

The Efficiency Edge: Rethinking Sales and AI for FY26



The Efficiency Edge: Rethinking Sales and AI for FY26

As the financial year wraps up, many team leaders are asking the same question: how do we grow without adding more cost, complexity, or chaos?

It's a familiar challenge. Sales teams are stretched, marketing budgets are tight, and buyers are taking longer to make decisions. The 2025 Mood of the Sales Leader report by Indicator paints a clear picture: only 39% of companies achieved revenue growth last year, which is the lowest in the survey's eight-year history.

In this environment, our take is that success in FY26 will come down to efficiency. That means refining how we sell, and leaning into the right tools, like AI, to lift the load, not add to it. That's a theme echoed by two of our recent B2B Inspired Podcast guests.

Mike Stokes, Founder of Indicator, shared findings from the Mood of the Sales Leader 2025 report, highlighting a return to sales fundamentals as a key driver of success. In a tough year, Mike recommends focusing on process, consistency, and capability.

Dave Howden, CEO of Supahuman AI, brought a complementary perspective: while AI adoption surged in 2024, the real gains came from using it with intent. As Dave put it;

"AI should take the weight off the team, not add another thing to manage."

He also said that big efficiency gains are there for the taking, especially when "freeing smart minds from tedious work".

So, what does this mean for us as we head into ?



Dave Howden
CEO, Supahuman AI



1. Refocus on the Fundamentals

Mike Stokes pointed out that companies who succeeded in 2024 didn't do so by luck, they doubled down on what they could control.

Sales capability, process, and consistency were key. In many of the conversations we've had, there's a renewed appreciation for structure, not as red tape, but as a lever for results.

"What we can all recognise, first and foremost, was that 2024 was tough... in eight years we saw the lowest number of companies achieve growth. But there is certainly opportunity for those that drive hard to get it."

2. Bring Sales and Marketing Closer Together

Mike noted that two-thirds of sales leaders rated their relationship with marketing as good or excellent, but many still rated marketing as average to poor at lead generation.

So, while optimism about the sales-marketing relationship is growing, there's still work to do. When teams share goals, language, and insights, the customer experience improves, and that's when efficiency really kicks in.

"We know sales and marketing has 100% got a lot closer in the last few years... more collaboration is needed. Sales leaders have significant influence on marketing and need to feed back those great customer stories. Shared goals and metrics can be incredibly smart."

Mike Stokes
Founder, Indicator



3. Let AI Help, Not Hinder

There's no shortage of AI tools out there, but not every tool is worth your time. If you're unsure where to begin with AI, Dave from SupaHuman advocates for starting with admin or simplifying prep work. Once you get up to speed, Dave says that it's realistic to shorten the time it takes to complete compliance reports or audits from 10 hours down to 15 minutes.

"If you can shorten [a compliance report] from 10 hours down to 15 minutes – which is super realistic – your ability to create gross profit margin and sustain your business is massive."

– Dave Howden, CEO, SupaHuman AI

4. Redefine What Growth Looks Like

Dave Howden encouraged business owners to see AI not just as a tool for efficiency, but as a way to sharpen their strategic edge. Growth in might come not from doing more, but from seeing more clearly. With better access to insights and customer feedback via AI driven tech, leaders can refine their value proposition and deliver more of what really matters.

"Your context has the opportunity to get more refined because you can now do better research, and more customer testing."



Actionable Takeaways for B2B Brands

At this time of year, we're usually working with business owners to find clarity in their go-to-market so their people, process, and tools are aligned and ready for what's next.

For some, that means sharpening messaging, simplifying sales processes, or getting more value from the assets they've already got. Wherever you're starting from, there's usually more potential than you think, it may just need a fresh perspective.

Ready to equip your team for smarter growth?

Our [Sales Enablement offering](#) helps you enhance what you already have, sharpening messaging, refining tools, and aligning your sales conversations with what buyers care about.

If you're thinking, "We could be selling better, but I'm not sure where to start," we'd love to help.



CONTACT US



0800 258 362



hello@blueoceanagency.co.nz



Level 1, 143 Durham Street,
Tauranga, Bay of Plenty 3110

GridAKL, 12 Madden Street
Auckland 1010



www.blueoceanagency.co.nz

B2B INSPIRED

Helping the B2B
community succeed.

At BlueOcean, we aspire to learn and share as much as we possibly can to inspire fellow B2B professionals to be some of the best and brightest in the world.

Follow the B2B Inspired podcast and join the community of B2B leaders who are making waves across New Zealand and abroad.

Watch on
YouTube

Listen on
Spotify

Listen on
Apple Podcasts

FREEING SMART MINDS FROM TEDIOUS WORK

DAVE HOWDEN
Co-Founder & Chief Executive - SupaHuman AI

 **B2B INSPIRED**
The podcast

 SUPAHUMAN



Freeing Smart Minds From Tedious Work with Dave Howden

Join us on the latest episode of B2B Inspired, BlueOcean's podcast sharing inspiration and insights for the New Zealand marketing community. This week, we chat to Co-Founder & Chief Executive of...

[blueoceanagency.co.nz](#)

THE 2025 B2B SALES OUTLOOK

MIKE STOKES
CEO & Founder - Indicator

 **B2B INSPIRED**
The podcast





The 2025 B2B Sales Outlook with Mike Stokes

Join us on the latest episode of B2B Inspired, BlueOcean's podcast sharing inspiration and insights for the New Zealand marketing community. This week, we chat to CEO & Founder of Indicator, Mike...

[blueoceanagency.co.nz](#)

