

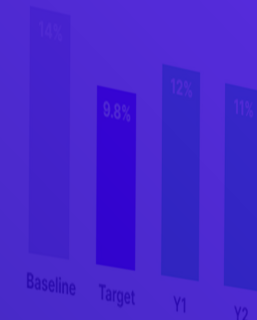


# Transforming Value Selling with Collaboration and AI

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11% (Current)

Percent of Time Spent Collaborating



# Executive Summary

In the evolving landscape of B2B sales, the conventional practice of value selling is being transformed by the advent of artificial intelligence (AI) and collaborative strategies. This white paper presents the findings from a comprehensive study centered on the integration of AI and collaboration in value-selling processes, revealing the empirical influence of these components on deal closure rates and offering a new paradigm for sales strategies in the digital age.



**Michael Plaskow**

Chief Product Officer at Ecosystems

## Key Takeaways

### Win with Collaboration

There's a significant correlation between collaboration, both internally within sales teams and externally with customers, and the likelihood of closing deals.

Internal collaboration increases the odds by 2.4x, while external collaboration increases it by 3.4x.

### Tailor Your Value Proposition

Customizing value propositions based on customer contexts is essential. The level of tailoring in value assessments positively correlates with sales achievements, emphasizing the importance of customer-centricity.

### Value is More Than ROI

Traditional metrics like ROI don't strongly correlate with winning deals. The effectiveness of value selling relies more on qualitative engagement than quantitative assessments.

### Harness AI to Reinforce Best Practices

Leveraging AI can significantly enhance sales outcomes. By analyzing data from value assessments, AI can accurately predict outcomes and provide guidance to sellers, improving their chances of success. Needing only visibility into value assessment activity, machine learning proved to accurately predict the outcome for more than two out of three deals (68% accuracy).

# Introduction

The objective of this study was to empirically investigate effective behaviors in B2B sales opportunities leveraging a value assessment and the effects of collaboration (both internal within sales teams and external with customers) on the success rates of deals. With a growing emphasis on data-driven approaches in sales, this research aimed to provide actionable insights that organizations can leverage to enhance their value-selling efforts.

## Methodology

The study analyzed an anonymized data set of 2,960 sales opportunities from five mature B2B SaaS technology providers of varying sizes (\$300M to \$8B). All opportunities involved a value-based sales approach and were associated with a definitive sales outcome. In other words, clarity on if the deal was won or lost. Key variables examined included the following data related to the value assessment tied to each opportunity:

- Collaborators (internal versus external)
- Number of collaborators who only viewed (internal versus external)
- Number of collaborators who modified inputs (internal versus external)
- Total views (internal versus external)
- Total number of changes to value assessment inputs (internal versus external)
- Number of quantified benefits
- Number of quantified benefits with inputs that were changed
- Event timing (create date of value assessment versus create and close dates of opportunity)
- Investment and financial metrics (ROI, NPV, Cost of Delay, IRR)

Through training machine learning algorithms on patterns of 'won deals,' also known as the target function, the research sought to empirically identify best practices and effective behavior in value selling.

### What is a Value Assessment?

A collaborative document, shared between provider and customer, to quantify and track the business value of deploying the provider's products and services.

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The study analyzed an anonymized data set of



**2,960**

Sales Opportunities



**5**

Mature B2B SaaS Tech Providers



**\$300M-\$8B**

Varying Sizes

# Research Findings

- **Collaboration is King**
- **A Tailored Value Proposition Holds Greater Sway**
- **It's more about the Conversation than the Math**
- **AI can make the Best Practice, Common Practice**

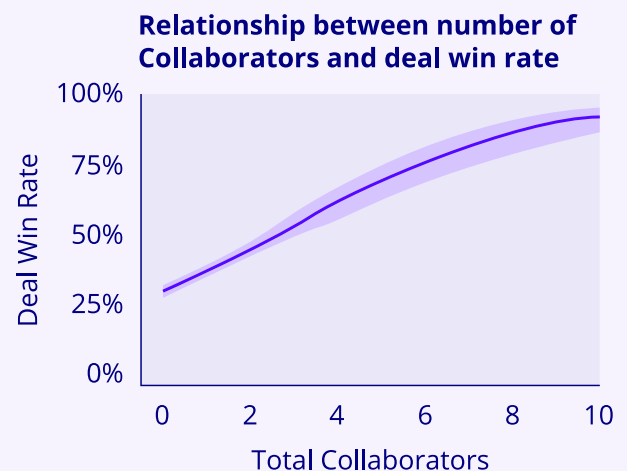
## Collaboration is King

The analysis revealed a strong correlation between the level of collaboration and the likelihood of closing deals. Specifically:

- When a value assessment involves **internal collaborators**, the odds of winning the deal are **2.4x higher** (than if there is no collaboration).
- When a value assessment involves **external collaborators**, the odds of winning the deal are **3.4x higher** (than if there is no collaboration).

