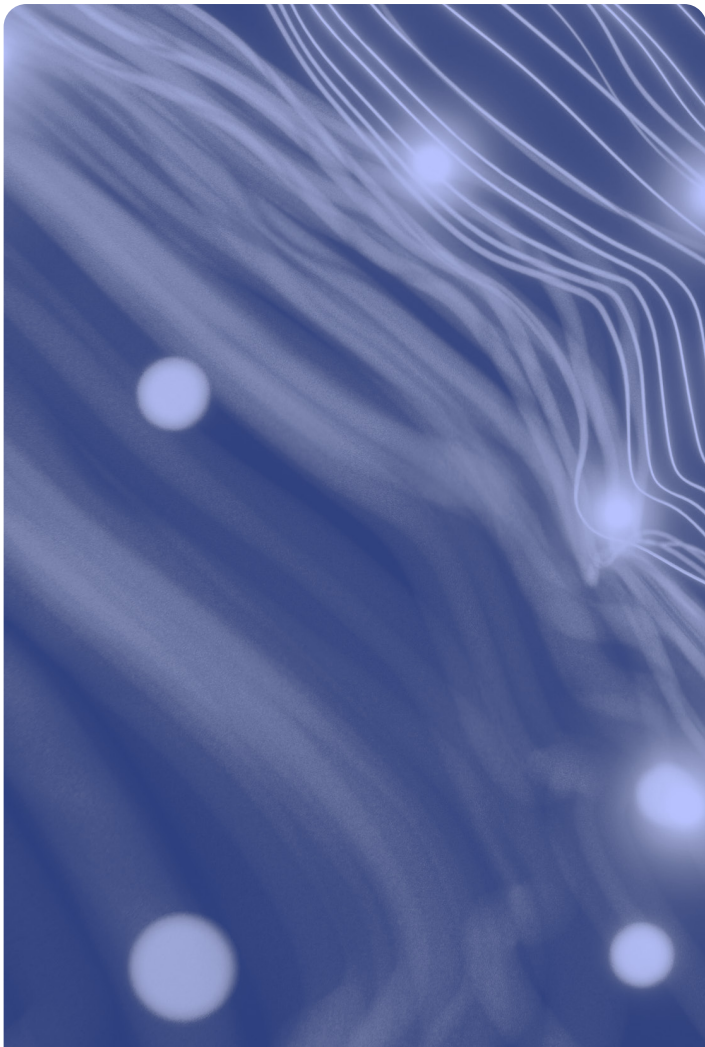


The Data-Driven Sales Leader

How to Use Analytics and Coaching to Build a High-Performing Team



Executive Summary

Sales managers can only review 2% of their team's calls, yet they're accountable for predictable revenue. This visibility gap costs companies 3.2 months in onboarding time and prevents them from scaling top performer behaviours.

Conversation intelligence platforms solve this by analysing 100% of sales conversations, identifying what top performers do differently, and enabling data-driven coaching.

Companies implementing this approach see 33% faster time to proficiency, 30% improvement in closing scores, and 35% increases in sales.

This whitepaper provides a framework for implementing conversation intelligence, based on research across hundreds of organisations.



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1 The Visibility Problem in Sales Management

Traditional sales management operates with a fundamental blind spot. When managers can only sample 2% of their team's conversations, they're making decisions based on incomplete information.

The Real Cost of Limited Visibility

The average sales new hire spends 10 weeks in training and only becomes productive after 11.2 months (Sales Management Association, 2023). During this ramp period, managers rely on gut instinct and anecdotal evidence because they can't listen to enough calls to understand what's actually happening. This creates several problems:

Inconsistent Performance

Research published by Revegy (2023) showed that advancing from an informal to formal coaching programme increased team quota attainment by 24.8%. Yet without visibility into actual conversations, coaching remains subjective and inconsistent.

Slow Skill Development

Reducing onboarding time by just one month can increase a representative's first-year revenue contribution by 15-20% (Salesforce Research, 2024). But without systematic analysis of where new hires struggle, managers can't provide targeted coaching when it matters most.

Unreplicable Success

Your top performers have techniques that work, but without analysing their actual conversations, you can't document what they do differently or teach those behaviours to others.

Reducing onboarding time by just one month can increase a representative's first-year revenue contribution by 15-20%.





Why Traditional Methods Fall Short

Manual call review doesn't scale. Even if a manager listens to five calls per representative per month, that's still only a small sample. Programmes highly rated for structure and consistent application outperform those with low ratings by 37%—reducing average time-to-productivity from 9.1 months to 5.7 months (Sales Management Association, 2018).

The question becomes: How do you systematically identify what works and scale it across your entire team?



2 The New Framework for Sales Performance Management

Conversation intelligence platforms have emerged as a solution to the visibility problem. The global conversation intelligence platform market was valued at USD 6.3 billion in 2023 and is projected to reach USD 26.5 billion by 2033, growing at a CAGR of 15.3% (Future Market Insights, 2024).

Three Pillars of Data-Driven Sales Management

1. Complete Conversation Analysis

Instead of sampling 2% of calls, these systems analyse 100% of conversations—both voice and digital channels. This provides a full picture of team performance, not just a random sample.

