

AI, Strategy, and Sales Growth

WHAT EVERY EXECUTIVE NEEDS TO KNOW

BY AMY FRANKO

If you're an executive leading growth in 2026 and beyond, you've probably heard this question: *What role is AI playing in your sales strategy?*

In my sales and marketing work with clients, the answers range. Some organizations are using AI agents, or they're using AI for activities like sales coaching or conversation role-play. AI might support sales workflows, like drafting emails or researching prospects.

But the best opportunity is to create a growth strategy that selectively chooses and integrates AI into your vision, goals, and activities. There's a risk to not embracing AI in your growth strategy. Competitors who do this better and faster than you will outpace you. And clients may see your business as outdated and unable to help them meet their goals.

But while AI is an essential tool, it doesn't replace human expertise. In fact, companies that achieve the greatest impact combine technology with human decision-making.

This article explores AI's role in sales and growth strategy, processes, and teams—highlighting where human insight still matters most.

1. Sales and Growth Strategy: AI as Input, Not Autopilot

AI is not its own strategy. Rather, it supports the existing strategy or helps us think differently about the effectiveness of the current strategy workflow. Forward-looking sales organizations weave AI into strategic planning by:

- Identifying market opportunities
- Forecasting pipeline performance with greater accuracy
- Allocating resources based on clearer data signals

None of these insights mean much without decision-making. AI can show what's happening; human leaders decide why it matters and what to do next.

Executives who define the role of AI in sales strategy set the tone for the entire organization. It signals that technology is not a replacement for leadership, but a decision-support system that enables sharper growth plays and more resilient planning.

2. Sales Processes: Technology Scales, People Prioritize

Process is where many organizations are seeing the most significant early wins with AI, using it to:

- Generate call summaries and action items that keep the sales process moving. This eliminates hours of note-taking and improves CRM accuracy.
- Automate research to prepare for prospecting calls. This improves the quantity and quality of early-stage calls, adding better opportunities to the pipeline.
- Craft better and more personalized outreach. Better research, combined with greater investment in understanding your buyer, will improve sales outcomes.

But AI's value depends on the systems around it. A modern CRM is now table stakes. Without a centralized data hub, AI becomes a patchwork, and sales teams remain stuck in manual work.

And this is where human oversight comes in again. For example, AI can help score opportunities on specific criteria, and then a human seller must weigh the context. Opportunities flagged as "low probability" by an algorithm may still be worth pursuing due to contextual factors that aren't reflected in the data.

3. AI and Your Sales Force: The Human Advantage

The strongest differentiator in an AI-driven world isn't the technology itself. We've already established that people are central to AI's value.

Yes, AI can prepare call notes, survey buyer behavior, and suggest next steps. But what clients really want is something AI can't provide: clarity, context, and confidence. They don't just need data; they need trusted advisors to connect the dots and guide decisions.

I designed a concept called "Advisory Intelligence" that I use with my clients. It's the ability to blend technology-based insights with human expertise.

Consider four categories of insight where sellers add human context:

- Company & Industry Insights: In-



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terpreting macro trends for a client's unique business.

- Relationship Insights: Navigating networks of influence with nuance AI can't map alone.
- Event Insights: Judging which triggers signal opportunity versus noise.
- Individual Insights: Understanding what decision-makers value personally, not just organizationally.

AI helps sellers show up more prepared, but the real advantage comes when they use it to ask better questions, draw sharper connections, and deliver confidence in moments that matter.

The Executive Imperative

For executive leaders, the strategy is clear: use AI to support growth strategy, but don't allow it to take the lead.

By integrating AI into sales strategy, processes, and the sales force (with human decision-making at the center), you create a sales organization that is more efficient today and more resilient for tomorrow.

Amy Franko is the leader in modern sales strategies. She helps mid-market organizations to grow sales results, through sales strategy, advisory, and skill development programs. Her book, *The Modern Seller*, is an Amazon bestseller, and she is recognized by LinkedIn as a Top Sales Voice. amyfranko.com.