



WHITEPAPER

Tomorrow's Marketplace:

How Today's Sellers Can Take Advantage

Introduction

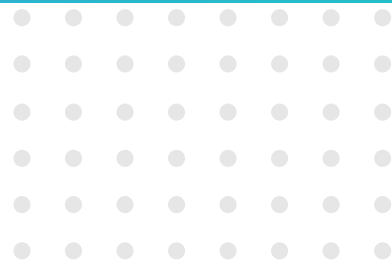
A GROWING DIVIDE exists between our past experiences, our "new normal" and the future it suggests. From home to the workplace, a general air of disruption seems to be the common thread that connects today's world.

A thread of disruption has too woven itself into the larger business community with staggering outcomes, both positive and negative, reverberating across the US economy. While some businesses and sectors are shuttering their doors, others are reporting record-breaking expansions.

Needless to say, the Work From Home (WFH) movement that has been closely correlated with the Covid19



outbreak has materialized as one of the most notable secondary outcomes of the pandemic. But even WFH and the digital-communication technologies that enable it have had their own unintended consequences. One such consequence is the imminent return to homeschooling which has cyclically turned into another possible workplace disruption.



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In order to better understand these phenomena and their impact on the business community, [SalesRoads, a nationally recognized B2B Appointment Setting](#) and SDR Outsourcing Firm, surveyed 755 Sales Professionals working in the [SaaS industry on the state of their businesses](#).

Although only focusing on a portion of the economy, SaaS has proven to be an incredibly resilient vertical that includes giants such as Zoom Communications, Google, and Salesforce. Because of the sector's diverse nature and astounding success, it's reasonable to assume that results of this survey could be applied in a broader context to represent the hottest parts of the economy.

To further contextualize these findings for the purpose of this white paper, the survey has been done in concert with a separate study measuring the impact of mobile work numbers on sales-connectivity success. Conducted by leading data provider SalesIntel, as well as sales enablement firm ScaleX, both studies indicate that amongst the disruption there is an opportunity for sales professionals who are able to adapt to today's business climate.



