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SBI CEO Growth Forum Summary

Co-hosted by Mike Hoffman and Bryan Kurey

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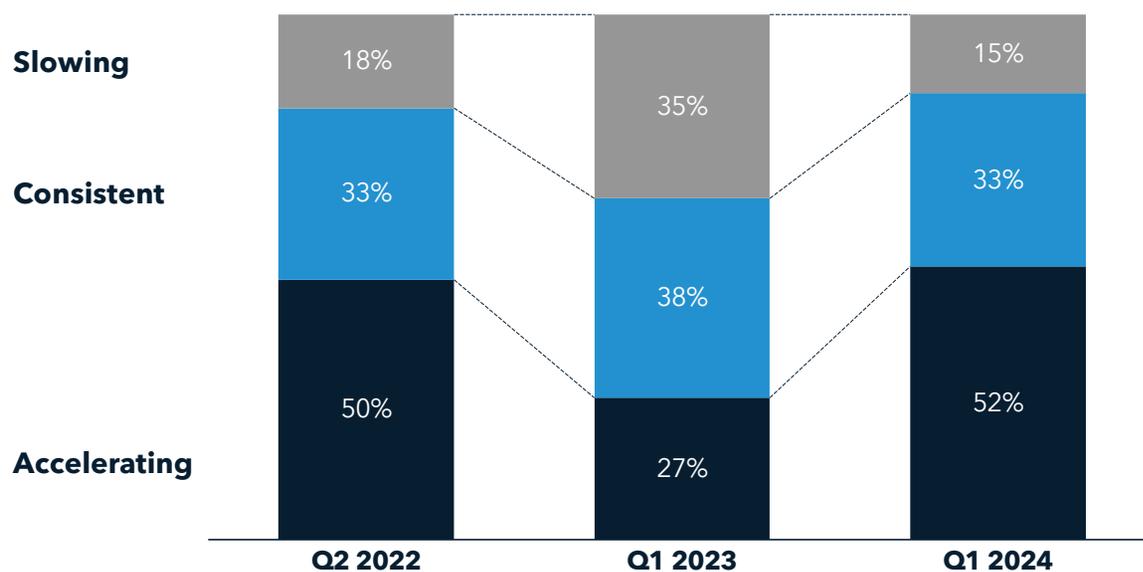
Session Agenda

- 01** Welcome & Introductions
- 02** Market Direction
- 03** Growth Risks for 2024
- 04** Advancing Commercial Talent Performance

SBI's CEO Growth Forum brings together industry-leading CEOs to share perspectives on the future of B2B go-to-market strategies and the best ways to drive unforgettable growth. The group gathered in February 2024 to discuss demand trends and risks to growth in the coming calendar year.

Demand sentiment has rebounded from lows in Q1 2023

CEO Assessment of Demand Indicators for Their Business



Q2 2022 N = 120; Q1 2023 N = 91; Q1 2024 N = 87

Response to question: Q2 2022 and Q1 2023: To what extent do you perceive softening demand indicators for your business?;

Q1 2024: How would you characterize demand indicators for your business?

Source: SBI Q2 2022 CEO Survey; SBI Q1 2023 CEO Survey; SBI Q1 2024 CEO Survey

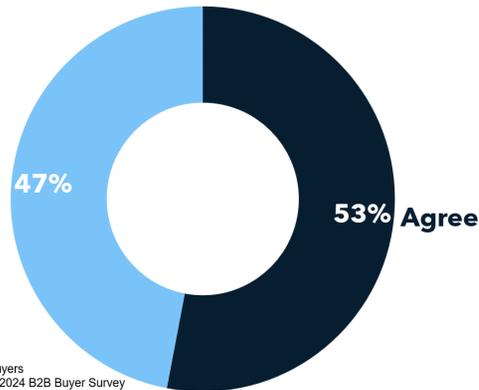
SBI's surveying indicates demand accelerating at levels not seen since the middle of 2022. CEOs in the conversation **largely confirmed this trend of high expectations for 2024.**

CEOs emphasized that **their focus is more squarely on execution than it has been in some time.** The critical drivers of a successful quarter and year are going to be getting deeper into the details with their teams than they typically have -- setting the right objectives and metrics, regularly reviewing them and updating plans to ensure their teams are set up to deliver. This will drive higher and faster demand conversion into actual bookings.

Growth Risk: More reps, more confusion, less value

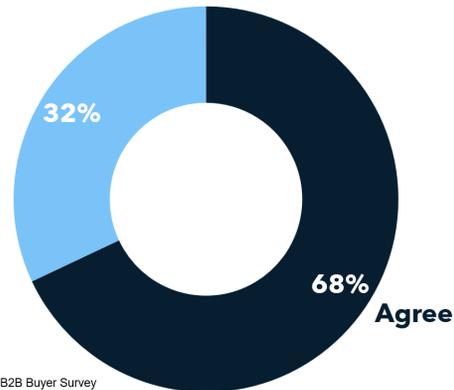
Today, the average B2B buyer works with nearly half a dozen different supplier reps creating a confusing and frustrating experience. While commercial teams are getting larger it isn't clear they're delivering more value:

Q: We talked to an overwhelming number of supplier representatives and honestly, I'm not sure what they all did.