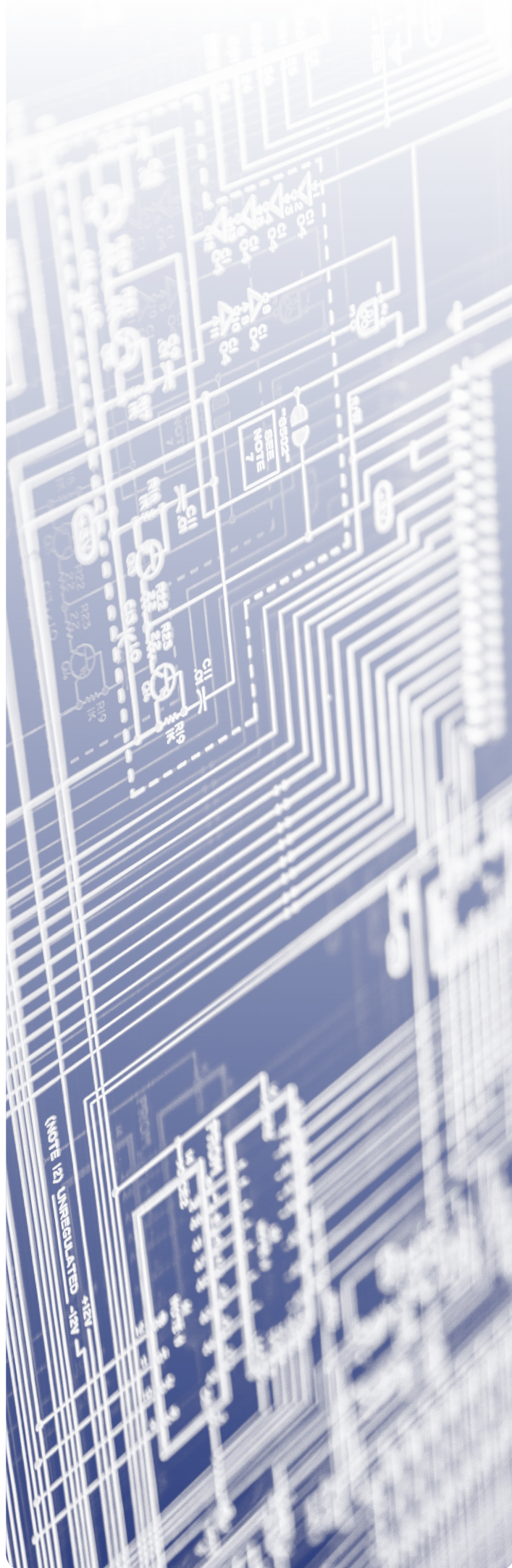
2. Objective Performance Metrics

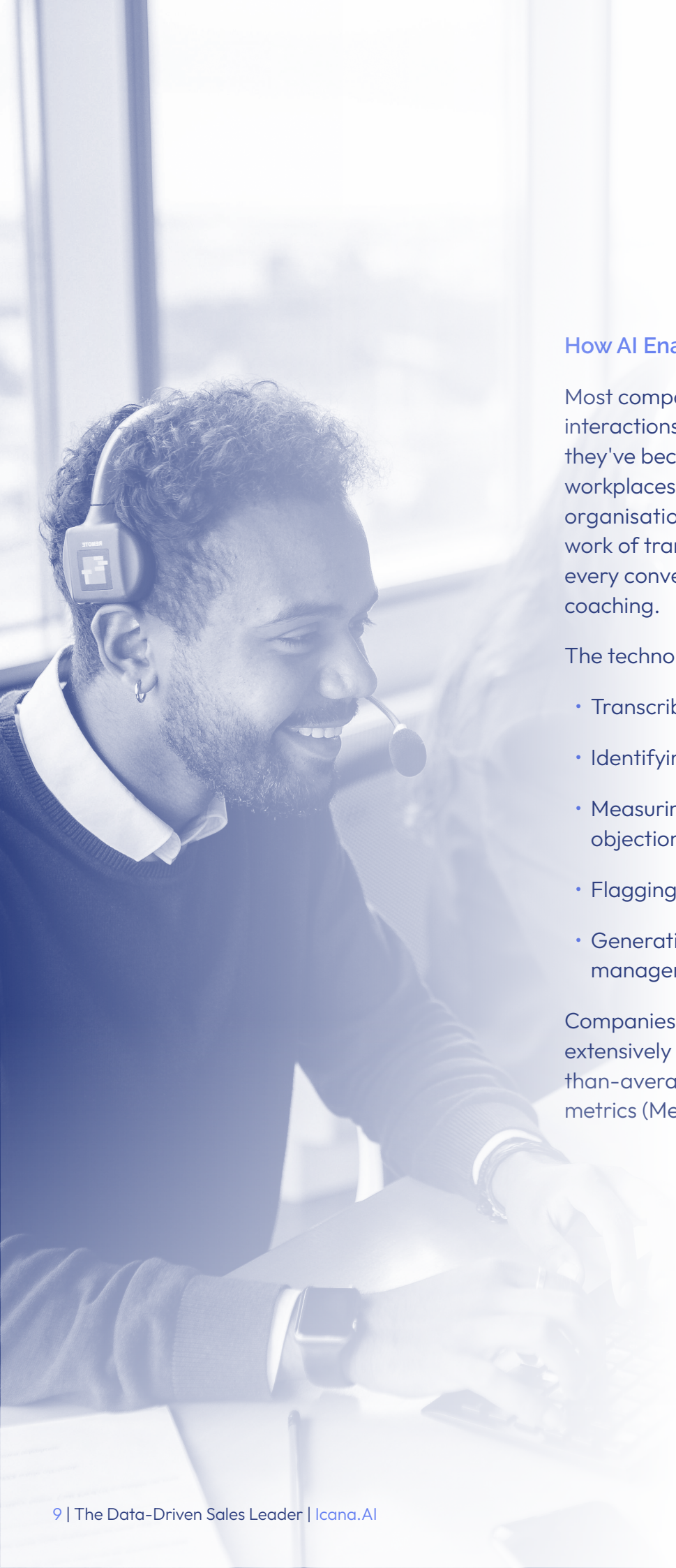
Rather than relying on manager intuition, these platforms measure specific behaviours: talk-to-listen ratios, question patterns, objection handling, and sentiment analysis. This removes subjectivity from coaching conversations.

3. Behaviour Identification and Scaling

By analysing what top performers do differently, you can create a replicable playbook for the rest of your team.

Companies using AI for customer interactions extensively are twice as likely to achieve higher than-average improvements...





How AI Enables Scale

Most companies either use AI for customer interactions or plan to do so, with 82.3% reporting they've become more accepting of AI's use in their workplaces (Metrigy Research, 2024). For sales organisations, AI handles the time-consuming work of transcribing, analysing, and categorising every conversation, freeing managers to focus on coaching.

The technology works by:

- Transcribing calls and chats in real-time
- Identifying keywords, topics, and sentiment
- Measuring talk time, question frequency, and objection handling
- Flagging compliance risks and quality issues
- Generating performance summaries for managers

Companies using AI for customer interactions extensively are twice as likely to achieve higher than-average improvements in business success metrics (Metrigy Research, 2024).



3 Uncovering Insights with Sales Call Analytics

The first step is understanding what's actually happening in your sales conversations. Modern analytics platforms measure dozens of conversation attributes, but several metrics show strong correlation with performance.

