

The B2B Sales Glossary

77 terms every B2B sales team in India should share a definition for, across pipeline, process, metrics, hiring and leadership, plus the industry vocabulary used in BFSI, manufacturing, pharma, IT services and real estate.

Use it to onboard new sellers in their first week

Settle arguments about what qualified, pipeline and forecast actually mean

Prepared by Simpli5Sales | simpli5sales.in/glossary

Pipeline (10 terms)

Channel partner (real estate) | Real estate

A broker or agency network sourcing buyers for a project. Activation, exclusivity and payout clarity decide how much of their pipeline you see.

Channel sales | Manufacturing & channel

Selling through distributors, dealers, system integrators or resellers instead of only direct. The customer of the sales team is the partner; the customer of the partner is the end user.

DSA (Direct Selling Agent) | BFSI

An external agent or agency sourcing loan and card applications for a bank or NBFC. Productivity comes from agent onboarding, activation and quality of sourcing, not headcount alone.

Empanelment | Tenders & PSU

Getting onto an institution's approved vendor list. Nothing can be sold until it is done, and it is a project with owners and deadlines, not a background task.

Inbound lead

A prospect who initiates contact through content, search or referral. Inbound shortens cycles but rarely covers an enterprise quota on its own.

Installed base selling | Retail & key accounts

Growing revenue from equipment and customers you already have, spares, upgrades, service and replacement cycles. Usually the cheapest pipeline in the business and the least managed.

MQL and SQL

Marketing Qualified Lead and Sales Qualified Lead, the handover points between marketing interest and sales-accepted opportunity. Agreeing the definitions in writing prevents most marketing-sales conflict.

OEM sale | Manufacturing & channel

Selling a component that is designed into another manufacturer's product. Cycles are long, approvals are technical, and once specified the revenue annuitises for years.

Outbound prospecting

Creating pipeline by approaching accounts that have not raised their hand, research, calls, email and social, sequenced around a relevant trigger.

SDR / BDR

Sales Development or Business Development Representative, the outbound role responsible for researching accounts and creating qualified first meetings, not for closing revenue.

Process (27 terms)**Application engineering sale | Manufacturing & channel**

A technical industrial sale where the seller specifies a product for the customer's process or drawing. Discovery is engineering discovery: load, tolerance, cycle time, total cost.

Bancassurance | BFSI

Selling insurance through a bank's branch network and relationship managers. Success depends on branch-level trust and referral discipline rather than on cold outreach.

Beat plan | Manufacturing & channel

The fixed route and call schedule a field seller follows each day or week. Coverage discipline in the beat plan usually explains more variance in field performance than talent does.

Buying group

Every person who influences a B2B purchase: champion, economic buyer, technical evaluator, procurement, legal and security. Deals stall when only one of them is engaged.

Capex vs opex sale | Manufacturing & channel

Whether the buyer funds you from a capital budget or an operating budget. It changes who signs, when the money exists, and which business case wins.

Consultative selling

A method where the seller diagnoses before prescribing, using questions and expertise to help the buyer understand their own problem more clearly.

Detailing call | Pharma & healthcare

A short, evidence-led conversation with a prescriber built around one clinical message. Structure and repetition beat improvisation because the window is measured in minutes.

Discovery

The structured conversation that establishes the buyer's current situation, the cost of leaving it unchanged, and the decision process. Weak discovery is the single most common cause of lost B2B deals.

Formulary listing | Pharma & healthcare

Approval that puts a product on a hospital's or payer's approved list. Without it, individual prescriber preference rarely converts into volume.

GeM / e-procurement portal | Tenders & PSU

Government e-Marketplace and similar portals through which public-sector buying runs in India. Registration, catalogue hygiene and compliance discipline are prerequisites to selling at all.

ICP (Ideal Customer Profile)

A written description of the accounts you win most often, retain longest and serve profitably, by industry, size, tech stack, trigger and buying behaviour. It is the filter every prospecting decision should pass through.

KYC-led onboarding | BFSI

The documentation and verification steps a financial sale must clear before it counts as revenue. Sellers who plan for it early lose fewer deals to process fatigue.

Master Service Agreement (MSA) | IT services

The umbrella contract that lets subsequent work start on an SOW alone. Getting one signed early shortens every deal after it.

