AI IMPACT REPORT NO. 143 · REVISED 5 OCTOBER 2026 · 250 ROLES COVERED

Business Development Executives

AI transforming lead generation, market analysis, and initial outreach.

EXPOSURE	WINDOW	ADOPTION TODAY	READING
52	2–6 yrs	Medium-High	The role is being reshaped.
Elevated exposure	until change lands		Exposure is the share of today's work AI can plausibly take on within the window.

§ 01 WHAT IS HAPPENING

What is happening to business development executives

Impact

AI tools are being used to identify and qualify leads, analyze market trends and competitor landscapes, personalize outreach communications, and automate follow-ups. This allows Business Development Executives to focus on higher-value activities like building relationships and closing strategic deals.

Risk

Significant workflow augmentation; focus on strategic partnerships and complex negotiations.

The role of a Business Development Executive will be heavily augmented by AI, automating many of the initial research and outreach tasks. This shift requires executives to become adept at leveraging AI insights for strategy, focusing on building deep client/partner relationships, navigating complex negotiations, and developing innovative growth initiatives.

Sector readiness

Progressive Integration, Especially in SalesTech

AI is being rapidly integrated into CRM, sales intelligence, and outreach automation platforms. Companies are adopting these tools to improve sales efficiency, targeting accuracy, and to gain a competitive edge in identifying and capturing new business opportunities.

§ 02 POSITION

Where you stand

i The Business Development Executive role is being significantly augmented by AI, which automates many time-consuming prospecting and research tasks.

ii AI provides powerful tools for identifying leads, understanding markets, and personalizing outreach, allowing executives to be more targeted and efficient.

iii The core human skills of strategic thinking, building deep relationships, complex negotiation, creative deal structuring, and client advisory become even more critical and are the primary value drivers.

§ 03 ACTIONS 15 POINTS

What this means for you

Concrete changes to how the work gets done, in the order you are likely to meet them.

01 **AI-Powered Lead Generation & Prospecting.** Utilize AI tools that analyze firmographic, technographic, and intent data to identify high-potential leads and target accounts.

02 **Automated Market & Competitor Research.** Employ AI to gather and synthesize information on market trends, industry developments, competitor activities, and potential partnership opportunities.

03 **Personalized Outreach at Scale.** Leverage AI to help draft and personalize outreach emails or LinkedIn messages based on prospect profiles and pain points, improving engagement rates.

04 **Intelligent Sales Forecasting & Pipeline Management.** Use AI-driven analytics within CRM systems to get more accurate sales forecasts, identify at-risk deals, and prioritize pipeline activities.

05 **Focus on Strategic Relationship Building.** With AI handling initial outreach, dedicate more time to building deep, trust-based relationships with key prospects and strategic partners.

06 **Complex Deal Structuring & Negotiation.** Concentrate on a_human_centric aspects of deal-making, such as understanding complex client needs, creative solutioning, and navigating intricate negotiations.

07 **AI-Assisted Proposal & Presentation Creation.** Use generative AI to help draft initial versions of proposals, presentations, or sales collateral, which you then customize and refine.

08 **Identifying New Market Segments & Opportunities.** AI can analyze data to uncover underserved market segments or emerging needs that could represent new business opportunities.

09 **Optimizing Sales Cadence & Follow-Up.** AI tools can suggest optimal timing and channels for follow-up communications to nurture leads effectively.

10 **Continuous Learning of SalesTech & AI Tools.** A key requirement will be to stay updated on and proficient with the latest AI-powered sales and business development technologies.

11 **Data-Driven Account Planning.** Using AI-generated insights about target accounts to develop more strategic and effective engagement plans.

12 **Enhanced Collaboration with Marketing.** AI can help align sales and marketing efforts by providing shared insights on lead quality and campaign effectiveness.

13 **Personal Branding & Thought Leadership (AI-assisted).** Using AI to research content ideas or analyze engagement to build your professional brand and attract inbound leads.

14 **Understanding Ethical Use of AI in Sales.** Ensuring that AI tools for outreach and data collection are used responsibly and ethically, respecting privacy.

15 **Measuring and Improving Personal Effectiveness.** Using AI analytics to track your own performance metrics and identify areas for improvement in your sales process.

§ 04 CAUSES 10 DRIVERS

What is pushing this change

01 **Demand for Hyper-Personalization in Sales & Marketing.** AI enables tailoring outreach and value propositions to individual prospect needs and pain points at scale.