Key Metrics That Matter

Talk-to-Listen Ratio

Top performers typically talk less and listen more than average performers. Analytics platforms can measure this precisely across all calls, revealing patterns that indicate active listening versus monologuing.

Question Patterns

Successful discovery calls follow a pattern: open questions early, targeted questions in the middle, and confirming questions before presenting solutions. Analytics can identify whether representatives follow this pattern or skip discovery entirely.

Objection Handling

By analysing how top performers handle common objections—price concerns, timing issues, competitor mentions—you can document effective responses and teach them to your team.

Sentiment and Tone

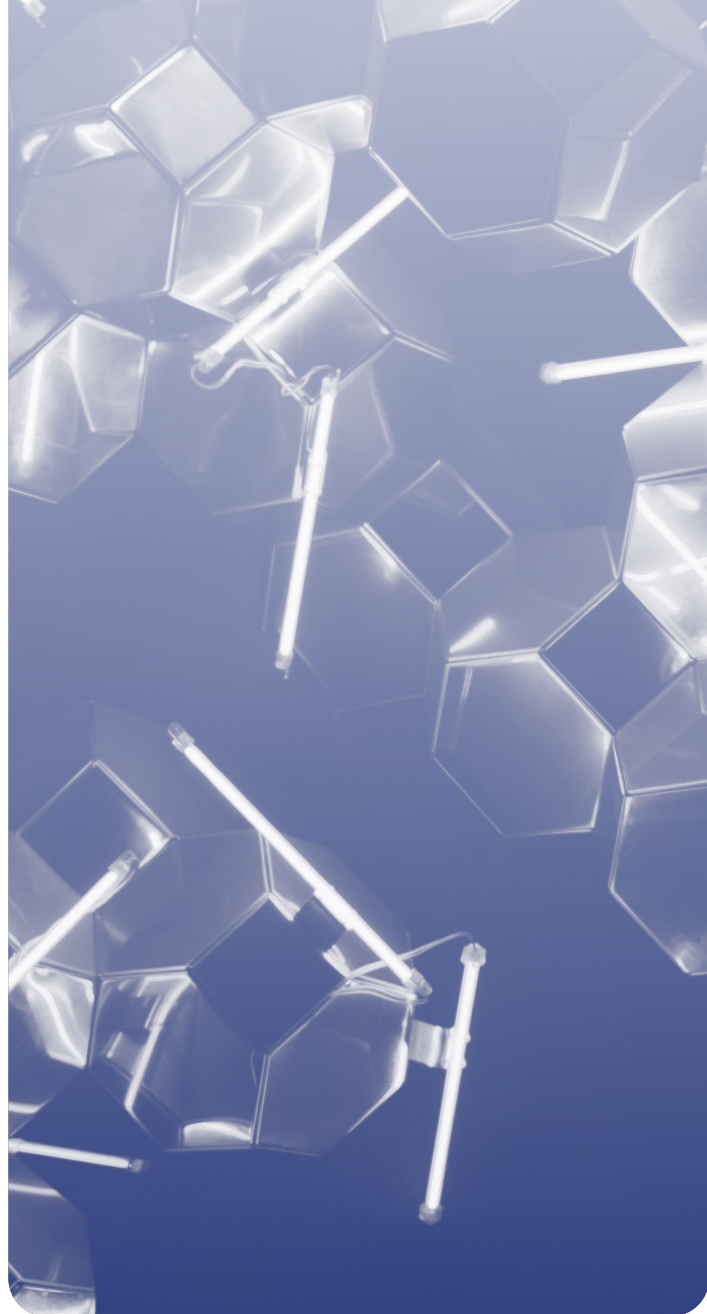
Voice analytics can detect customer engagement, frustration, or enthusiasm. Representatives who maintain positive customer sentiment throughout calls typically have higher close rates.

From Data to Action

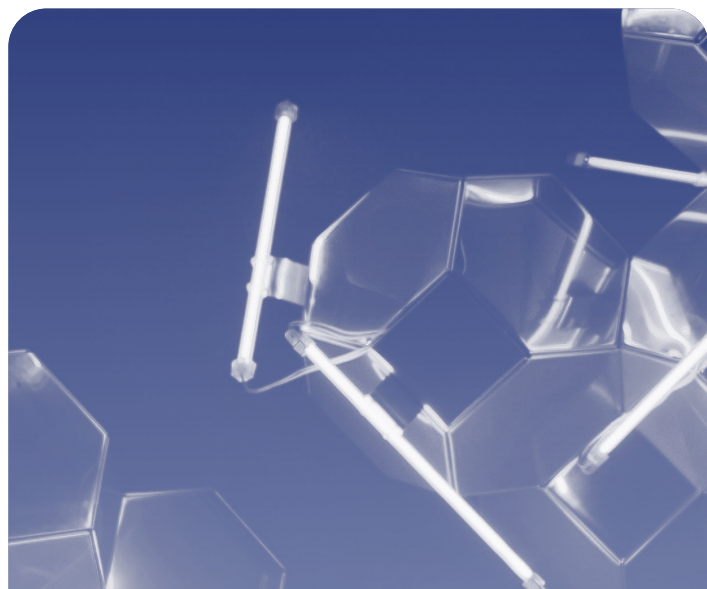
Sales representatives who receive quality coaching report a 19% increase in job satisfaction and can see performance improvements of up to 25% (SiriusDecisions, 2024). But coaching only works when it's based on specific, observable behaviours rather than vague feedback.

Example: Instead of saying "work on your discovery," you can say "your average question count in discovery calls is 3, while top performers ask 8-12 questions. Let's listen to three of your calls together and identify opportunities to dig deeper."

This level of specificity transforms coaching from opinion to fact-based skill development.



19% increase in job satisfaction and can see performance improvements of up to 25%



A low-angle, upward-looking photograph of several modern skyscrapers with glass facades, set against a clear blue sky. The perspective creates a sense of height and architectural scale.

4 Actionable Sales Call Reporting

Data without action is meaningless. Effective reporting systems deliver insights that managers and representatives can immediately act upon.

What Good Reporting Looks Like

Daily Performance Summaries

Research has demonstrated that interruptions during complex work significantly increase stress, frustration, and error rates (Gloria Mark, UC Irvine). Rather than interrupting representatives mid-call with real-time prompts, effective systems deliver daily summaries at natural workflow breaks.

