

2025 SBI SPRING REGIONAL SUMMIT

MAY 13-14, 2025 ATLANTA, GEORGIA

BLUEPRINT

for Sustainable Growth



Driven by Insights
Delivered from Experience

The background features a series of thin, light blue lines forming a grid-like pattern. Several arrows are integrated into this pattern: one points upwards on the left, another points to the right in the center, and a third points upwards on the right. The overall aesthetic is clean and modern.

How Today's Most Successful Commercial Teams are Breaking Through Buying Friction

Bryan Kurey, Head of Research, SBI Growth Advisory

Buyers are surrounded by friction, stalling progress

Supplier-Created Friction

 5 Supplier Reps

 71% Frustrating Supplier Experience

 74% Too Many Choices

 70% Unsure What Everyone Does

Buyer-Created Friction

 12 Decision Makers on Average

 74% More Internal Coordination

 71% More Internal Bureaucracy

 78% More Executive Oversight

Environment-Created Friction

 7 Change Events

 75% Constant Change

 77% Greater Risk

N = 643 Commercial decisions (net-new, displacement, renewal, expansion)
Source: SBI 2024 Commercial Differentiation Survey
Note: Percents indicate buyers agreeing (5-7) on 7-point scale

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High Friction Reduces the Odds of a Purchase by
43%

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Friction is only increasing

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- Initial Attempts to Monetize AI
- Sellers Pressing Harder to Meet Suddenly Unrealistic Targets

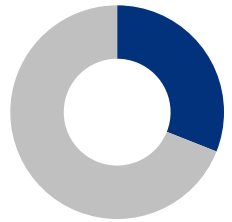
- Spend Freezes
- Even More Executive Oversight

- Initiatives Put on Hold
- Workflows Shifting with AI

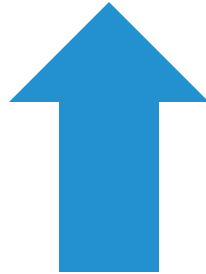
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Buyers still make bold purchase decisions

Bold Purchase Decisions



31%
of Purchase
Decisions



15%
Larger
Deals



62%
Increase in
Demonstrated
Advocacy

N = 643 Commercial decisions (net-new, displacement, renewal, expansion)
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How can we win bigger, bolder deals?

Buying Teams



Analyzed **643 purchase decisions**

- All commercial touchpoints
- All purchase types
- Cluster analysis and multivariate regression

Commercial Teams



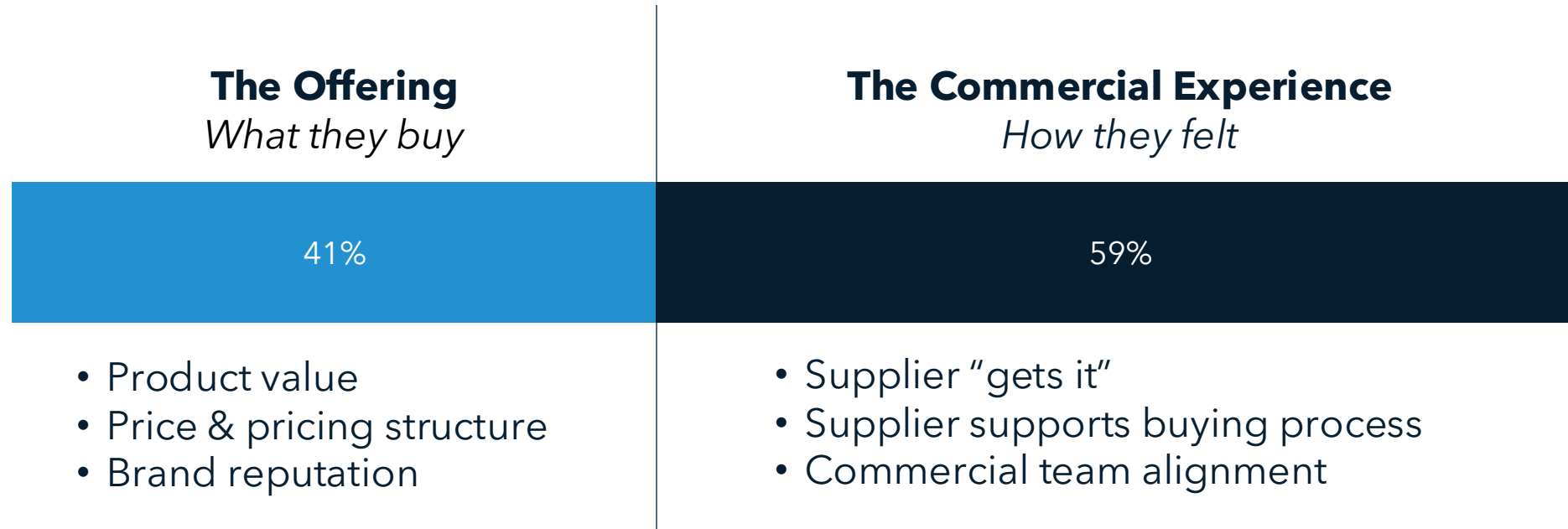
Analyzed **850 commercial team members'** approach to the customer relationship