While the roles of internal collaborators can vary (such as AEs, sales overlays, sales managers, and professional services), embracing the larger 'team sell' consistently correlates to good sales outcomes. The significance of internal cooperation in securing deals was second only to external engagement, indicating customers leveraged cloud collaboration to access and immerse themselves in the evolution of the value assessment.

### Machine Learning Analysis

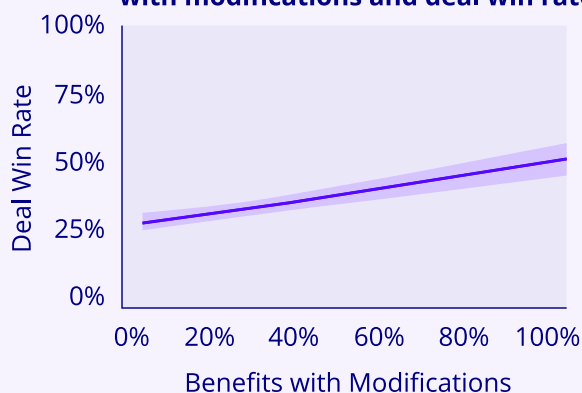


Coefficients	Odds Ratio
(Intercept)	0.365
Collaboration Profile (Internal collaboration)	2.391*
Collaboration Profile (External collaboration)	3.388**

\* 2.4x higher close rate with internal collaboration

\*\* 3.4x higher close rate with customer collaboration

Relationship between number of benefits with modifications and deal win rate



When considering alterations made to a value assessment, **the most reliable gauge of a successful sales outcome is the percentage of benefits that underwent modification.** For instance, if a value assessment initially comprised 5 benefits and 4 of them were modified, that would constitute an 80% adjustment rate.

## A Tailored Value Proposition Holds Greater Sway

Following collaboration, the next best indicator of an effective value-selling engagement is the extent to which the value assessment was exercised. The level of tailoring in value assessments showed a positive correlation with sales achievements, indicating that adapting and customizing value propositions based on customer contexts is essential.

Interestingly, the best indication of a good sales outcome is not the overall quantity of adjustments made, but rather the diversity of benefits altered, such as productivity, revenue, cost, risk, and ESG. Emphasizing customer-centricity and personalized value propositions demonstrated a distinct link to securing deals.

## It's More About the Conversation Than the Math

Equally intriguing as identifying the factors that contribute to good sales outcomes is discerning the factors that bear little influence, or even serve as false flags. The analysis revealed that traditional metrics, such as ROI, did not strongly correlate with winning deals, indicating that the effectiveness of value selling relies more on qualitative engagement than quantitative assessments.

Put simply, more important than whether ROI stands at 100% or 500%, is the thorough exploration and refinement of the value proposition, alongside the active involvement of both internal and external stakeholders.



# Expanding the Use of AI: Make the Best Practice, Common Practice

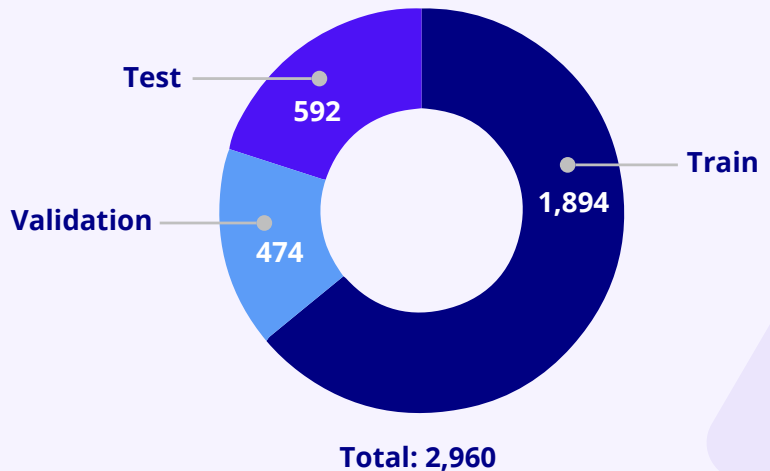
Armed with empirical evidence on best practices for leveraging value assessments in the sales motion, Ecosystems posed a question that introduced a second dimension to the research:

*Could machine learning, once trained, forecast sales results for deals in flight and provide guidance to sellers to enhance their chances of winning?*

To answer this question, Ecosystems turned to [ViViEN™ \(Virtual Value Engineer\)](#), an AI agent within Ecosystems' SaaS value-selling platform. Through ingesting signals from value assessments (including collaborators, views, number of modifications, breadth of the value proposition, and the timing of activities throughout the sales cycle), ViViEN™ accurately predicted the outcome for over 68% of deals.