These summaries should show:

- Yesterday's call quality scores
- Specific behaviours to improve
- Comparison to team benchmarks
- Trending performance over time
- Individual Skill Tracking

Generic team reports aren't actionable. Representatives need to see their own metrics: How many discovery questions did I ask? What was my talk-to-listen ratio? Did I handle objections effectively?



Manager Coaching Dashboards

Managers need quick visibility into who needs coaching and what to focus on.

Effective dashboards highlight:

- Representatives below team average on key metrics
- Common skill gaps across the team
- Top performers' techniques to replicate

Evidence of Impact

Companies using AI for quality management can analyse 100% of interactions rather than a small sample, leading to measurable improvements including a 31.0% reduction in time spent on after-call work and a 29.5% improvement in average handle time (Metrigy Research, 2024).

Across conversation intelligence implementations, organisations typically see:

- 33% faster time to proficiency for new hires
- 30% improvement in closing scores within the first quarter
- 35% increase in sales through scaling winning behaviours

These results reflect aggregate anonymised data across multiple implementations and require consistent application of data-driven coaching practices. The key is timing. Feedback delivered the next morning—when representatives can reflect and adjust—is more effective than real-time interruptions that divide attention during customer conversations.



5 Effective Sales Call Coaching

Companies with dynamic sales coaching programmes achieve 28% higher win rates, and formal coaching processes see 91% quota attainment compared to 85% for informal approaches (CSO Insights, 2024). But what makes coaching "effective"?

...sales win rates rose from 43% to 56%.

The Evidence-Based Coaching Framework

1. Use Specific Call Examples

Instead of abstract feedback, play actual call recordings. "In yesterday's call with ABC Company at 2:15pm, you asked only two discovery questions before presenting. Let's compare that to Sarah's call where she asked nine questions and learned the customer's budget constraints before ever mentioning price."

2. Focus on Measurable Behaviours

According to Aberdeen Research (2020), companies that provide deal-specific sales coaching increased revenue by 8.4% year-over-year—a 95% improvement over companies that don't provide that level of coaching.

Coach on things you can measure and the representative can control:

Number of questions asked in discovery

- Percentage of talk time versus listen time
- Response time to objections
- Sentiment maintenance throughout the call

3. Create Individual Development Plans

Representatives with individual development programmes and career paths based on their skills see 25% better outcomes (ValueSelling Associates, 2024). Use analytics to identify each person's specific gaps and create targeted improvement plans.

4. Track Progress Over Time
High-quality coaching can elevate the quota attainment of the middle 60% of performers by up to 19% (Harvard Business Review, 2020). Show representatives their improvement: "Three weeks ago, your average question count was 3. Last week it was 7. You're now above the team average of 6."

Coaching Frequency Matters

When coaching increased from less than 30 minutes per resource per week to over 2 hours per resource per week, sales win rates rose from 43% to 56% (Revegy, 2023). But it's not just about time—it's about quality and consistency. 96% of sales leaders agree that coaching influences quota attainment, yet 82% of sales representatives state that coaching is critical to their success (MySalesCoach, 2024). The gap between importance and execution is where many organisations fail.



6 Sales Performance Management Best Practices

Based on research across hundreds of organisations, several practices consistently correlate with success.

Best Practice 1: Start with Clear Benchmarks

Companies with consistent sales coaching and impact measurement see 32% higher win rates and 28% higher quota attainment (Korn Ferry, 2024). Before you coach, you need to know what "good" looks like.


Establish benchmarks by:

Analysing your top 20% of performers
Identifying their common behaviours

Setting these as team standards Measuring
everyone against these standards

Best Practice 2: Focus on the Middle 60%

A 5% increase from the middle 60% of the salesforce delivered 80% more revenue than a 5% increase from the top 10% (Sales Executive Council, 2019). Your highest ROI comes from elevating average performers, not trying to make top performers slightly better.



**...32% higher win rates
and 28% higher quota
attainment.**



AI reduces the time required for after-call work for 48.8% of companies...

Best Practice 3:

Make Coaching Data-Driven, Not Punitive

Representatives who rate their coaching as excellent or very good are 50% more likely to achieve quota (MySalesCoach, 2024). But this only works when coaching is positioned as development, not surveillance.

Frame the conversation: “The data shows you’re doing these three things really well. Let’s work on improving your objection handling, where you’re slightly below team average. Here’s what top performers do differently.”

Best Practice 4:

Invest in Manager Training

60% of sales representatives say they’re more likely to leave their job if their manager is a poor coach (Center for Sales Strategy, 2024). Giving managers access to conversation intelligence data without teaching them how to coach is like giving someone a Ferrari without driving lessons.

Effective manager training includes:

- How to interpret analytics data
- Coaching conversation frameworks
- How to give constructive feedback
- How to create development plans
- Best Practice 5: Automate What You Can

AI reduces the time required for after-call work for 48.8% of companies and shortens interaction time for 49.2% (Metrigy Research, 2024). Let technology handle transcription, basic analysis, and report generation so managers can focus on the human elements of coaching.

7 Fast-track Implementation: 8 Weeks to Results

Successfully implementing conversation intelligence requires careful planning, cultural change management, and realistic expectations. This section combines strategic planning, cultural transformation, and tactical execution into a cohesive implementation guide.



Understanding What You're Buying Into

Investment Requirements Total cost of ownership for conversation intelligence platforms typically starts at under \$50,000 annually for mid-sized teams. While this represents a small fraction of most sales budgets, implementation requires more than financial investment—it demands time, attention, and organisational commitment.

When It Makes Sense

This approach delivers strongest ROI for sales teams of 5+ representatives. For smaller teams where people already work closely together and managers can observe most interactions, the overhead may outweigh the benefits. In high-performing small teams, people often trump

process.

