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The five biggest myths about AI in sales

Mario Pufahl · 4 September 2026

Why expectations matter

Few topics attract as much discussion in sales as artificial intelligence. New studies, tools and success stories appear almost daily. Some predict the end of traditional selling; others expect revenue growth simply from deploying a copilot. Both views are misleading. The biggest challenge is often not the technology, but assumptions about what AI can and cannot do.

Myth 1: AI replaces the salesperson

AI is taking on more tasks: research, meeting preparation, CRM documentation, proposal drafts, forecast analysis, follow-ups and lead qualification. But those activities are only part of effective selling.

The decisive moments still happen between people: building trust, aligning interests in a buying group, supporting complex investment decisions or helping a board assess strategic change. AI takes over routine work rather than the entire sales role. That can make effective salespeople even more valuable.

Myth 2: More AI automatically means more revenue

New technology does not automatically improve sales results. AI does not fix poor processes; it may simply accelerate them. Inadequate opportunity qualification, incomplete CRM data and unclear responsibilities remain problems even with powerful AI.

The real opportunity lies in the combination of processes, data, leadership and skills. AI amplifies strengths - and weaknesses.

Myth 3: Everyone needs autonomous sales agents

The discussion can make it seem that every company must rapidly build fully autonomous sales. I believe that is the wrong focus. Many organisations benefit more from intelligent assistance than from full autonomy.

Sales decisions are often complex, political and context-dependent. An agent can spot risks, offer recommendations and combine information. Accountability for strategic customer decisions should remain with people. The most effective approach is usually hybrid: not maximum autonomy, but maximum useful support.

Myth 4: The best language model is the biggest competitive advantage

Discussions often focus on GPT, Claude, Gemini, Grok or proprietary models. That is too narrow. As capable models become increasingly standard, differentiation comes from data quality, system integration, governance, sales processes, employee skills and the ability to embed AI in everyday work.

The decisive factor is not just the model. It is how the organisation operates.

Myth 5: AI is an IT project

Many AI initiatives sit entirely with IT. That is understandable, but the real change takes place in the business. AI changes roles, responsibilities, leadership, decisions, metrics, collaboration and culture.

It is not merely a software project. It is a transformation programme, and transformation starts with the business.

What successful companies do differently

Companies making progress spend less time talking about technology and more time discussing outcomes. They ask:

- Which decisions do we want to improve?
- Which tasks should people own?
- Where can AI help?
- Which data do we need?
- How will we measure success?

This perspective makes the difference.

The most important shift in perspective

Perhaps the biggest misconception is treating AI as just another tool. It changes how sales is organised. Salespeople work with specialised agents, while sales leaders manage hybrid systems of people and AI.

Companies do not sell more effectively simply because they have AI. They do so when they learn to make people and AI work together intelligently.

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