02 **Availability of Vast Prospect & Market Data.** AI can process and analyze large datasets (company info, social media, news) to identify and qualify potential leads.

03 **Advancements in AI for Lead Scoring & Predictive Analytics.** Machine learning models can predict which leads are most likely to convert, helping prioritize sales efforts.

04 **Need for Increased Sales Productivity & Efficiency.** AI automates time-consuming tasks, allowing business development professionals to focus on relationship building and closing.

05 **Rise of Sales Intelligence & Engagement Platforms.** A growing ecosystem of AI-powered tools provides rich insights and automation capabilities for sales and business development.

06 **Competitive Pressure to Identify & Win New Business Faster.** AI can help businesses identify opportunities and engage prospects more quickly than competitors relying on manual methods.

07 **Globalization of Markets & Need for Broader Reach.** AI tools can assist in researching international markets and identifying potential partners or clients globally.

08 **Desire for Data-Driven Sales Strategies.** AI provides analytics on sales performance, market trends, and customer behavior to inform more effective strategies.

09 **Integration of AI into CRM Systems.** Leading CRM platforms are embedding AI features for lead scoring, opportunity insights, and sales forecasting.

10 **Automation of Repetitive Outreach & Follow-up Tasks.** AI can manage initial email sequences or chatbot interactions, ensuring consistent follow-up without manual intervention.

§ 05 VARIATION 5 SECTORS

Impact by sector

The headline figure is an average. Where you work changes the picture.

Enterprise Sales / Key Account Management	AI for deep account intelligence, identifying key stakeholders, and mapping complex organizational structures. Human focus on strategic relationship building and complex solution selling.
SME / Mid-Market Business Development	AI for lead generation, automated outreach, and CRM management, allowing smaller teams to manage a larger volume of prospects.
Channel & Partnership Development	AI for identifying potential strategic partners, analyzing market synergies, and managing partner relationships.
SaaS / Tech Sales	Heavy use of AI for product demo personalization, understanding user engagement with trial software, and identifying up-sell/cross-sell opportunities.
International Business Development	AI for researching new international markets, identifying local partners, and assisting with cross-cultural communication and market entry strategies.

§ 06 PREPARATION 8 SKILLS

Skills to build

The skills that keep the human part of this work valuable as the routine part is automated.

01 **Strategic Relationship Building & Networking.** The core human ability to build trust, rapport, and long-term partnerships with clients and stakeholders.

02 **Consultative Selling & Value Propositioning.** Understanding client needs deeply and articulating how your product/service provides a unique solution, often informed by AI insights.

03 **Negotiation & Closing Expertise.** Successfully navigating complex deal structures, handling objections, and bringing agreements to a close.

04 **AI Sales Tech Proficiency & Data Interpretation.** Skill in using AI-powered CRM, sales intelligence, and outreach tools, and interpreting the data they provide to inform strategy.

05 **Business Acumen & Market Understanding.** Deep understanding of the client's industry, business model, competitive landscape, and strategic priorities.

06 **Communication & Presentation Skills.** Clearly and persuasively communicating value propositions, insights, and proposals to diverse audiences.

07 **Resilience & Adaptability.** Ability to handle rejection, adapt to changing market conditions, and learn new sales techniques and tools.

08 **Strategic Planning & Territory Management.** Developing and executing effective plans for market penetration, account targeting, and achieving sales goals, often using AI for prioritization.

§ 07 INSTRUMENTS 11 ENTRIES

Tools in use

KINDS OF TOOL WORTH KNOWING

01 **AI-Powered Sales Intelligence Platforms.** Platforms that use AI to provide deep insights into target accounts, identify decision-makers, and track buying signals.

02 **CRM Systems with AI Capabilities.** Customer Relationship Management systems that embed AI for lead scoring, sales forecasting, next-best-action recommendations, and activity logging.

03 **Sales Engagement & Outreach Automation Tools.** Software that uses AI to automate and personalize email sequences, LinkedIn outreach, and call cadences.

04 **Generative AI for Content Creation.** Large Language Models used to assist in drafting personalized emails, proposals, presentation scripts, and sales collateral.

05 **AI for Conversation Intelligence.** Tools that analyze sales calls and meetings to provide insights on talk-to-listen ratios, topics discussed, and coaching opportunities.

06 **Predictive Lead Scoring Tools.** AI algorithms that analyze various data points to predict the likelihood of a lead converting, helping to prioritize sales efforts.