Technology Quality Matters

Not all conversation intelligence platforms are created equal. Poor transcript quality, inability to handle diverse accents, or missing tone-of-voice analysis can produce misleading data that damages rather than improves performance. Evaluate platforms carefully based on:

Transcription accuracy across your team's communication patterns

- Tone and sentiment analysis capabilities
- Integration with existing systems
- Analytics depth and customisation options

Week 1: Stakeholder Alignment

- Secure executive sponsorship and budget approval
- Define success metrics (align with existing KPIs)
- Identify initial teams (20-40 representatives across 2-3 teams)
- Address privacy and compliance requirements
- Communicate the "why" to your teams

Weeks 2-3: Technical Setup

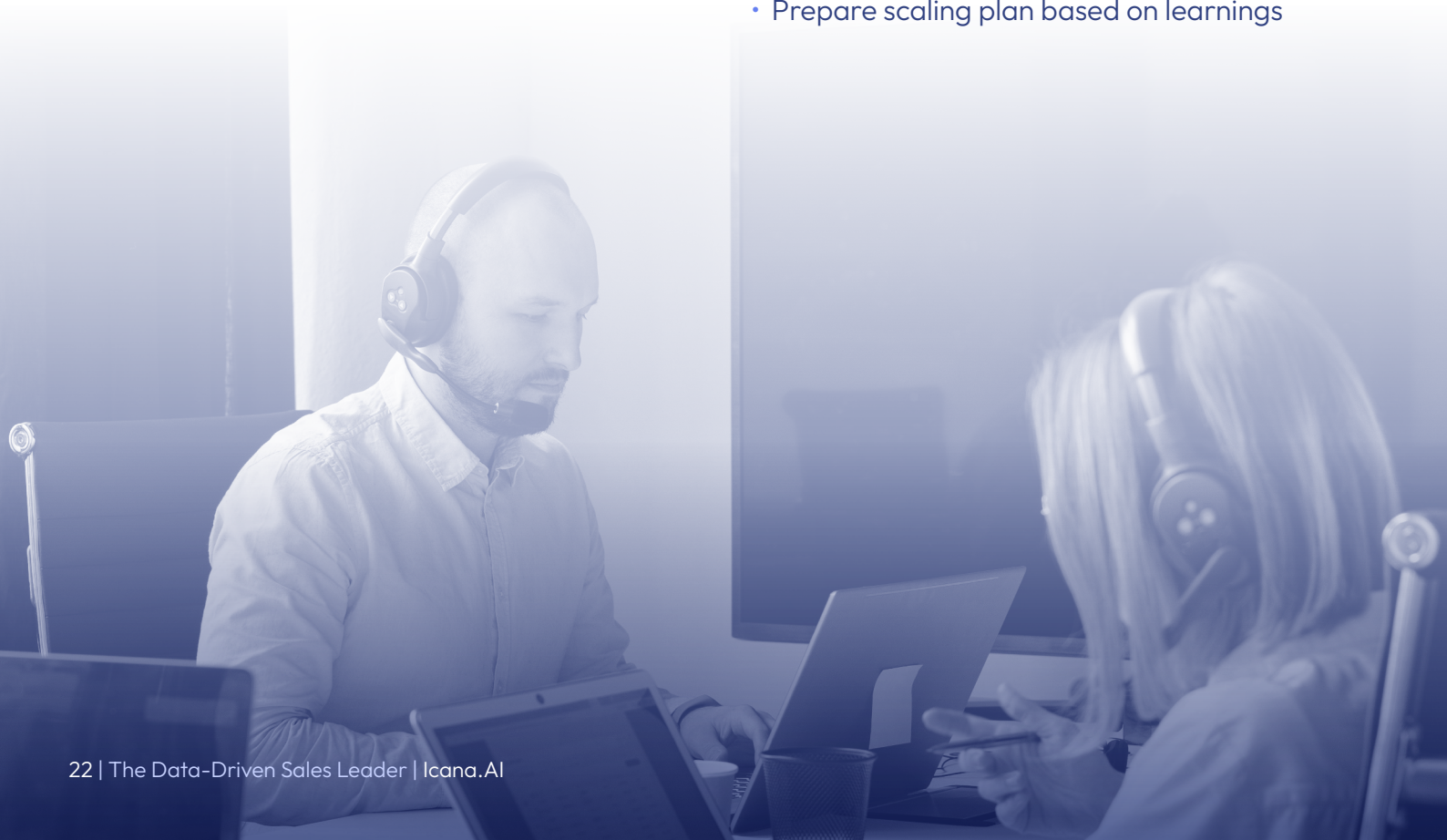
- Integrate with existing CRM and phone systems
- Configure initial evaluation criteria (start with 3-4 key behaviours)
- Set up manager and representative dashboards
- Conduct training sessions for managers and reps

Weeks 4-5: Data Collection and Metric Tuning

- Record and analyse all initial team calls
- Review sample analytics with managers
- Refine evaluation criteria based on what you learn
- Identify early patterns in top performer behaviours
- Start immediately: Use call reports to find winning calls and discuss them in team meetings

Weeks 6-8: Active Coaching

- Establish weekly coaching cadence
- Track performance metrics across initial teams
- Gather feedback from managers and representatives
- Document and share early success stories
- Prepare scaling plan based on learnings





Beyond Week 8: Iterative Expansion

- Roll out to additional teams progressively (one team every 2-3 weeks)
- Continue refining coaching practices based on data
- Build library of best-practice call examples
- Train additional managers as you expand
- Review metrics monthly to identify new coaching opportunities
- Update evaluation criteria as your sales process evolves

Success Indicators by Week 8:

- Managers conducting 2+ coaching sessions per rep per month
- Representatives accessing their own analytics regularly
- At least 3 documented examples of behaviour improvement
- Positive feedback from 70%+ of participants
- Companies with formal onboarding processes see 60.7% of representatives reach full productivity within the first 6 months (Sales Management Association, 2023). With this accelerated approach, you should see early indicators of improvement within the first 8 weeks.

Building the Right Culture

Technology enables data-driven coaching, but culture determines whether people embrace it or resist it.

Address Privacy Concerns Upfront

Be transparent about what's being recorded, how data is used, and who has access. Data privacy concerns are cited as a major factor limiting adoption of conversation intelligence technology (Business Research Insights, 2024).

Involve the Team in Metric Selection

When representatives help choose which behaviours to measure, they're more likely to see the system as developmental rather than punitive.

Share Success Stories

Highlight representatives who improved their metrics and achieved better results.

"Jamie increased her discovery question count from 4 to 9 over six weeks and her close rate improved from 18% to 27%."

From Individual Improvement to Team Learning

Structured mentorship programmes can reduce onboarding time by up to 37% compared to traditional training-only approaches (CSO Insights, 2024). When you document what works through conversation analysis, you can:

- Create libraries of effective call examples
- Build training modules around actual conversations
- Enable peer learning by sharing best practices
- Update training as you discover new techniques

Companies see 2x seller engagement and almost 30% reduced voluntary turnover when they have consistent coaching programmes (Korn Ferry, 2024).

