Four families of commercial problems. Only some of them need AI.

GROWTH

Key accounts erode slowly; innovation projects convert late

Share-of-wallet erosion, cross-sell, account priorities, sample-to-sales

Analytics · ML / optimization · Process & governance

MARGIN

Price increases and cost pass-through are only partly realized

Price realization, discount leakage, rebates, raw-material pass-through

Analytics · ML / optimization · GenAI / RAG

SALES EXECUTION

Reviews explain the gap; few end with an owned action

Performance reviews, forecasting, resource allocation, opportunity management

Process & governance · Analytics · ML / optimization

PRODUCTIVITY & KNOWLEDGE

RFQs, specs and orders arrive as documents, re-keyed by hand

RFQs and tenders, quote-to-order, technical search, admin load

GenAI / RAG · Workflow · Analytics

Before any model: one customer hierarchy, invoice-level net prices, a named owner per action, incentives that reward margin.

84% of sales leaders say analytics influenced performance less than expected

Filled: main answer · Outlined: supporting · Source: Gartner survey of 303 sales leaders, published February 2024

Five opportunities stand out, but AI plays a different role in each

Prioritize business value first; use AI only where it materially improves the decision or workflow.

OPPORTUNITY	BUSINESS VALUE	ROLE OF AI		EVIDENCE
Margin Bridge & Price Realization	Protect margin: price realization, pass-through, leakage	AI-ENHANCED	Price corridors · contract extraction	**ESTABLISHED**
Quote-to-Order & Technical RFQ	Reduce response time and expert workload	AI-CORE	Document understanding · RAG · drafting	EMERGING
Key Account Share-of-Wallet Erosion	Retain and grow strategic accounts	AI-ENHANCED	Erosion signals · prioritization	LIMITED
Commercial Performance Cockpit	Move faster from performance gap to owned action	ANALYTICS-LED	Explanation · action prioritization	ESTABLISHED*
Sample-to-Commercial Conversion	Convert more innovation with scarce technical capacity	AI-ENHANCED	Project scoring · brief structuring	LIMITED

*Established for performance management; AI contribution less proven.

The strongest business case is not necessarily the one with the most AI.

Not prioritized as standalone demonstrators: Pipeline Coach · Distributor Performance Engine

Start with price realization: direct P&L impact, testable in a 90-day pilot

BUILD NOW · MARGIN

Margin Bridge & Price Realization Engine

- Starts from the gap to budget: price, volume, mix
- Runs on invoice data, the most reliable in the firm
- AI suggests price corridors and reads contracts; people decide
- Peer-reviewed B2B field experiment: +11% profit on treated quotes

Source: Marketing Science, 2024

Opens with the performance cockpit

BUILD NEXT · PRODUCTIVITY / GROWTH

Quote-to-Order & Technical RFQ Copilot

The clearest GenAI case, measured in lead time and expert hours

Key Account Share-of-Wallet Erosion

Growth, and the change management that comes with KAMs

SECTOR-SPECIFIC · INNOVATION

Sample-to-Commercial Conversion

For ingredients, F&F and specialty chemicals

Evidence still emerging

SAME DECISION LOOP FOR EVERY DEMONSTRATOR



Each demonstrator is judged on one test: can a commercial decision be traced from signal to measured value?