NAMED TOOLS ALREADY IN USE

Salesforce Sales Cloud (with Einstein AI)
A leading CRM platform with embedded AI (Einstein) for lead scoring, opportunity insights, activity capture, and sales forecasting.

HubSpot Sales Hub (with AI features)
An integrated CRM platform offering AI tools for sales automation, personalized email suggestions, and predictive lead scoring.

Outreach / Salesloft
Sales engagement platforms that use AI to help automate and optimize sales outreach sequences across multiple channels.

ZoomInfo / Apollo.io
B2B database and sales intelligence platforms that leverage AI to provide accurate contact information, company insights, and intent data.

ChatGPT / Jasper / Copy.ai (for drafting sales copy)
Generative AI tools that can assist in writing personalized sales emails, product descriptions, and other marketing/sales content.

§ 08 EXAMPLES 5 EXAMPLES

In practice

Ways people in this role are already using AI, and what they get from it.

Identify High-Potential Leads with AI Sales Intelligence

EXAMPLE 1

HOW Use AI platforms that analyze firmographic data, buying signals, and intent data to generate prioritized lists of target accounts and key decision-makers.

GAIN Focuses efforts on the most promising leads, increases conversion rates, and improves sales efficiency.

Automate & Personalize Initial Outreach Sequences

EXAMPLE 2

HOW Employ sales engagement tools that use AI to personalize email templates at scale and automate follow-up sequences based on prospect engagement.

GAIN Saves significant time on manual outreach, ensures consistent follow-up, and allows for personalized engagement at scale.

Gain Deeper Market & Competitor Insights using AI

EXAMPLE 3

HOW Leverage AI tools to monitor industry news, competitor announcements, and market trends, providing you with timely insights for strategic conversations.

GAIN Enables more informed strategic planning, helps identify new business opportunities, and positions you as a knowledgeable advisor.

Forecast Sales More Accurately with AI-Driven CRM

EXAMPLE 4

HOW Utilize the AI features in your CRM to analyze historical sales data and current pipeline activity for more reliable sales forecasts and to identify deals needing attention.

GAIN Improves business planning, resource allocation, and helps in proactively addressing potential shortfalls in the sales pipeline.

Draft Initial Proposals & Presentations with Generative AI

EXAMPLE 5

HOW Use LLMs to generate first drafts of sales proposals, executive summaries, or presentation outlines, which you then customize with specific client details and strategic messaging.

GAIN Accelerates the creation of sales collateral, ensures consistency in initial drafts, and allows more time for strategic refinement and personalization.

§ 09 CONTEXT

How this role compares

Three neighbouring roles chosen to show the direction of travel.

Telemarketers / Lead Qualification Reps (Basic Scripted Outreach) MORE EXPOSED	AI IMPACT	High (AI chatbots and automated email sequences can handle initial scripted outreach and basic qualification questions)
	WORK MOVES TO	Role may contract or shift to managing AI outreach campaigns, handling exceptions, or focusing on more complex initial engagements.
Sales Operations Analysts / AI Sales Tool Administrators DIFFERENT SKILLS, GROWING	AI IMPACT	Foundational/Enabling (They implement, manage, and optimize the AI sales tech stack that BDEs use)
	WORK MOVES TO	Skills in CRM administration, data analysis, sales process optimization, and technical proficiency with sales AI tools.
Strategic Alliance Managers (High-Level Partnerships) COMPLEMENTARY, LESS EXPOSED	AI IMPACT	Moderate Augmentation (AI for identifying potential partners, market research), but core value is in complex negotiation, trust-building, and long-term strategic alignment.
	WORK MOVES TO	Deep industry knowledge, executive-level relationship management, strategic vision, and complex deal structuring.

§ 10 VERDICT

Closing judgement

> For Business Development Executives, AI is a powerful enabler, automating the groundwork and providing rich insights. This allows professionals to elevate their role, focusing on strategic deal-making, building profound client relationships, and leveraging human ingenuity where it matters most – in understanding complex needs and forging valuable partnerships.

§ 11 BASIS REVISED 5 OCTOBER 2026

Evidence and revisions

What the exposure figure rests on, what changed when it was last revised, and the published work cited for this role.

SCORE

50 to 52

WINDOW

2-6 years (unchanged)

The 5 October 2026 review moved the score up by 2 points.