**...reduce onboarding
time by up to 37%**

Common Pitfalls to Avoid

Pitfall 1: Technology Without Training

Too often, sales managers do not receive the training they need to be effective coaches (Training Industry, 2021). Budget time and resources for manager development.

Pitfall 2: Too Many Metrics

Start with 3-5 key behaviours. You can always expand later.

Pitfall 3: Real-Time Prompts That Distract

Research by Gloria Mark at UC Irvine has demonstrated that interruptions during complex work—even momentary ones—significantly increase stress, frustration, and error rates. When representatives are mid-call, managing customer interactions and navigating CRM systems, real-time prompts and alerts create additional cognitive load that can derail performance rather than improve it.

Effective systems deliver insights at natural breaks in the workflow. Start-of-day reporting allows representatives to review their performance from the previous day, identify areas for improvement, and set goals for the day ahead—all without the pressure of immediate action during customer conversations.

Pitfall 4: Ignoring Change Management

More than two-thirds of employees reporting to a manager who is not a good coach are considering quitting their jobs (Center for Sales Strategy, 2024). How you position and implement this technology matters as much as the technology itself.

Pitfall 5: Focusing Only on Weak Performers

Also analyse and document what your best people do well. This creates positive examples and removes the punitive feeling.

Pitfall 6: Expecting Immediate Results

Behavioural change takes time. Look for leading indicators (increased coaching frequency, improved manager-rep relationships) before expecting lagging indicators (quota attainment) to shift.





8 Case Study: Open Universities Australia

Open Universities Australia (OUA), Australia's leading online higher education platform, sought to improve student engagement quality whilst scaling operations.

The Challenge

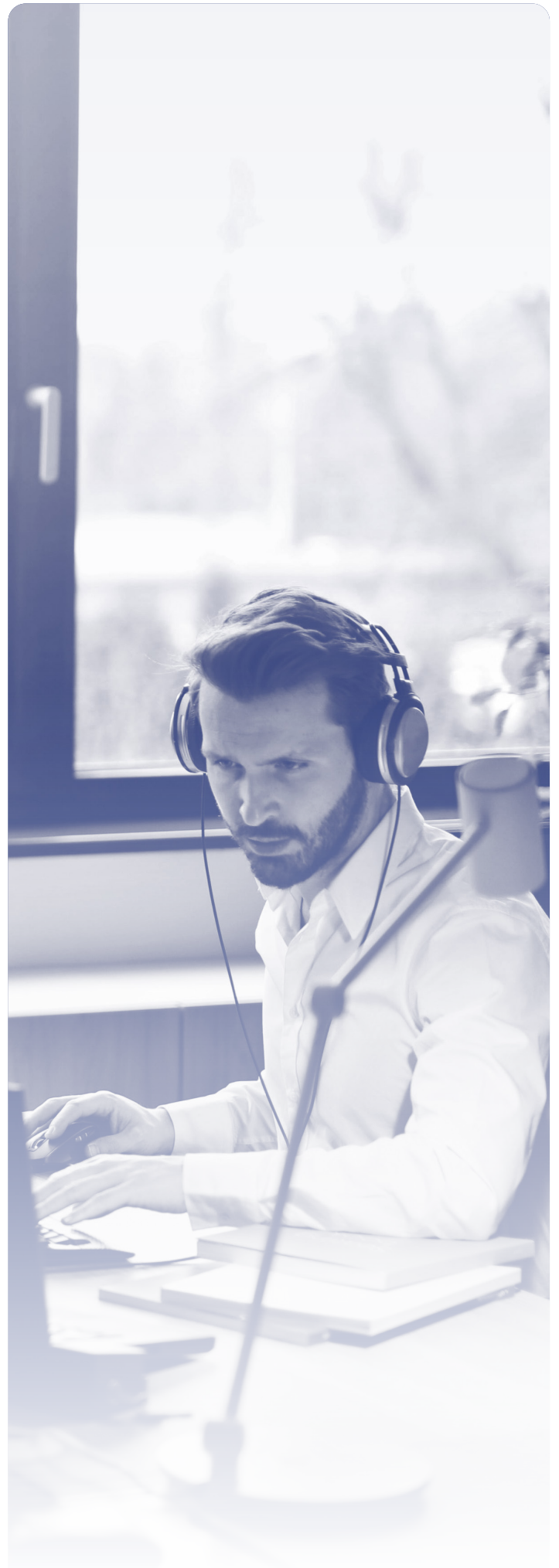
Before implementing conversation intelligence, OUA faced typical scaling challenges:

