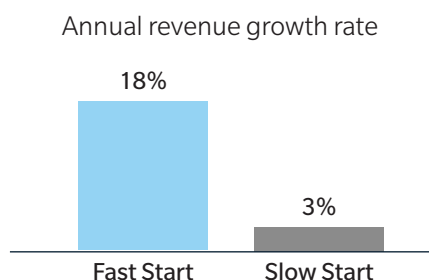# A *Fast Start* is Necessary for 2026 Success
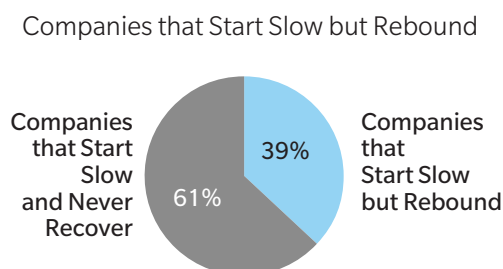
## A Company's Fate is Decided in Q1

## Q1 Separates Top PE-Backed Performers

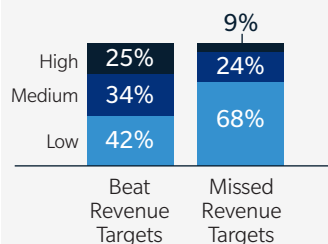### *Fast Starters* Achieve **6x Higher Growth**

Annual revenue growth rate

- 18% — Fast Start
- 3% — Slow Start

### **Slow Starters Rarely Recover** Their Growth Trajectory

Companies that Start Slow but Rebound

- 61% — Companies that Start Slow and Never Recover
- 39% — Companies that Start Slow but Rebound

## Disciplined Execution, not Q4 Carryover, Drives Fast Starts

### 1 Use AI to Reveal Early Softness and Improve Decisions

**Revenue leaders are 3X more likely to benefit from AI-enhanced decisions**

| | Beat Revenue Targets | Missed Revenue Targets |
|---|---|---|
| High | 25% | 24% |
| | | 9% |
| Medium | 34% | |
| Low | 42% | 68% |

Top performers use AI to improve forecast accuracy, flag pipeline softness, and act sooner. This protects EBITDA and reduces early-quarter execution risk.

### 2 Strengthen NRR by Focusing on the Right Accounts

**58% of companies report lower NRR than two years ago**

- Increasing — 36%
- Same — 7%
- Declining — 58%
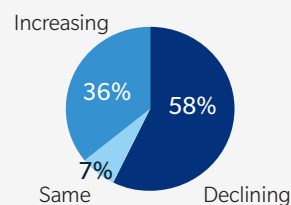
Leaders use AI-driven segmentation to detect churn risk and expansion potential early. This lifts NRR and improves contribution margin for PE-backed value creation

### 3 Improve Manager Cadence to Reduce Low-ROI Activity

**47% of Manager's Time is Spent on Required Activities**

- Required Activities — 47%
- Coaching, Performance Management & Selling Support — 53%
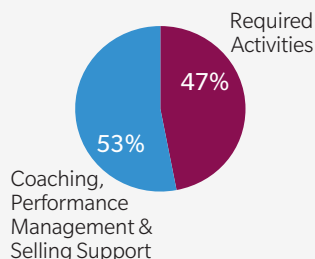
Leaders free managers from reporting and admin so they can coach and qualify deals. Strong manager cadence improves win rates and stabilizes Q1 execution.

### 4 Maximize WTP by Segment to Protect Margin

**88% of Companies beating targets understand willingness to pay**

- 88% — Beating Targets
- 58% — Missing Targets
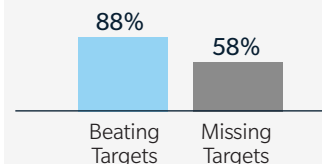
Winning teams understand segment-level service needs and willingness to pay. This reduces discounting and strengthens early-quarter margin performance.

**:::SBI**