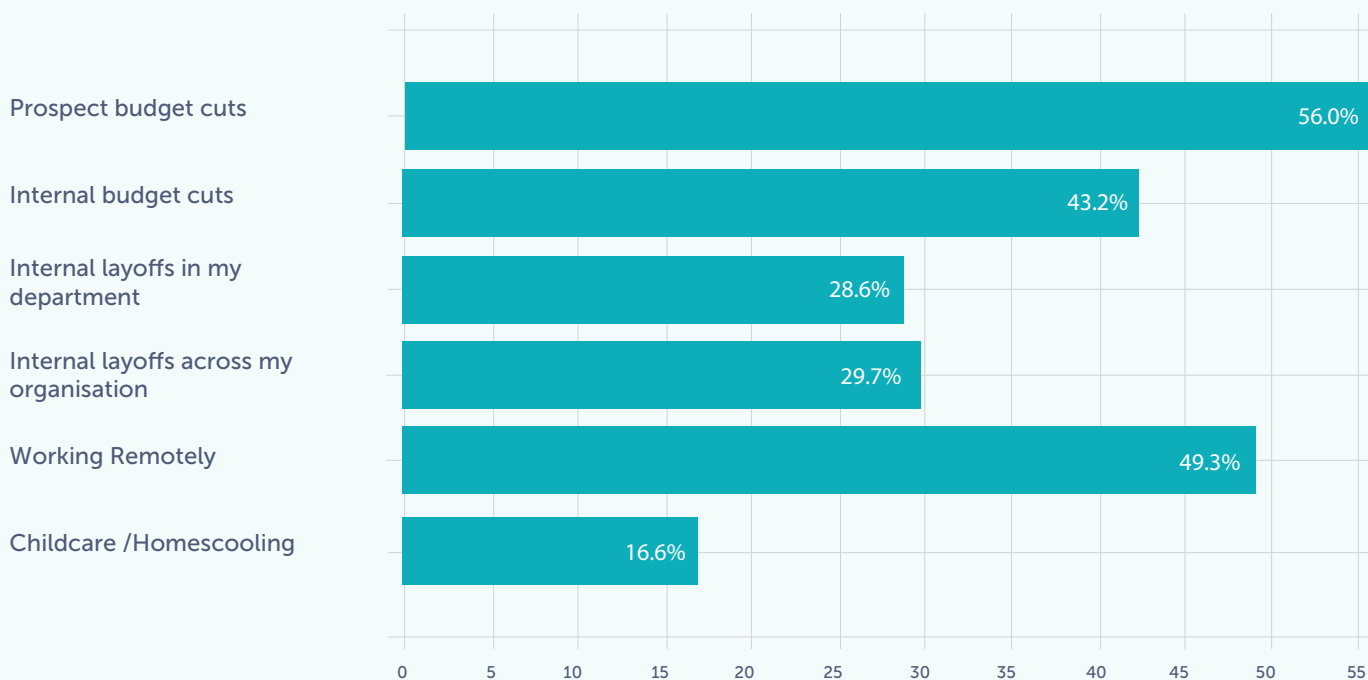
SECTION 1

Measuring The Disruption



Looking to first understand the breadth of disruptions faced by the business community, we asked 755 sales professions, "Which of the Following Has Impacted Your Ability to Sell?"

Which of the Following Have Affected Your Ability to Sell?





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Of the options provided, budget cuts on the prospect-side of selling engagements was the highest cited disruption at 56% of respondents, quickly followed by remote work (49.3%), internal budget cuts (43.2%), internal layoffs (29.7%), and finally childcare/homeschooling (16.6%).

The Childcare Question

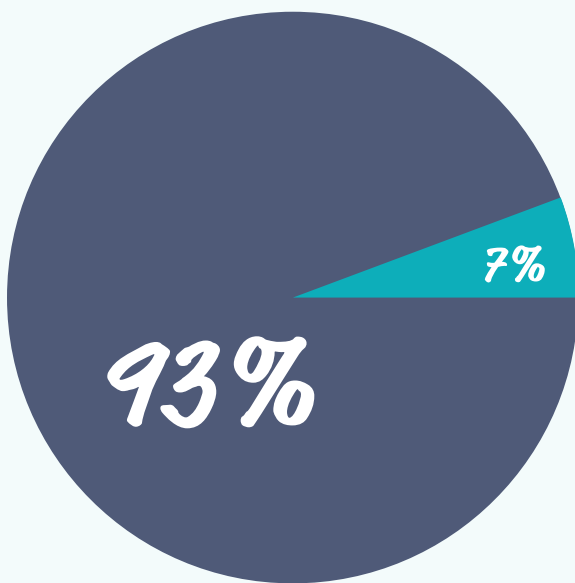
When this survey was initially conducted in the month of June, the vast majority of US schools were on summer vacation. Although one may initially assume summer vacation presents a challenge for parents, it also means that the majority of students were not taking classes, meaning parents simply needed to provide supervision, not education. This dynamic may change as schools kick off their fall sessions with distance learning, requiring parents to act as part-time teachers during work hours.

As some sectors of the economy plunge into deeper recessions, others are continuing to grow, making it hard to gauge how long buyer budget cuts will last. In a similar fashion, predicting the impact of seller-side layoffs is challenging.

Despite the natural assumption that fewer sales reps working for a company would naturally slow growth and new opportunities, individual sales reps may not see this as a barrier to success as individual reps would likely take over more accounts, possibly leading them to conflate personal performance with broader business outcomes. Finally, internal budget cuts may have a similarly lagging impact on sellers if new tools or employees aren't acquired over time.

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The one area we may have more [insight is remote work](#). Interestingly, remote work was the second most cited selling disruption, despite the fact that 93% of respondents indicated they are more likely to consider remote work in the future.