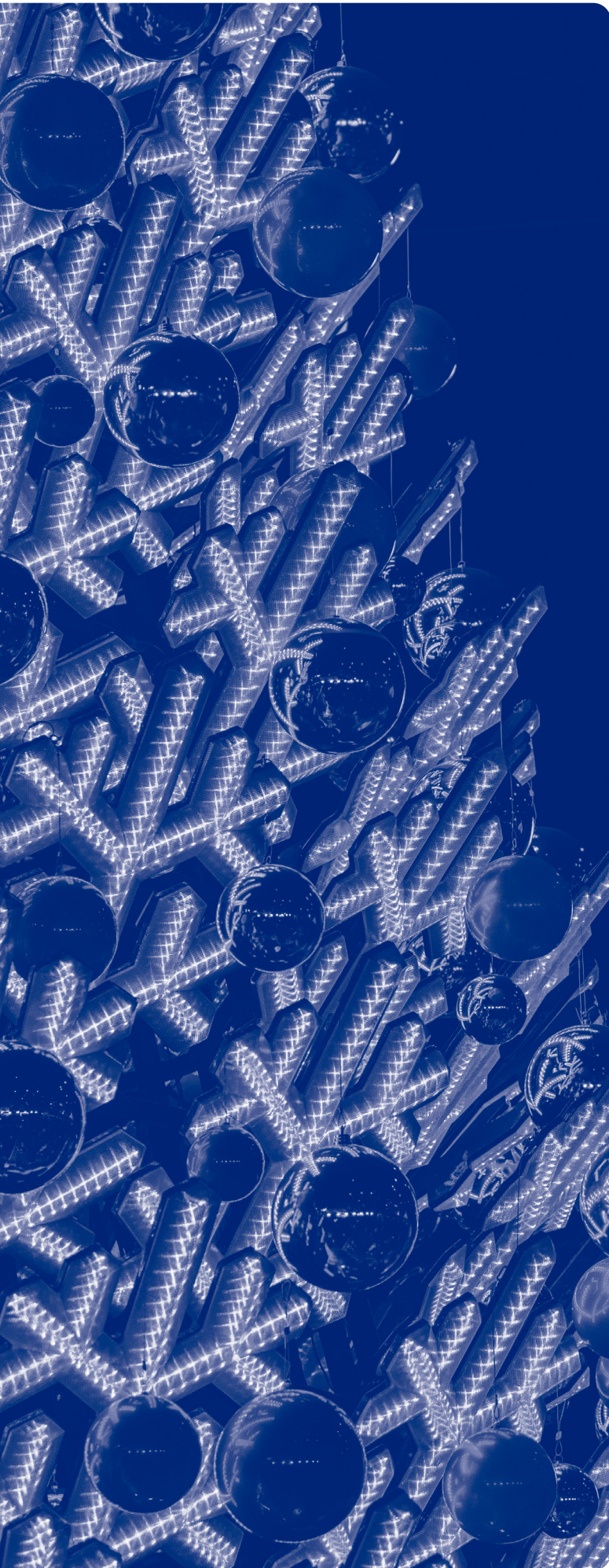
- Manual quality assurance could only review a small fraction of calls
- Six-week onboarding time for new student advisers
- Limited visibility into what separated top performers from average ones
- Difficulty providing consistent, evidence-based coaching

The Solution

OUA deployed a conversation intelligence platform to analyse 100% of student interactions. The platform's adaptability was important—OUA customised evaluation criteria to match their specific student engagement goals.

Rachit Monga, Head of Student Recruitment, explained: "One key consideration for us was the extensive configuration options, allowing us to tailor it to our processes."





The Results

Within two months, OUA achieved measurable improvements:

Faster Time to Proficiency

New hire ramp time dropped from six weeks to four weeks—a 33% reduction. This meant new advisers were contributing value significantly faster.

Complete Visibility

The shift from reviewing a small sample to analysing 100% of calls provided managers with unprecedented insight into every student interaction.

Measurable Quality Improvements

OUA achieved a 10-15% enhancement in key quality metrics, including communication effectiveness and tone assessment.

Monga noted: "With AI analysing every call, we have unprecedented visibility into our student interactions. This oversight is a game-changer."

Key Learnings

OUA's success came from several factors:

- Executive sponsorship (CEO Stuart Elmslie championed the initiative)
- Customisation to match their specific processes
- Positioning technology as enabling managers to focus on high-value coaching
- Measuring and communicating early wins to build momentum

**New hire ramp
time dropped
from six weeks to
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Conclusion

The evidence is clear: Companies that incorporated AI into their sales coaching activities achieved 3.3x year-over-year growth in overall sales team quota attainment compared with companies using AI without sales training (ValueSelling Associates, 2024).

The Business Case

The ROI of conversation intelligence and data-driven coaching is measurable:

- Companies achieve an ROI equal to 7 times the initial investment in coaching programmes (ICF/PricewaterhouseCoopers, 2023) 3
- 5% increase in sales through scaling winning behaviours (client data across conversation intelligence implementations)
- 25-30% faster time to productivity through data-driven coaching (Gartner, 2024) 32% higher win rates and 28% higher quota attainment with consistent coaching (Korn Ferry, 2024)

Beyond the Numbers

The real transformation isn't just in metrics—it's in fundamentally changing how sales

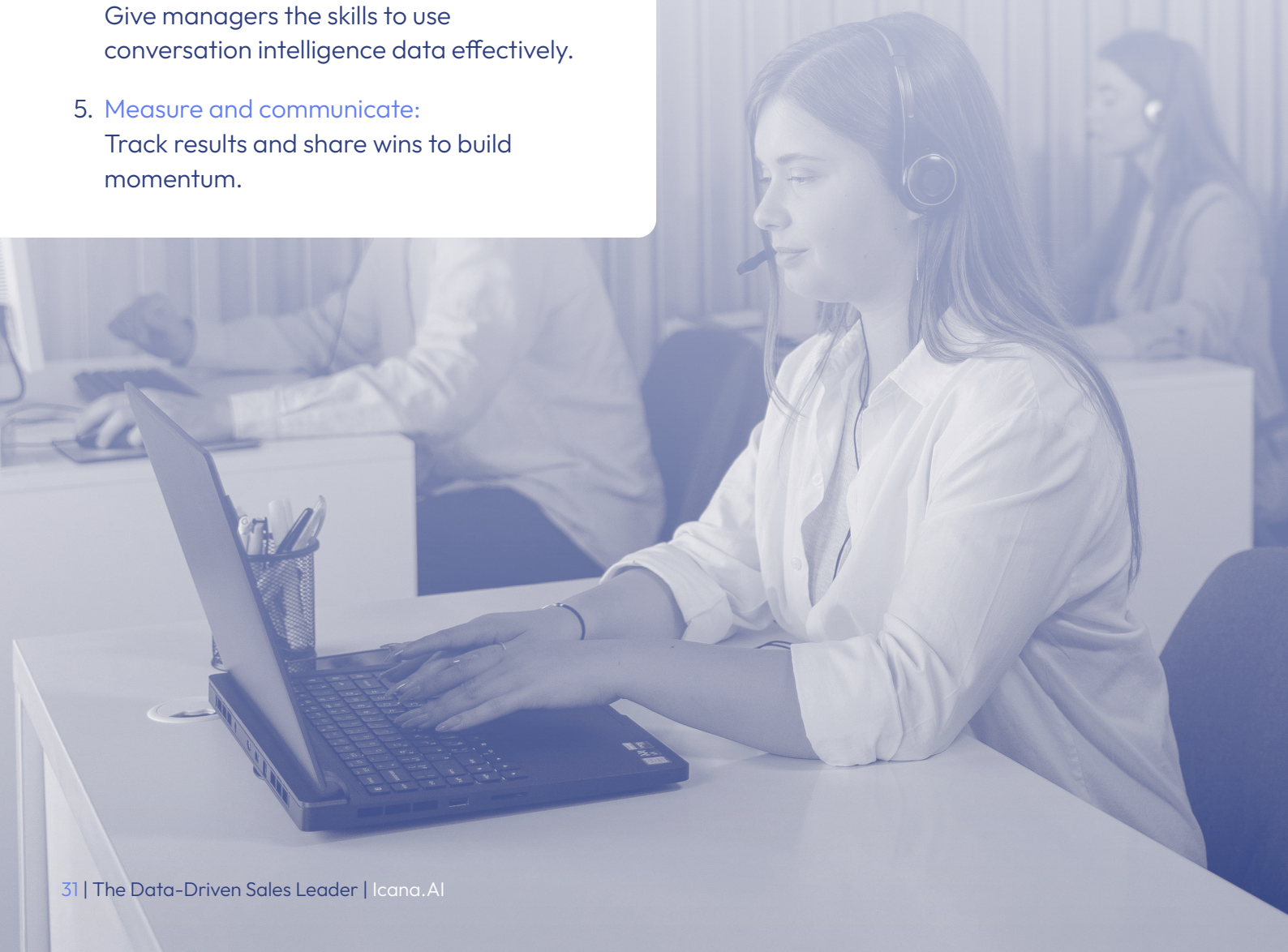
organisations operate. Instead of guessing what works, you know. Instead of anecdotal coaching, you provide specific, actionable feedback. Instead of hoping new hires will figure it out, you show them exactly what success looks like.