Exposure Index v2. Inputs: task applicability 61/100 (Microsoft AI applicability score 0.31 for Sales representatives of services, except advertising, insurance, financial services, and travel; Sales managers); observed usage 6/100 (Anthropic observed exposure 0.04); official exposure tier 85/100 (BLS: very high / high); labour-market trajectory 41/100 (BLS projects employment to grow 3.6% over 2025–35); published adoption rating 55/100 (medium-high adoption). Weighted base 52.0. Final score 52. The previous figure of 50 was raised by 2 points, a small change that comes from moving off scores rounded to the nearest five. The change window is unchanged.

HOW THE FIGURE IS BUILT (EXPOSURE INDEX V2)

Task applicability — Microsoft Research, AI applicability score	61 × 35%	21.5
Observed usage — Anthropic Economic Index, observed exposure	6 × 20%	1.2
Official exposure tier — US BLS AI-exposure category	85 × 20%	17.0
Labour-market trajectory — US BLS projected employment change 2025–35	41 × 10%	4.1
Published adoption rating — This report's adoption level	55 × 15%	8.3
Weighted base		52.0
Exposure score		52

MEASURES BEHIND THE SCORE

US Bureau of Labor Statistics · *Employment Projections 2025–35 and AI Exposure Categories* (27 August 2026)

AI-exposure tier: High / Very high. Projected employment change 2025–35: +3.6%. Matched to Sales managers; Sales representatives of services, except advertising, insurance, financial services, and travel.

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Microsoft Research · *Working with AI: Measuring the Applicability of Generative AI to Occupations* (10 July 2025)

AI applicability score 0.31 (percentile 89 of 785 occupations) for SOC 41-3091, 11-2022.

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Anthropic · *Anthropic Economic Index report: Cadences* (26 June 2026)

Observed exposure 0.04 for SOC 41-3091, 11-2022 (percentile 65 of 756 occupations).

PUBLISHER PDF

UK Department for Science, Innovation and Technology · *Assessment of AI capabilities and the impact on the UK labour market* (28 January 2026)

UK context: around 70% of UK workers are in occupations with tasks AI could perform or enhance, above the US average; a one-standard-deviation rise in exposure was associated with a 3.9% fall in UK job postings.

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§ 12 APPENDIX

Method and sources

Each report was written from a large body of published research. The exposure score itself is computed, not written: it is the CareerGuard Exposure Index, a weighted average of occupation-level measures from the US Bureau of Labor Statistics (AI-exposure classification and 2025–35 projections), Microsoft Research (AI applicability scores) and Anthropic (observed exposure), together with the adoption rating published on the report. The organisations and publications below are the standing literature behind the narrative sections. Every source, with dates, licences and archived copies where we are permitted to hold them, is catalogued in the research library.

Exposure Index v2 (October 2026). Each input is scaled to 0–100 and weighted: task applicability 35% (Microsoft AI applicability score ÷ 0.5), observed usage 20% (Anthropic observed exposure ÷ 0.75), official exposure tier 20% (BLS very high = 100, high = 70, moderate = 40, low = 10), labour-market trajectory 10% (50 2.5 × projected % employment change), published adoption rating 15% (very high = 85, high = 70, medium-high = 55, medium = 40, low-medium = 25, low = 10). Inputs not measured for an occupation are dropped and the remaining weights renormalised. An editorial adjustment of at most ±12 points is allowed only for automation channels the measures cannot see (robotics, self-service, machine vision, medical imaging, RPA/OCR, generative video) and is always logged with its reason. Scores are whole numbers, not rounded to five. The change window shifts one notch (a year at each end) per ten points of movement.

I GLOBAL AND MACROECONOMIC IMPACT OF AI ON WORK

World Economic Forum

The Future of Jobs Report series — Employer survey of expected job growth and decline, skill shifts and technology adoption (2020, 2023 and 2025 editions); Artificial Intelligence and the Future of Entry-Level Work (2026).
AI governance and transformation reports — Frameworks on ethical AI, talent strategy and industry transformation.

McKinsey Global Institute

AI, Automation and the Future of Work series — Research quantifying automation potential by task, sector and demographic, from "Jobs Lost, Jobs Gained" to "Agents, robots, and us" (2025).
Industry-specific reports — Financial services, healthcare, manufacturing and others.

PwC

Global AI Jobs Barometer — Annual analysis of job postings and productivity by AI exposure (2024–2026 editions).
Upskilling Hopes and Fears survey — Employee perceptions and readiness.