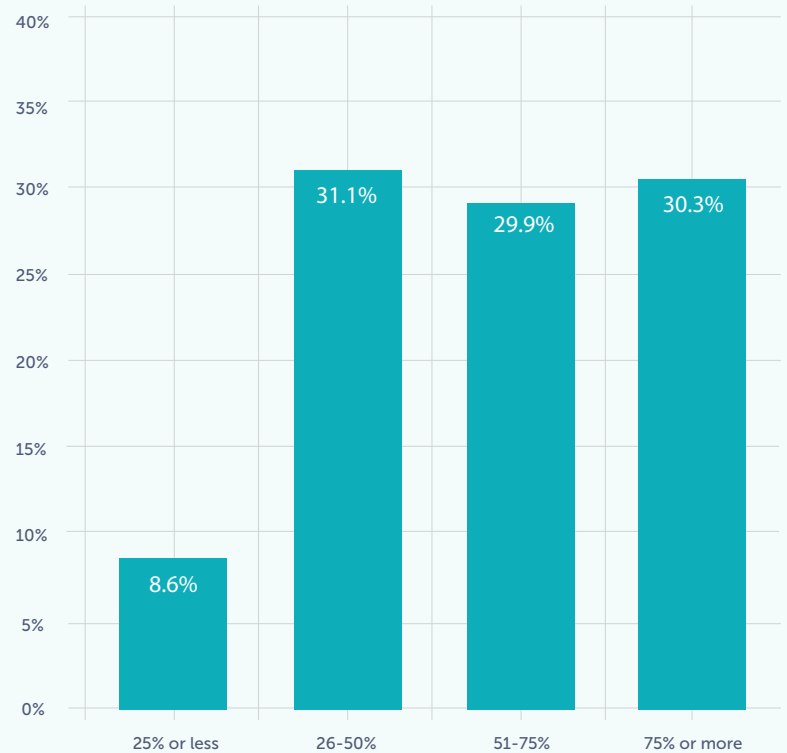
Are You More or Less Likely to Consider Remote Work in the Future?

■ More 93% ■ Less 7%

Questions regarding sentiments on remote work are further compounded by another question posed to the same 755 sales professions, "What Percent of Your Sales Team is Working Remotely for the First Time?"

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What Percentage of Your Sales Team Has Started Working Remotely for the First Time?



In total, 51.2% of respondents indicated that $\frac{1}{2}$ or more of their team was working remotely for the first time. In contrast, only 8.6% of respondents reported that the majority (75% or more) of their team was continuing to work in the office.

Put in reverse, 91.4% of sellers indicated that at least part (26% or more) of their team was working remotely, meaning the vast plurality of sellers are being exposed to remote work internally.

But how will this play out over time is another question; can we predict the future impact of remote work?