- Comprehensive inventory of skills and behaviors
- Factor analysis and multivariate regression

The commercial experience matters more than the offering itself

Relative Impact on Likelihood of Making A Bold Purchase Decision

Findings statistically significant at >98% confidence level



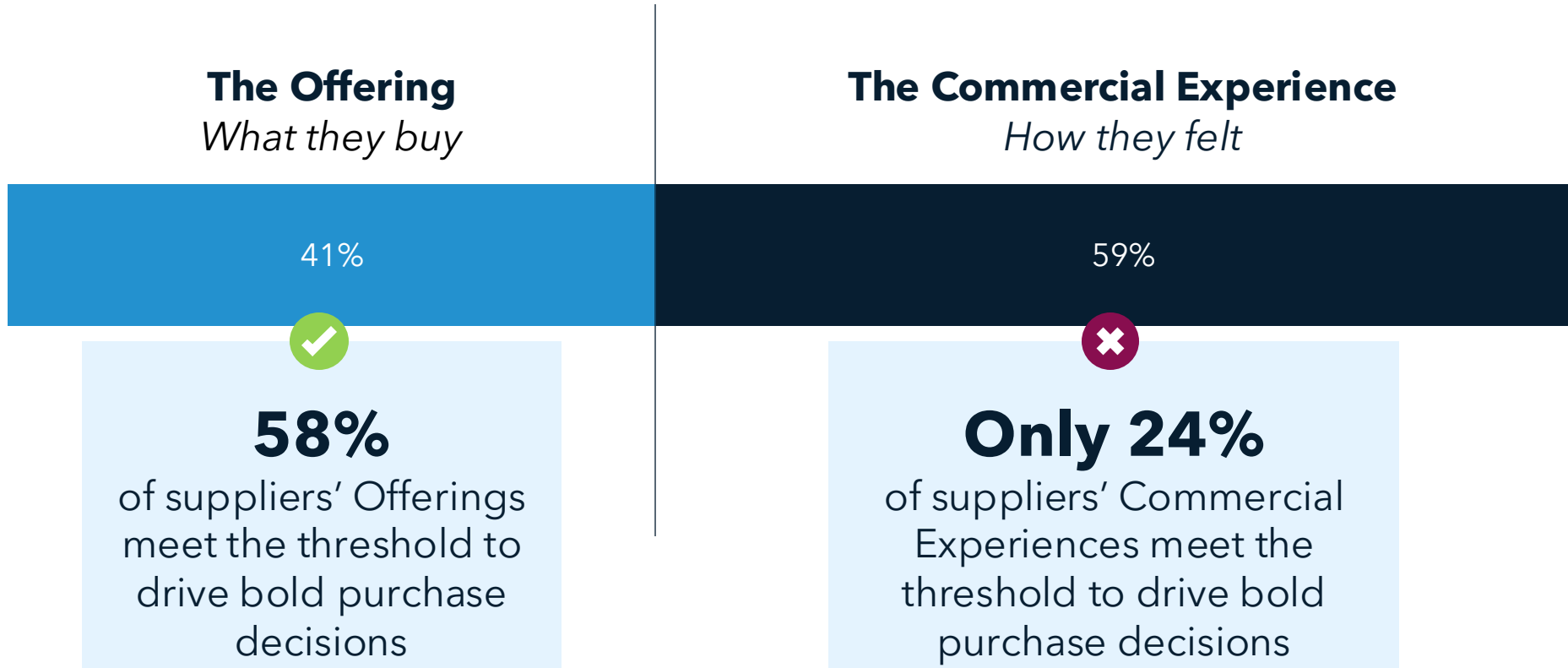
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Most commercial experiences fall short