For comparison, CSO Insights benchmarks the average win rate for forecast deals at 46.4%.

Data Split



Boosting Classification

Trees	Shrinkage	n(Train)	n(Validation)
12	0.100	1894	474
n(Test)	Validation Accuracy		Test Accuracy
592	0.673		0.681



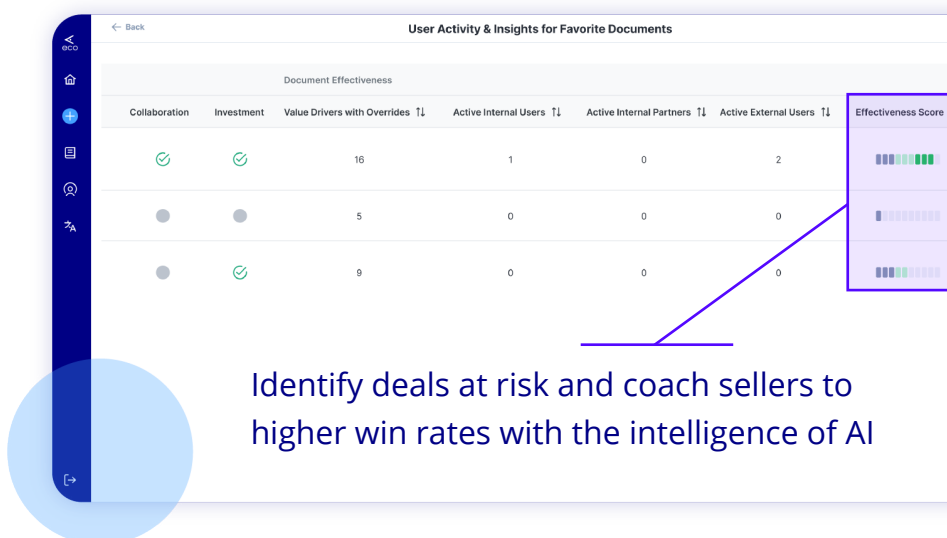
**ViViEN™ correctly forecasted the outcome for more than two-thirds of deals involving value assessments.**



Upon identifying deals deviating from 'Best Practice' in value-selling behavior, AI can course-correct sellers through in-app coaching. This two-step approach, which Ecosystems terms

**"Make the Best Practice, Common Practice,"**

can elevate value-selling standards across the enterprise.



Identify deals at risk and coach sellers to higher win rates with the intelligence of AI

*Interested in learning more about Ecosystems' virtual value engineer, ViViEN™ AI?*

**GET STARTED**

## Implications

This first-of-its-kind research challenges conventional wisdom around value-selling metrics and provides scientific validation of the importance of artful sales execution, which involves engaging a broader spectrum of stakeholders (both internal and external to the enterprise) and tailoring value propositions to specific customer needs and contexts. Moreover, it underscores value selling as an actionable frontier for harnessing the power of AI. Through monitoring all deals for the adoption of best practices, AI agents such as ViViEN™ can coach sellers to better results across the enterprise.



***Through monitoring all deals for the adoption of best practices, AI agents such as ViViEN™ can coach sellers to better results across the enterprise.***

## Conclusion

This research marks a significant step towards understanding the complex dynamics of value selling in the digital age. By integrating AI and fostering a culture of collaboration, organizations can unlock new levels of efficiency and effectiveness in their sales processes.

## Future Directions

The results of this study unveil numerous possibilities for future research. These include exploring the differences in optimal value-selling methods across various provider/customer industries, direct versus indirect sales channels, and customer segmentations like SMBs compared to large enterprises.

## Learn More

You can elevate your value selling by joining thousands of B2B professionals in the [Customer Value Community](#) to network, learn, and benchmark your organization's value maturity against top SaaS companies like Google, ServiceNow, and HP.

Discover more about Ecosystems' SaaS platform designed for large-scale value selling.

**VISIT [ECOSYSTEMS.IO](#)**