SECTION 2

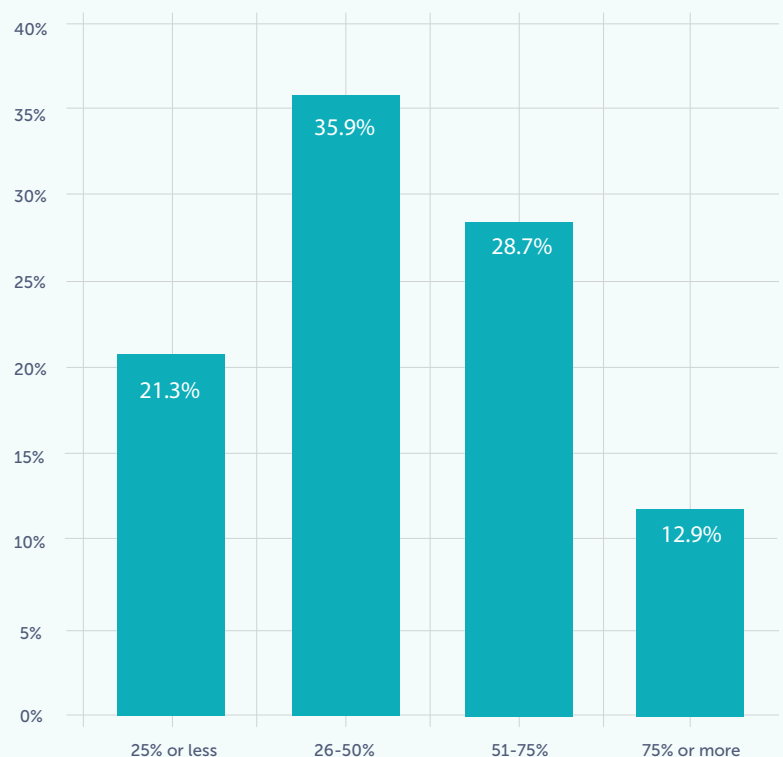
Tomorrow's Marketplace



Few events are so disruptive they change our world forever, but the Covid pandemic is exactly that. Indeed, the abrupt, mass transition to remote work has emerged as a highly consequential outcome of the outbreak.

The magnitude of the transition was affirmed by our respondents when we asked, "What percentage of their sales team do you expect to stay remote permanently?"

What Percentage of Your Sales Team Do You Expect to Stay Remote Permanently?



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The results here are mixed with only 12.9% of respondents indicating that the majority (75% or more) of their team would be staying remote, while 21.3% expect the majority of their team will return to the office. Although it may be tempting to consider the individual responses at either end of the curve, the results are much more pronounced when put together.

When grouped, a whopping 78.7% of respondents said at least part (26% or more) of their team would work remotely on a permanent basis. This implies that organizations aren't considering an all-or-nothing approach to remote work, but rather are planning for a mix of home and office work. The implication is tomorrow's workforce will be comprised of highly dynamic organizations that don't simply exist in an office, but exist wherever their employees choose to work. Assuming this prediction holds true,

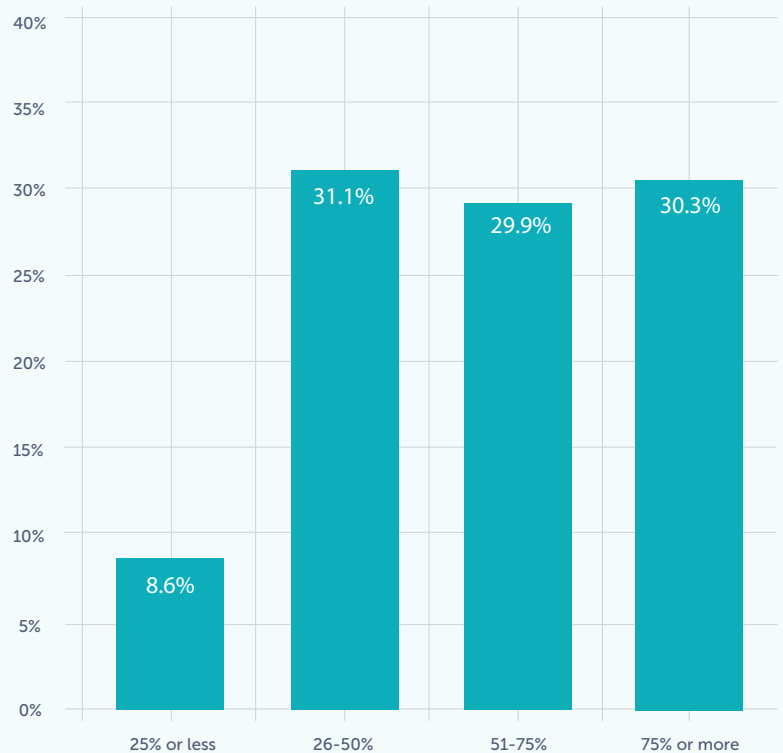


one could infer that tomorrow's buyers will mirror those of today's remote-marketplace.

It then behooves sellers to closely study recent shifts in buyer behavior, especially as they relate to remote work. One area that would naturally lend itself to this study is buyer engagement across [various sales channels](#). To understand those shifts we asked the same set of sales professionals about their experiences reaching buyers, both before and after the pandemic onset.

