AI IMPACT REPORT NO. 199 · REVISED 5 OCTOBER 2026 · 250 ROLES COVERED

Sales Managers

AI profoundly augmenting sales strategy, team performance analysis, and process optimization.

EXPOSURE	WINDOW	ADOPTION TODAY	READING
41	2–6 yrs	High	Augmented more than replaced.
Moderate 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 sales managers

Impact

AI tools are automating forecasting, lead scoring, performance monitoring, and assisting in personalized communication. This shifts Sales Managers' focus towards high-level strategic planning, advanced coaching, validating AI outputs, ensuring ethical AI use, and fostering human-centric sales relationships.

Risk

Significant augmentation; emphasis on strategic leadership, advanced coaching, and AI tool mastery.

The Sales Manager role will be heavily augmented by AI. AI will handle much of the data analysis, performance monitoring, and routine sales operations, demanding that managers pivot to leveraging these tools for deeper insights, overseeing AI-generated content, focusing on strategic vision, team development, and the human elements of sales leadership. Ethical considerations and bias mitigation in AI performance evaluation will also be paramount.

Sector readiness

Rapid & Deep Integration

The sales industry is aggressively integrating AI into CRM, sales enablement, and sales intelligence platforms. Companies are adopting AI tools to improve sales efficiency, forecasting accuracy, and rep productivity. The sector is characterized by rapid experimentation and implementation of new AI-powered solutions.

§ 02 POSITION

Where you stand

i The Sales Manager role is at a significant inflection point, with AI profoundly transforming how sales operations are managed and teams are led.

ii AI will automate routine data analysis, performance tracking, and lead prioritization, freeing up Sales Managers for strategic leadership, advanced coaching, and fostering high-value human connections.

iii Success will increasingly depend on a Sales Manager's ability to master AI tools, interpret AI-driven insights, champion ethical sales practices, and develop their team's human-centric selling skills in an AI-augmented sales landscape.

§ 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-Driven Sales Forecasting & Pipeline Management.** Sales Managers are increasingly leveraging AI tools that analyze historical sales data, pipeline velocity, market trends, and external factors to generate highly accurate sales forecasts. This allows for more precise resource allocation and strategic planning, moving beyond traditional spreadsheet-based forecasting.

02 **AI-Powered Performance Monitoring & Coaching Insights.** Sales Managers will benefit from AI systems that analyze sales rep activities (ee.g., call recordings, email interactions, CRM data) to identify patterns, highlight coaching opportunities, and predict performance trends. This enables more personalized and data-driven coaching interventions.

03 **Automated Lead Scoring & Opportunity Prioritization.** Sales Managers are overseeing AI tools that automatically score leads based on their likelihood to convert and prioritize sales opportunities within the pipeline. This ensures sales teams focus their efforts on the most promising prospects, increasing conversion rates and efficiency.

04 **Generative AI for Sales Enablement Content.** Sales Managers will find generative AI to be a powerful asset for creating sales enablement materials. This includes drafting initial versions of personalized sales emails, pitch decks, proposals, and training content, allowing managers to accelerate content creation and ensure messaging consistency.

05 **AI for Sales Process Optimization & Anomaly Detection.** AI tools are analyzing sales processes to identify bottlenecks, inefficiencies, or deviations from optimal workflows. Sales Managers will use these insights to refine sales methodologies, pinpoint areas where reps might struggle, and proactively address systemic issues.

06 **Market & Competitive Intelligence with AI.** Sales Managers are utilizing AI-powered platforms to gather and synthesize real-time market data, competitive strategies, and customer sentiment. This provides deeper intelligence to inform sales strategy, identify market gaps, and train sales teams on competitive positioning.

07 **AI-Augmented Territory & Account Planning.** AI can analyze customer data, market potential, and sales rep performance to suggest optimized territory assignments and account prioritization. Sales Managers will leverage these insights for more equitable distribution of workload and maximizing revenue potential across their teams.

08 **Voice & Conversation Intelligence.** Sales Managers are employing AI tools that analyze sales calls for key phrases, sentiment, talk-to-listen ratios, and adherence to sales scripts. This provides objective insights into rep performance, customer objections, and successful sales tactics for more effective coaching.

09 **Ethical AI Use & Bias Mitigation in Sales Operations.** Sales Managers will be responsible for ensuring that AI tools used in sales operations (e.g., lead scoring, territory assignment) are applied ethically, are free from unintended biases, and comply with data privacy regulations. This requires active oversight and validation.