Relative Impact on Likelihood of Making A Bold Purchase Decision

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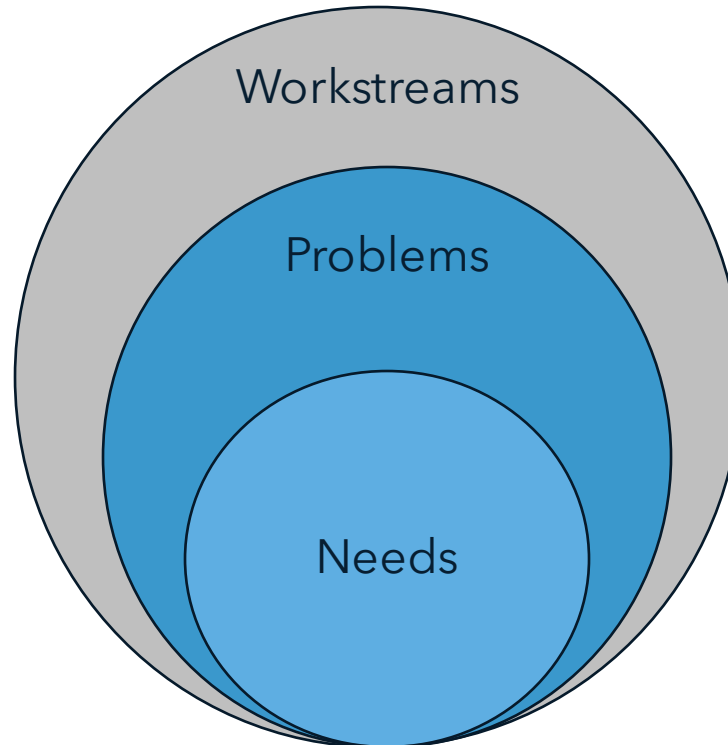


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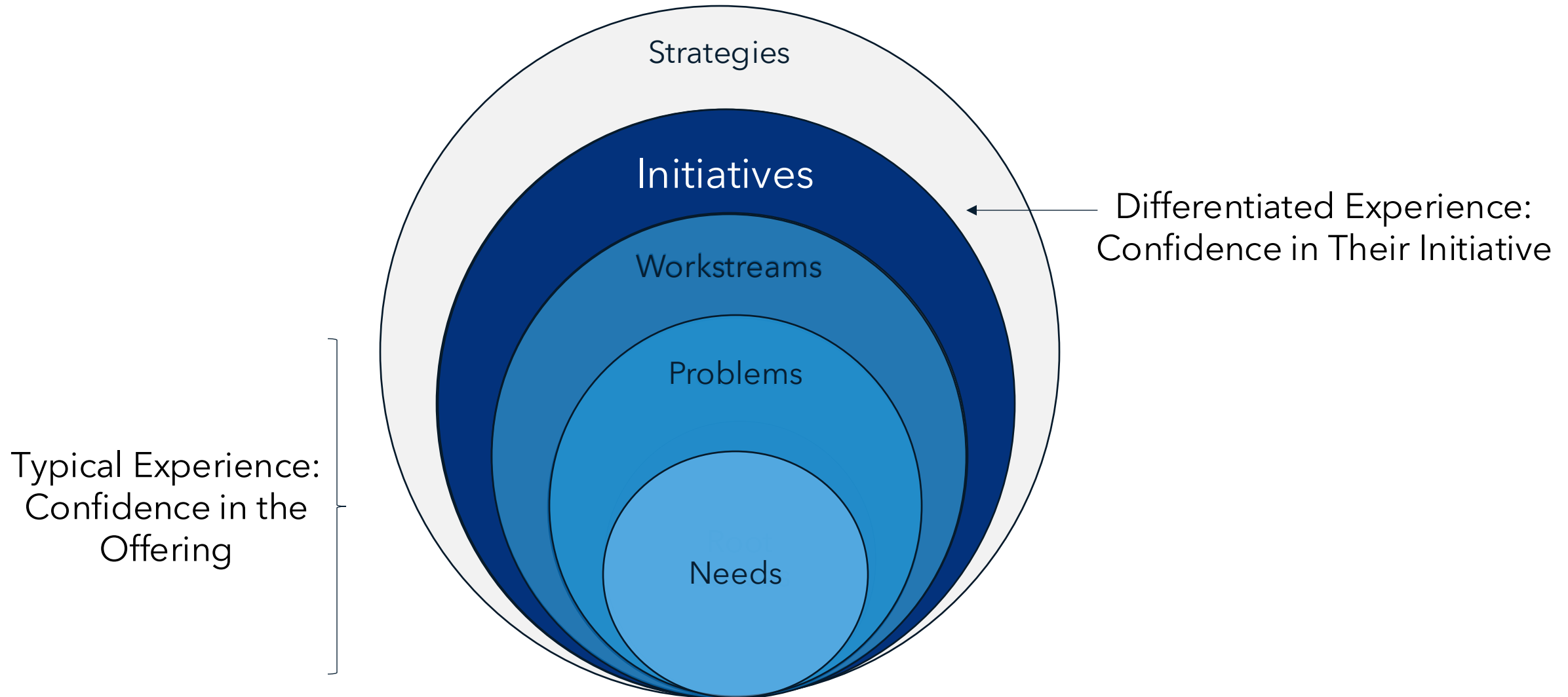
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What are people buying?