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What Percentage of Your Sales Team Has Started Working Remotely for the First Time?

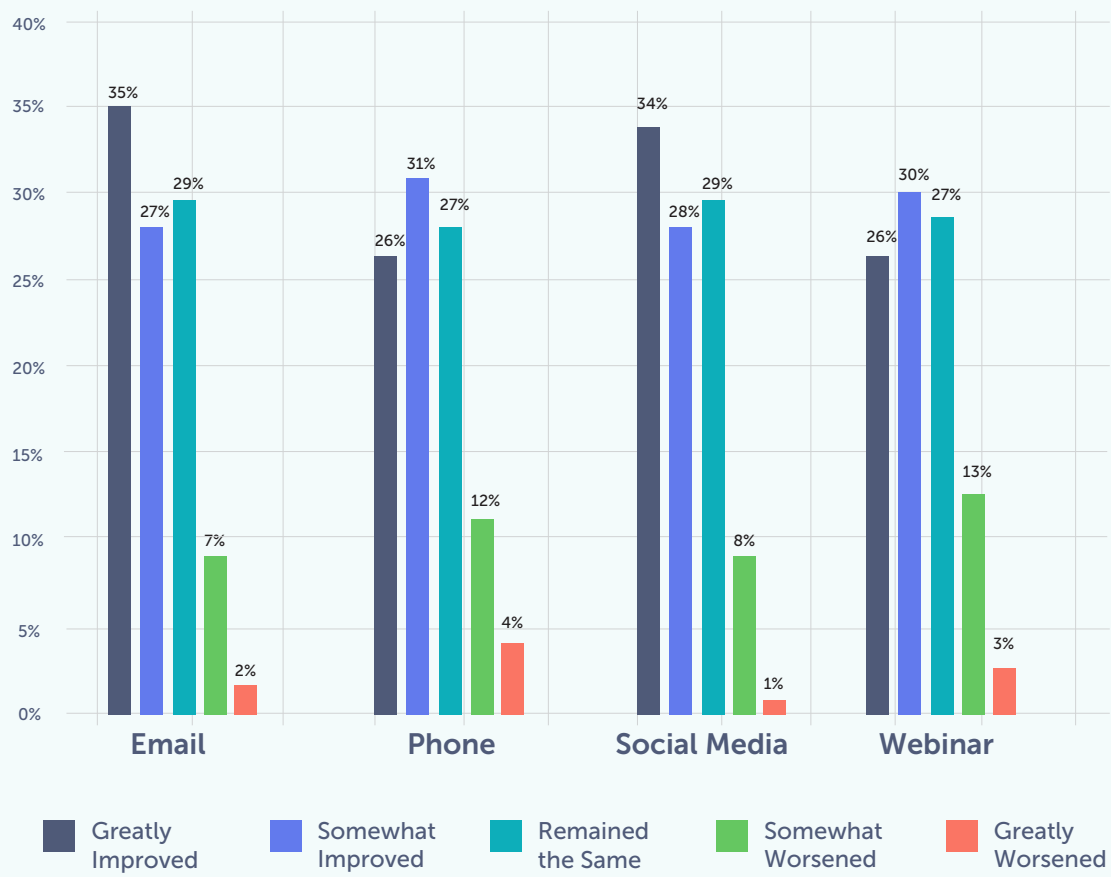


Notably, email and social media were reported by respondents as being their most effective sales channels prior to the crisis, coming in at 31.3%

and 27.5% respectively. Phone was a relatively close third at 22.%, with webinars (13.1%) and other (5.7%) trailing in the distance.

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How Has the Crisis Affected Your Ability to Contact Prospects via:



When discussing tomorrow's marketplace, this is where the rubber meets the road. Interestingly, sellers reported increased buyer engagement across all channels. The surprising result may be a factor of sample bias as we surveyed a quickly

growing industry. To spot future trends in these results, we then need to look at the ratios of improved to worsened when considering various channels.