10 **Human-AI Teaming for Sales Reps.** Sales Managers will coach their teams on how to effectively collaborate with AI tools. This includes training reps to use AI for personalized outreach, real-time call assistance, and data analysis, ensuring they leverage AI as a force multiplier without losing the human touch.

11 **AI for Onboarding & Training Personalization.** AI can analyze new rep performance and learning styles to personalize training modules, suggest relevant resources, and identify areas needing improvement. Sales Managers will use AI to accelerate ramp-up time and improve the effectiveness of their sales training programs.

12 **AI-Driven Customer Churn Prediction & Retention.** Sales Managers are leveraging AI models that predict which existing clients are at risk of churning based on their usage patterns, support interactions, and sentiment. This enables proactive outreach and tailored retention strategies, reducing customer attrition.

13 **Strategic Relationship Building & Complex Negotiation.** As AI automates data and routine interactions, the Sales Manager's focus will intensify on coaching their team in complex deal structuring, high-stakes negotiations, and building profound, trust-based relationships with key clients and decision-makers.

14 **Continuous Learning of SalesTech & AI Tools.** The sales technology landscape is evolving rapidly with AI integration. Sales Managers must continuously update their proficiency with new AI-powered CRM features, sales intelligence platforms, and sales enablement tools to effectively lead their teams.

15 **Data Storytelling & Influence.** Sales Managers will need to effectively translate complex AI-driven sales performance data into clear, compelling narratives for senior leadership, demonstrating ROI, justifying resource needs, and influencing strategic business decisions.

§ 04 CAUSES 10 DRIVERS

What is pushing this change

01 **Demand for Higher Sales Productivity & Efficiency.** Businesses constantly seek to maximize revenue with fewer resources, driving AI adoption to boost rep productivity.

02 **Advancements in AI/ML (Predictive Analytics, NLP, Generative AI).** Breakthroughs in these AI fields enable sophisticated analysis of sales data, personalized communication, and content generation.

03 **Growth of CRM & Sales Enablement Platforms.** These platforms provide the data infrastructure and integration points for AI tools to enhance sales workflows.

04 **Need for Accurate Sales Forecasting.** Accurate sales forecasts are critical for business planning, resource allocation, and financial health; AI significantly improves this.

05 **Competitive Pressures in Sales.** Companies must leverage technology to gain an edge in lead generation, conversion rates, and customer retention.

06 **Volume of Sales Data (CRM, interactions, market).** The vast amount of data from CRM systems, sales calls, emails, and market activity provides rich input for AI analysis.

07 **Demand for Personalized Customer Engagement.** Customers expect tailored experiences, and AI enables sales teams to personalize interactions at scale.

08 **Shortage of Highly Skilled Sales Professionals.** AI augmentation is seen as a way to increase the capacity and effectiveness of existing sales teams.

09 **Pressure for Cost Optimization.** AI automation of routine tasks and optimization of sales processes can lead to reduced operational costs.

10 **Digital Transformation in Sales.** Sales organizations are undergoing digital transformation, embedding AI into every stage of the sales lifecycle.

§ 05 VARIATION 5 SECTORS

Impact by sector

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

Enterprise Sales Managers	AI for forecasting complex deal cycles, identifying key accounts for strategic focus, and analyzing executive-level interactions. Focus on coaching strategic sales.
Inside Sales Managers	AI for lead prioritization, optimizing sales cadences, and analyzing high-volume call/email interactions. Focus on coaching efficiency and conversion rates.

Channel Sales Managers	AI for partner performance analysis, identifying co-selling opportunities, and optimizing partner programs. Focus on channel growth and relationship management.
Sales Operations Managers	Heavy use of AI for sales forecasting model development, territory optimization, compensation plan analysis, and sales tech stack management. Focus on sales strategy and infrastructure.
Sales Enablement Managers	AI for personalizing training content, analyzing rep skill gaps, and optimizing content delivery for sales reps. Focus on content effectiveness and rep readiness.

§ 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 **Leadership & Team Development.** Ability to motivate, develop, and lead a sales team, fostering a high-performance culture and ensuring alignment with sales strategy.

02 **Data Analysis & Interpretation (Sales Metrics).** Skill in analyzing complex sales data, interpreting AI-generated insights (e.g., performance trends, pipeline health), and making data-driven decisions.