Microsoft Research and Anthropic

Working with AI (2025); Anthropic Economic Index (2025–2026) — Occupation-level usage data from Copilot and Claude conversations, the two observed-usage measures behind the 2026 revision.

Stanford Digital Economy Lab and Stanford HAI
Canaries in the Coal Mine? (2025–2026); AI Index Report (annual) — Payroll evidence on early-career employment in exposed occupations; annual measurement of AI capability, investment and adoption.

Deloitte
Human Capital Trends series — Workforce, talent and HR technology trends.
Tech Trends series — Emerging technologies and their business implications.

Accenture
Technology Vision series — Forward-looking analysis of emerging technology, with emphasis on AI.
Fjord Trends — Design, innovation and human experience in a digital world.

Boston Consulting Group
AI/ML insights and industry solutions — "The AI Revolution in the Workplace" and related research.

EY
AI and workforce reports — Adoption, talent strategy and ethics.

IBM Institute for Business Value
AI and automation studies — Business models, workforce evolution and leadership.

OECD
AI Policy Observatory — International data and policy on AI, labour markets and skills.
Employment Outlook — Labour-market trends including technological impact (2023–2026 editions).

International Labour Organization
Generative AI and Jobs: A Refined Global Index of Occupational Exposure (2025) — Task-level exposure gradients for every ISCO occupation; successor to the 2023 global index.

International Monetary Fund
Staff Discussion Notes on AI and work (2024, 2026) — Complementarity framing: where AI augments and where it substitutes.

UK Department for Science, Innovation and Technology
Assessment of AI capabilities and the impact on the UK labour market (2026) — UK occupational exposure and job-posting evidence.

Brookings Institution
AI and automation research — Economic and social implications, displacement and skills.

Yale Budget Lab and Goldman Sachs Research
Tracking the Impact of AI on the Labor Market; AI and the US labour market (2026) — Aggregate labour-market monitoring; macro displacement estimates.

Oxford University (Oxford Martin School)
The Future of Employment — Frey & Osborne and subsequent research on susceptibility to automation.

MIT Technology Review
AI & Work — Reporting on AI research and its implications for industries and jobs.

Gartner
Hype Cycle for Artificial Intelligence — Maturity and adoption of AI technologies.
Future of Work reports — Workplace models and talent strategy.

U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics
Employment Projections 2025–35; AI Exposure Categories; Occupational Outlook Handbook — Ten-year employment projections and, from the 2025 cycle, an AI-exposure tier for every detailed occupation.

Indeed Hiring Lab
AI at Work Report (2025) and posting-market updates — Skill-level transformation estimates and job-posting trends by occupation.

II CORE AI AND MACHINE-LEARNING RESEARCH

OpenAI
Research papers, blog and API documentation — Large language models, generative AI, safety and societal impact.

Google DeepMind
Research papers and blog — Reinforcement learning, AI for science, AGI and ethics.

Meta AI
Research papers and blog — Large language models, computer vision, AI for social good.

Hugging Face
Transformers library and model hub — Open-source state-of-the-art NLP models.

TensorFlow and PyTorch
Documentation and community forums — Core frameworks illustrating practical capability.

arXiv
cs.AI, cs.LG, cs.CV, cs.CL — Pre-print research.

NeurIPS and ICML
Conference proceedings — Top-tier academic research.

ACM and IEEE
Journals and proceedings — ACM Computing Surveys; IEEE Transactions on AI.

Kaggle
Datasets and competition solutions — Applied machine learning on real-world problems.

The Alan Turing Institute
Research and reports — Responsible and applied AI.

III ETHICAL AND RESPONSIBLE AI DEPLOYMENT

NIST
AI Risk Management Framework — Voluntary framework for managing AI risk.

European Commission
AI Act — Risk-tiered legal framework for AI.
Ethics Guidelines for Trustworthy AI — Principles for responsible development.

Partnership on AI
Research and best practice — Responsible AI development.

AI Now Institute
Annual reports — Social implications: power, inequality, rights.

ACM FAccT
Proceedings — Fairness, accountability and transparency.

Data & Society
Publications — Social implications of data-centric technology.

WIPO
Conversation on IP and AI — Intellectual-property implications of AI.

IEEE Global Initiative on Ethics of A/IS
Ethically Aligned Design — Recommendations for ethical AI design.

Center for AI and Digital Policy
Policy briefs — Accountable AI policy.