Multi-threading

Building relationships with several stakeholders inside one account so the deal survives a champion leaving or changing priorities.

Objection handling

Responding to resistance by clarifying the concern behind it before answering. Teams that maintain a shared objection library outperform teams relying on individual improvisation.

Qualification

Testing early whether an opportunity is real: is there a business problem worth solving, a budget path, an owner, and a timeline tied to a business event?

Rate contract | Tenders & PSU

A pre-agreed price list a buyer can draw against without a fresh tender. Winning one converts each future purchase from a competition into an order.

RFP / RFQ / EOI | Tenders & PSU

Request for Proposal, Quotation and Expression of Interest, the formal documents that structure enterprise and institutional buying. Influencing the specification before the document is issued matters more than the response.

Sales playbook

The documented way your team sells, stages, entry and exit criteria, questions, objection responses, and the assets used at each step. Without one, method lives only in individuals.

Sales process stage gates

Buyer-verified conditions required to move a deal to the next stage. Gates based on rep activity instead of buyer commitment are the root cause of inflated forecasts.

Staff augmentation vs managed services | IT services

Selling billable people versus selling an outcome you own. The second commands better margin and needs a business case, not a rate card.

Statement of Work (SOW) | IT services

The document that fixes scope, deliverables, assumptions and acceptance criteria. Most services margin is won or lost in how precisely it is written.

Tender and L1 bidding | Tenders & PSU

Public and institutional buying where the lowest technically-qualified bid (L1) wins. The selling work is in technical qualification and specification, not in the negotiation.

Time and material vs fixed price | IT services

Two commercial models for services work. Which one you propose changes who carries the risk and how tightly scope must be qualified before signature.

Total cost of ownership (TCO) | Manufacturing & channel

Purchase price plus installation, energy, consumables, downtime and service over the life of the asset. TCO is how industrial sellers defend a higher price against a cheaper quote.

Trade promotion and scheme selling | Retail & key accounts

Using price, credit or volume schemes to move stock. Teams that lead with schemes teach the channel to wait for the next one.

Value-based selling

Anchoring the conversation on quantified business outcomes rather than features, so price is evaluated against impact instead of against competitors.

Metrics (20 terms)**Annual maintenance contract (AMC) | Retail & key accounts**

Recurring service revenue attached to an installed base. Renewal rate on AMC is the industrial equivalent of net retention.

AUM (Assets Under Management) | BFSI

Total client assets a wealth or investment seller manages. Growth splits into net new money and market movement, only the first reflects selling capability.

Bench utilisation | IT services

The share of delivery capacity that is billable. In services, sales forecasting and hiring plans are the same conversation.

CAC payback

Months of gross profit required to recover the cost of acquiring a customer. It is the metric most sensitive to small improvements in win rate.

Cross-sell ratio | BFSI

Average number of products held per customer. In BFSI it is the cleanest measure of whether relationship managers diagnose needs or only push the product of the month.

Field sales productivity | Retail & key accounts

Output per seller per day, calls made, quality of conversation, and orders per call. In field-heavy industries it is the number that connects coaching to revenue.

Login-to-disbursal ratio | BFSI

Loan applications logged in versus loans actually disbursed. A weak ratio signals poor pre-qualification at the front end of the funnel.

Numeric and weighted distribution | Manufacturing & channel

Numeric distribution counts the outlets that stock you; weighted distribution weights them by category sales. Two teams can share a numeric number and have very different quality of reach.

Persistency | BFSI

The share of insurance policies still in force after 13 or 61 months. Low persistency almost always traces back to how the sale was made, not to the customer.

Pipeline coverage

Open pipeline value divided by the quota for the period. Coverage of three to four times is a common benchmark, though the right number depends on your win rate.

Prescription (Rx) share | Pharma & healthcare

Your share of a prescriber's writing in a therapy area. The pharma equivalent of win rate, and the number field coaching should move.

Primary and secondary sales | Manufacturing & channel

Primary is company-to-distributor billing, secondary is distributor-to-retailer. Healthy growth needs both moving together.

Quota attainment

The share of reps hitting target. When only a few carry the number, the problem is a capability and process problem, not a motivation problem.