03 **Advanced Coaching & Mentorship.** Providing personalized feedback, skill development, and strategic guidance to sales reps based on performance data and individual needs.

04 **AI Tool Proficiency & SalesTech Mastery.** Proficiency in using and managing AI-powered CRM features, sales intelligence platforms, forecasting tools, and sales enablement software.

05 **Strategic Planning & Execution.** Ability to define sales targets, develop comprehensive sales strategies, and oversee their execution to achieve revenue goals.

06 **Communication & Influence.** Articulating complex sales strategies, communicating performance insights, and influencing both sales teams and senior leadership.

07 **Ethical Sales Practice & AI Bias Awareness.** Understanding potential biases in AI tools (e.g., in lead scoring or performance evaluation) and ensuring sales practices comply with ethical guidelines and privacy regulations.

08 **Adaptability & Change Management.** Willingness to learn new sales technologies, adapt sales methodologies, and lead a team through technological and market changes.

§ 07 INSTRUMENTS 12 ENTRIES

Tools in use

KINDS OF TOOL WORTH KNOWING

01 **CRM Systems with AI (e.g., Salesforce Einstein).** Leading CRM platforms with integrated AI for lead scoring, opportunity insights, forecasting, and personalized recommendations.

02 **Sales Intelligence Platforms with AI.** Platforms that use AI to gather and analyze firmographic, technographic, and intent data to identify high-potential leads and accounts.

03 **Sales Engagement Platforms (AI-powered).** Software that automates and personalizes sales outreach across multiple channels (email, social, calls) using AI for optimization.

04 **Conversation Intelligence Platforms.** AI tools that analyze sales call recordings for insights into rep performance, customer sentiment, and effective sales tactics.

05 **Sales Forecasting Software (AI/ML-based).** Software solutions that leverage AI and machine learning algorithms to generate highly accurate sales forecasts and predictive analytics.

06 **Generative AI for Sales Content.** Large Language Models (LLMs) used to assist in drafting personalized emails, proposals, pitch decks, and sales collateral.

NAMED TOOLS ALREADY IN USE

Salesforce Sales Cloud (Einstein AI) / HubSpot Sales Hub (AI features) VISIT
Leading CRM platforms that embed AI for automated insights, lead scoring, forecasting, and sales process optimization.

ZoomInfo / Apollo.io / Lusha VISIT
Platforms that leverage AI to provide comprehensive B2B sales intelligence, including contact data, company insights, and buying signals.

Outreach / Salesloft / Groove VISIT
Sales engagement platforms that use AI for automated outreach, content personalization, and sequence optimization across various channels.

Gong.io / Chorus.ai VISIT
AI-powered platforms that record, transcribe, and analyze sales conversations to provide insights into rep performance, customer objections, and deal health.

Clari / Anaplan (for Sales Planning & Forecasting) VISIT
AI-driven sales forecasting and revenue operations platforms that use machine learning to provide highly accurate predictions and insights.

ChatGPT / Jasper / Copy.ai (for sales content)
Generative AI models that can assist in drafting personalized sales emails, proposals, and other sales-related content.

§ 08 EXAMPLES 5 EXAMPLES

In practice

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

Optimize Sales Forecasting Accuracy

EXAMPLE 1

HOW Implement an AI-powered sales forecasting tool that integrates data from the CRM, sales activities, and market trends to provide highly accurate revenue predictions. The Sales Manager uses this for strategic planning.

GAIN Significantly improves the accuracy of sales predictions, leading to better resource allocation and business planning.

Get AI-Powered Coaching Insights

EXAMPLE 2

HOW Utilize a conversation intelligence platform that analyzes recorded sales calls. The AI identifies key moments, talk-to-listen ratios, objections handled, and successful sales tactics, providing the Sales Manager with data-backed coaching points for reps.

GAIN Provides objective, data-driven coaching insights, leading to more effective sales teams and improved individual rep performance.

Automate Lead Qualification

EXAMPLE 3

HOW Implement an AI lead scoring system that automatically ranks incoming leads based on their likelihood to convert, utilizing demographic, firmographic, and behavioral data. The Sales Manager ensures the sales team prioritizes high-value leads.

GAIN Ensures sales reps focus on the most promising leads, increasing conversion rates and overall sales efficiency.

Generate Personalized Outreach Emails

EXAMPLE 4

HOW Use a generative AI tool to draft initial personalized outreach emails for sales reps, incorporating prospect-specific details and pain points. The Sales Manager reviews and coaches on tailoring for maximum impact.