N=640 B2B buyers
Source: SBI's 2024 B2B Buyer Survey
Note: Agree equal 6-7 on a 7-point scale

Q: I felt like I needed to repeat myself every time I spoke with a different person from the Supplier organization



N=640 B2B buyers
Source: SBI's 2024 B2B Buyer Survey
Note: Agree equal 6-7 on a 7-point scale



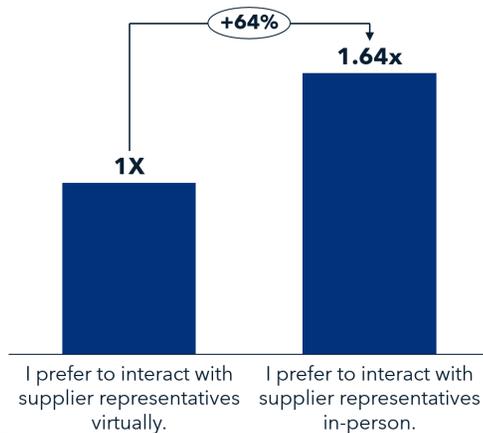
SBI is finding an emerging frustration with the size and lack of coordination among commercial teams. Perspectives in the discussion revealed uncertainty regarding how to manage the risk:

- Some noted that, with the growing need for multi-threading, it's ok if buyers are having a lot of contact – it drives motion and urgency. As long as they **manage interaction frequency and coordinate "hand-offs"** effectively, some see it as healthy.
- Others took a wider lens, noting that it's **not just the people but also other interaction channels like content** that influence buyer perceptions. With such deep content, managing these different channels becomes critically important.

Growth Risk: Digital fatigue creates more stress and fewer deals

Despite significant supplier investments in digital channels, virtual meeting capabilities, and online engagements, buyers are becoming burned out with virtual engagements. Buyers are now 64% more likely to say they prefer interacting with supplier representatives in person over virtually.

Q: What is your most preferred way to interact with suppliers during the Buying Journey?



N=640 B2B buyers
Source: SBI's 2024 B2B Buyer Survey

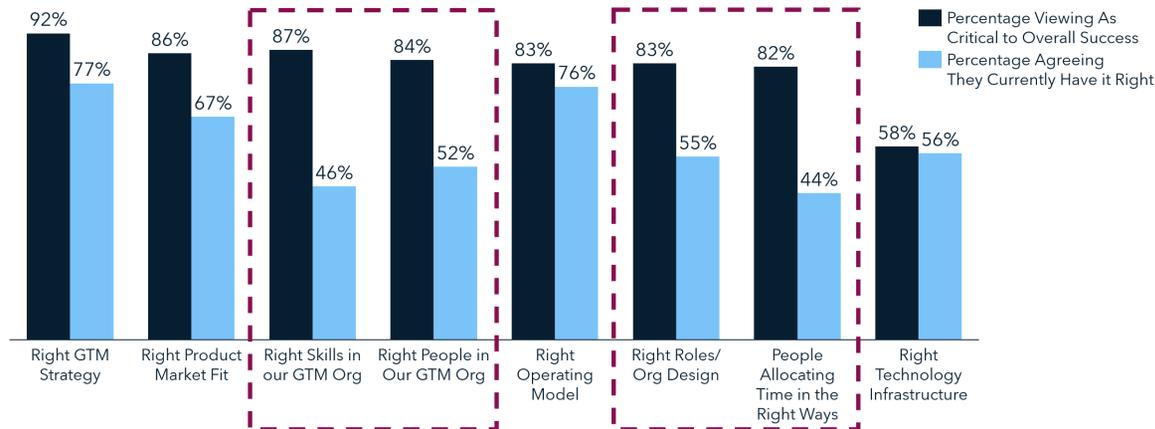
SBI's recent buyer survey reveals a **strong preference for in-person interactions with their suppliers**, over virtual interactions. Discussion indicated that, while this desire for more human interaction is becoming clearer, the nature of those interactions is changing:

- **Less formal** - people are more likely to meet for lunches or coffees than dinners. When they do happen, dinners are at less lavish, high-dollar venues.
- **Buyers coming to suppliers** - people are more likely to want to leave their own offices or locations and visit suppliers at their locations for a welcome change of scene.

Growth Risk: Significant talent deficiencies

Most CEOs are confident in their GTM strategy, product fit, and operating model but are expressing real concerns about their GTM talent.

CEO Ratings of Criticality and Adequacy of Contributors to Value Creation Goals



N = 87
Source: SBI Q1 2024 CEO Survey

CEOs view talent as critical to their success, but **only half or fewer believe they have their talent well-aligned to their needs**. Discussions emphasized that while it's always a challenge, the talent problem is more urgent today. CEOs were focused on what could drive results quickly.

- Some are **investigating the amount of redundancy** to incorporate into their talent acquisition plan as a 'hedge', knowing they will need to bring people in quickly and not all will ramp to productivity.
- Others are evaluating ways to **push a transformation among more senior sellers** who may have loyalty attached to them. Sales leaders are seen as a key leverage point, so there is a focus on ensuring a leadership bench ready for the future, not the past.

Take-Aways for CEOs and Their Commercial Leadership Teams

1. While demand may be returning, keep a tight handle on execution among your leadership teams to ensure you are able to convert that demand into bookings and maintain margins.
2. Make sure your entire go-to-market system – including not just the people who interact directly with customers but also your content and other channels – are well-aligned and creating a seamless customer experience. Role proliferation isn't necessarily a bad thing, but it can quickly become one if buyers lose confidence in your team.
3. Refresh your understanding of the buyer. What is their buying process today? How has it changed? What triggers might cause it to change again? How does it line up with your sales process?
4. Avoid the trap of assuming you will always be unsatisfied with your go-to-market talent, or that transformation will take too long. Identify the high-impact actions that will take hold quickly, including skill-building, improving time allocation, and providing tools for better sales coaching.



About SBI

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Working with us, leaders can expect confidence and trust with experienced partners every step of the way. We engage and support our clients as an extension of their team, both guiding and working side-by-side to deliver relatable, practical strategies that work for today and tomorrow.

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