Ramp time

How long a new hire takes to reach expected productivity. Structured onboarding and a 30-60-90 plan are the fastest levers on ramp time.

Rate card and blended rate | IT services

Published per-role pricing and the average rate across a proposed team. Blended rate is where undisciplined discounting hides.

Sales cycle length

Median days from qualified opportunity to closed-won. Lengthening cycles usually signal weak qualification rather than a slower market.

Sales velocity

Number of opportunities multiplied by average deal value and win rate, divided by sales cycle length. A single number that shows whether the engine is getting faster or slower.

Sell-in vs sell-out | Manufacturing & channel

Sell-in is volume pushed into the channel; sell-out is volume the channel actually sold to end customers. Reporting only sell-in hides inventory that will come back as pressure next quarter.

Site visit conversion | Real estate

Bookings as a share of site visits. In real estate it is the sharpest measure of pre-visit qualification and on-site selling capability.

Win rate

Closed-won opportunities as a share of all closed opportunities. Tracked by stage entered, it shows exactly where selling capability breaks.

Hiring (8 terms)**Account Executive (AE)**

The seller who owns an opportunity from qualified meeting to closed contract. In B2B teams the AE runs discovery, builds the business case, manages the buying group and negotiates commercials.

Hiring scorecard

A written definition of outcomes and competencies for a role, agreed before interviewing starts, and scored consistently for every candidate.

Medical representative (MR) | Pharma & healthcare

The field seller who calls on doctors, chemists and hospitals. Output is prescription share, and capability shows up in call quality rather than call count.

Pre-hire sales assessment

A structured evaluation of selling ability, reasoning, discovery, resilience and coachability, administered before an offer rather than discovered in month four.

Relationship Manager (RM) | BFSI

The BFSI seller who owns a book of customers and cross-sells across products. RM performance is a function of portfolio planning and consultative review conversations.

Sales headhunting

Direct, confidential approach to salespeople who are performing in comparable roles, rather than screening inbound applications.

Sales onboarding

The first 90 days of a sales hire: product, market, method, and supervised practice, with milestones a manager reviews weekly.

Structured interview

The same questions, in the same order, scored against the same rubric for every candidate. It is the highest-validity, lowest-cost improvement most sales hiring processes can make.

Leadership (12 terms)**Dealer / distributor management | Manufacturing & channel**

Running a partner network as a portfolio: coverage, stock, credit, joint targets and quarterly business reviews rather than ad-hoc order taking.

Forecast accuracy

How close the committed number lands to actual closed revenue. Accuracy comes from evidence-based stage gates and honest pipeline reviews, not from optimism management.

Inventory and unit mix | Real estate

Which units remain unsold and at what price. Sales plans that ignore the mix end up discounting the same configurations twice.

Joint business plan (JBP) | Retail & key accounts

An agreed annual plan with a large customer or retailer covering volume, listings, promotions and investment. It converts negotiation from an argument into a review.

Key account management (KAM) | Retail & key accounts

Running a small number of large customers as a growth plan: whitespace, stakeholder map, joint objectives and a quarterly review the customer values.

KOL (Key Opinion Leader) | Pharma & healthcare

A clinician or expert whose opinion moves peers. KOL engagement is a scientific relationship programme, not a discount conversation.

Pipeline review

A recurring session where a manager inspects deal evidence, not rep confidence, and agrees the next commitment for each opportunity.

Sales capability framework

A defined set of skills and behaviours required at each level of the sales organisation, used for hiring, development and promotion decisions.

Sales coaching

Manager-led development of specific selling behaviours through observation, feedback and practice. Distinct from training, which introduces the behaviour in the first place.

Sales compensation plan

The mix of fixed pay, variable pay, accelerators and quotas that determines behaviour. If the plan and the strategy disagree, the plan wins.

Sales enablement

The function that gives sellers the content, training, tools and data they need at each stage of the buying process, and measures whether it changed behaviour.

Territory and account planning

Deciding deliberately where selling effort goes, which accounts, segments and geographies get coverage, and what each is expected to produce.

Train the team on the vocabulary

Shared language is the cheapest sales improvement available. If your team defines 'qualified' five different ways, see the training modules at simpli5sales.in/sales-training/modules.