GAIN Accelerates content creation for sales reps, ensures consistent messaging, and enables highly personalized outreach at scale.

Analyze Sales Call Performance

EXAMPLE 5

HOW Access a dashboard from a conversation intelligence platform that summarizes sales call performance across the team. The AI highlights trends in successful calls, common objections, and coaching opportunities, allowing the Sales Manager to focus training efforts.

GAIN Offers clear, data-backed insights into team performance, identifies areas for improvement, and enables targeted coaching strategies for the Sales Manager.

§ 09 CONTEXT

How this role compares

Three neighbouring roles chosen to show the direction of travel.

Sales Development Representatives (SDRs/BDRs - cold outreach) MORE EXPOSED	AI IMPACT	High (AI can automate lead qualification, personalized cold outreach, and initial follow-ups, reducing the need for manual BDR tasks.)
	WORK MOVES TO	Role contraction or redefinition towards managing AI outreach campaigns, handling warm hand-offs, or specializing in complex initial engagements.
Sales Operations Analysts / AI Sales Tool Administrators DIFFERENT SKILLS, GROWING	AI IMPACT	Foundational (They implement, manage, and optimize the AI sales tech stack, ensuring data flow and model effectiveness.)
	WORK MOVES TO	Deep expertise in CRM administration, data analysis, sales process optimization, and technical proficiency with sales AI tools.
Chief Sales Officer (CSO) / VP of Sales (Strategic Vision) COMPLEMENTARY, LESS EXPOSED	AI IMPACT	High Augmentation (Leverage AI-driven insights for overall sales strategy, market expansion, and GTM planning), but core leadership, executive decision-making, and organizational culture remain human.
	WORK MOVES TO	Overall sales strategy, market expansion, revenue growth, talent development across the organization, and executive stakeholder management.

§ 10 VERDICT

Closing judgement

> For Sales Managers, AI is a powerful force that will transform their leadership and strategic impact. By automating many operational and analytical tasks, AI frees managers to focus on what truly drives results: developing high-performing teams, crafting winning strategies, and fostering the human connections that are indispensable in sales. Sales Managers who embrace AI as an enabler will lead the next generation of sales success.

§ 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

45 to 41

WINDOW

2-6 years (unchanged)

The 5 October 2026 review moved the score down by 4 points.

Exposure Index v2. Inputs: task applicability 33/100 (Microsoft AI applicability score 0.16 for Sales managers); observed usage 6/100 (Anthropic observed exposure 0.04); official exposure tier 70/100 (BLS: high); labour-market trajectory 39/100 (BLS projects employment to grow 4.5% over 2025–35); published adoption rating 70/100 (high adoption). Weighted base 41.0. Final score 41. The previous figure of 45 was lowered by 4 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	33 × 35%	11.5
Observed usage — Anthropic Economic Index, observed exposure	6 × 20%	1.2
Official exposure tier — US BLS AI-exposure category	70 × 20%	14.0
Labour-market trajectory — US BLS projected employment change 2025–35	39 × 10%	3.9
Published adoption rating — This report's adoption level	70 × 15%	10.5
Weighted base		41.0
Exposure score		41

MEASURES BEHIND THE SCORE

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

AI-exposure tier: High. Projected employment change 2025–35: +4.5%. Matched to Sales managers.

PUBLISHER PDF ARCHIVED COPY

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

AI applicability score 0.16 (percentile 57 of 785 occupations) for SOC 11-2022.

PUBLISHER PDF ARCHIVED COPY

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

Observed exposure 0.04 for SOC 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.

PUBLISHER ARCHIVED COPY

ALSO CITED FOR THIS ROLE

Microsoft · *2026 Work Trend Index Annual Report: Agents, human agency and the opportunity for every organization* (5 May 2026)

Microsoft's 2026 Work Trend Index documents the shift toward managing agents alongside people; leadership roles change in content more than in headcount.

PUBLISHER PDF

PwC · *2026 Global AI Jobs Barometer* (May 2026)

PwC finds AI-exposed sectors recording 34% productivity growth since 2018 against 24% for the least exposed; managerial roles capture the gains where they redesign work.

PUBLISHER PDF

Archived copies are served only where the licence permits; otherwise the link goes to the publisher. Full research library: https://www.careerguard.ai/sources

§ 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.