3.3x
year-over-year
growth in overall
sales

5% increase in sales
through scaling...
... 25-30% faster
time to productivity

Your Next Steps

1. **Assess your current state:**
How much of your team's conversations can you currently review? How consistent is your coaching?
2. **Define success metrics:**
What would "good" look like? Which behaviours correlate with your team's success?
3. **Start small:**
Pilot with a single team.
Learn what works before scaling.
4. **Invest in coaching training:**
Give managers the skills to use conversation intelligence data effectively.
5. **Measure and communicate:**
Track results and share wins to build momentum.

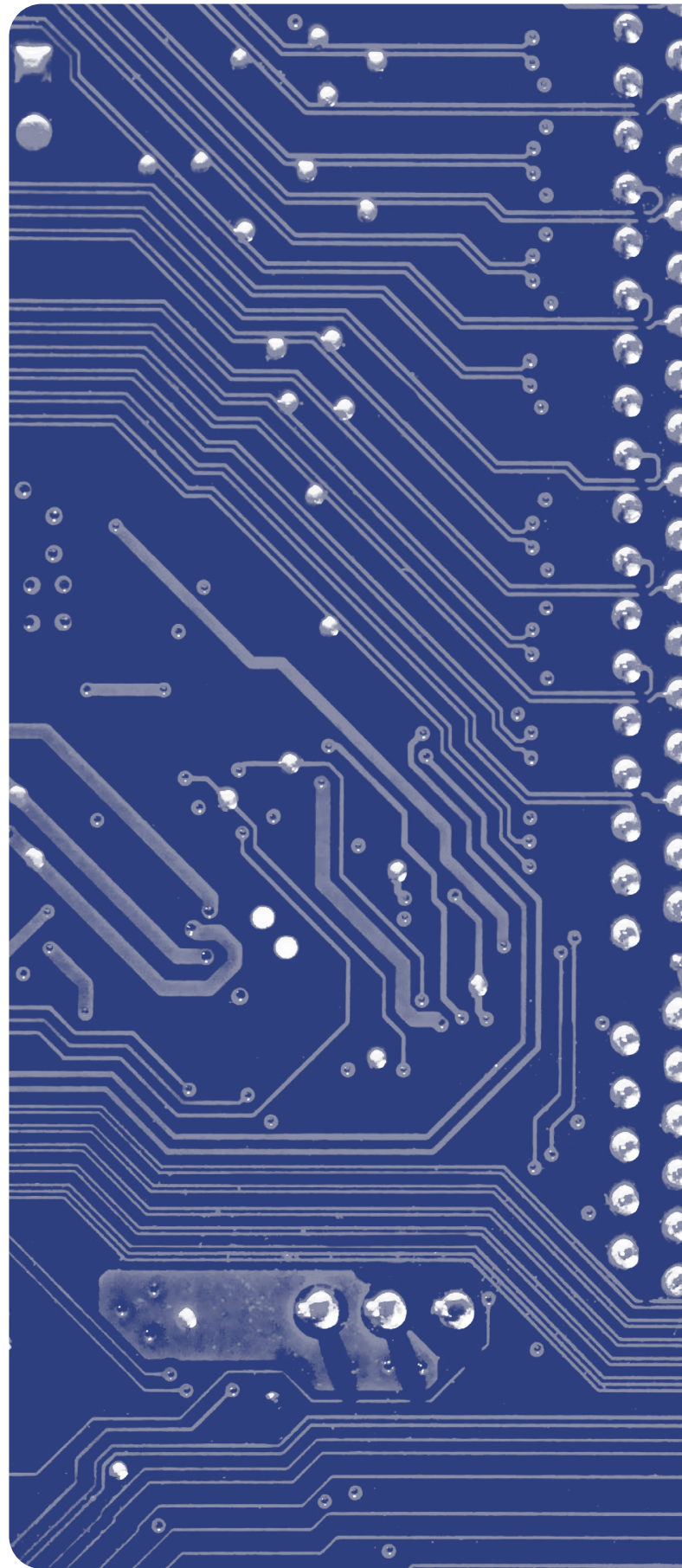


About Icana.AI and CallCoach

Founded in Australia, Icana.AI develops conversation intelligence technology for sales and service teams. CallCoach analyses 100% of customer interactions, identifies patterns that drive success, and provides the insights managers need for effective coaching.

CallCoach was specifically designed for the Australian market and is used by organisations like Open Universities Australia to improve performance, accelerate onboarding, and scale winning behaviours across their teams.

To learn more about how CallCoach can help your sales team, visit icana.ai/products/callcoach.html or contact us to schedule a demonstration.



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Through Manager Coaching"

ValueSelling Associates (2024).
"The ROI of Combining AI & Sales Coaching"

Client data referenced (33% time to proficiency
reduction, 30% closing score improvement,

35% sales increase) reflects aggregate
anonymised results observed across conversation
intelligence platform implementations, including
Icana.AI's CallCoach customer base.