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As predicted, email and social media saw the biggest gains with respondents saying they had improved success by a roughly 6:1 margin when compared to those who said they had worsened success. Lagging behind was the phone, in which respondents indicated improved success by only a 3.5:1 margin when compared to those who experienced worse outcomes across the same channel.

The upshot? Respondents are finding increased buyer engagement across email and social media, but are not finding the same improved success on the phone. There are several possible reasons for this discrepancy. First, buyers may feel more inclined to engage sellers when working from home, this could be because they are working independently and feel comfortable spending more time on social media or email. Another possibility is that buyers have more time to entertain solicitations because they are no longer



commuting. Finally, buyers could simply be looking for social outlets while isolated at home. For any of these theories to hold true, however, there would need to be a reason that sellers are finding increased engagement on social media and email at a different rate than they are finding success on the phone.

The answer, perhaps, simply comes down to the portability of social media and email when compared to phones. Digital accounts, such as those used for social media and email

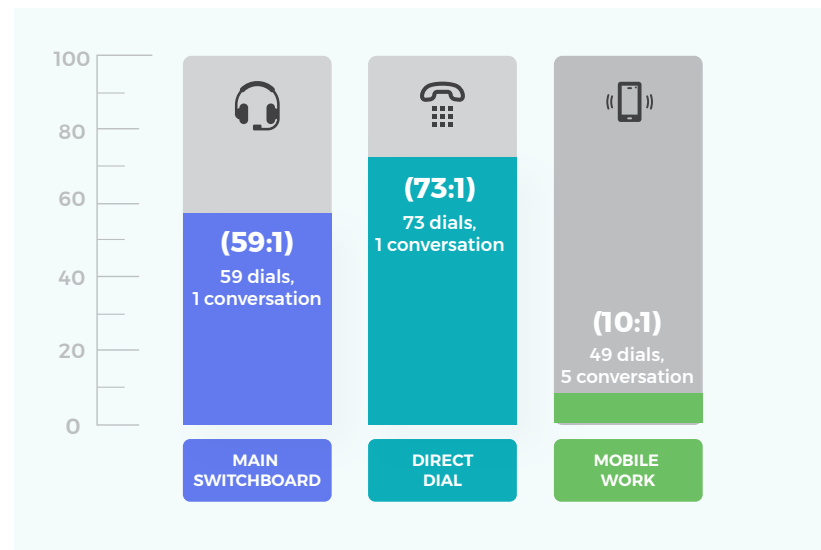
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are easily transferable to a home office, while a phone line may be a more challenging implementation. It could be assumed that organizations were initially wary of transferring work lines to employee computers if they projected a return to the office was likely to happen sooner than later, making buyers less engaged via phone simply because they didn't have the same access to the medium.

If this were true then sellers who could successfully reach buyers via phone at their home office would see an increase in engagement by a similar 6:1 margin (equal to reported improvement via email and social media).

To understand the validity of this hypothesis, we turn to SalesIntel's study on the impact of mobile work numbers on sales-connectivity success. Using mobile work numbers, direct lines, and switchboard as the variables, we called 100+ C-level executives to measure the

dial-to-connect ratio and the results are telling: you are 5x-[7x more likely to reach buyers using a mobile work number](#) when compared to a switchboard and direct lines! This research confirms our hypothesis that buyers aren't less receptive to phone calls in their home office, but they simply lack access to their traditional phone lines. Again, we predicted a 6:1 improvement in phone engagement if we removed accessibility from the equation, which falls directly in line with our findings.



SECTION 3

What It All Means



The data doesn't lie, despite the challenging circumstances for sellers in today's climate, there is real opportunity for executives who can adapt to their buyers' WFH reality.

In fact, small changes in communication channels can have an astounding impact on connectivity. Furthermore, because our findings conclude that remote work is here to stay in one form or another, mobile work numbers are likely to become more prevalent over time. Although this study doesn't look to answer how buyer behavior may change again as buyers become better equipped for remote work, it does prove that there is an enormous opportunity for sellers who are willing to adapt.