Typical Experience:
Confidence in the
Offering



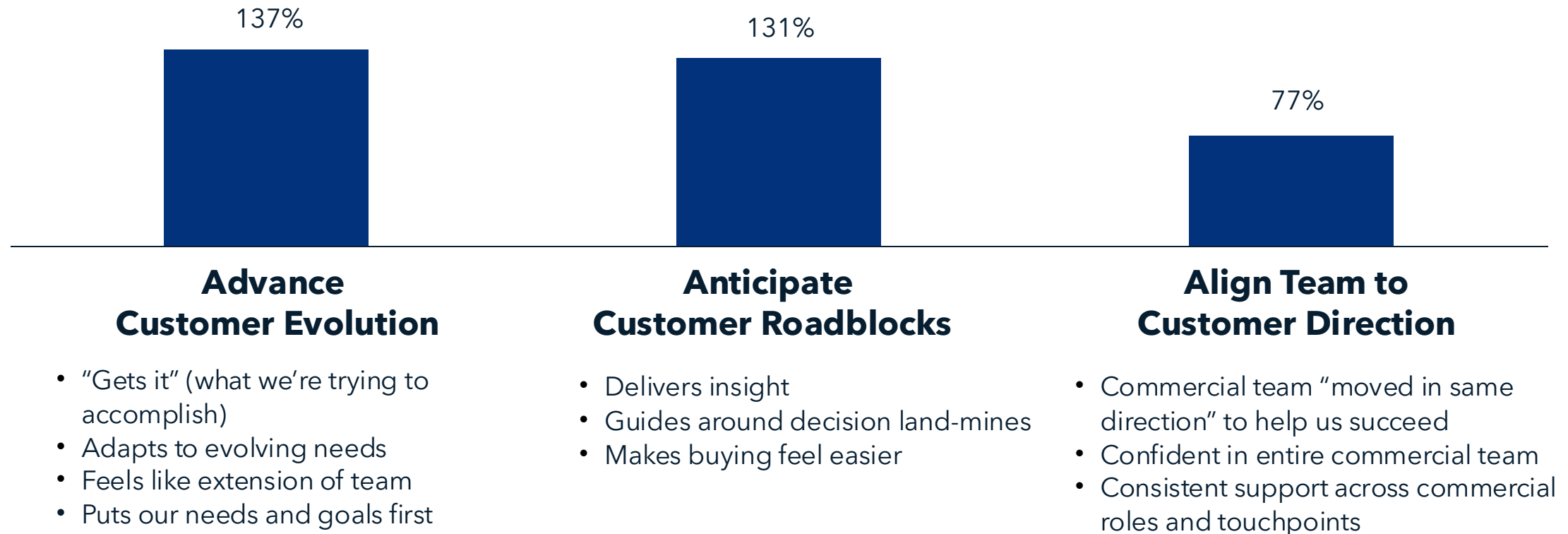
What are people buying?



A differentiated commercial experience centers on helping the customer make headway on their broader initiatives - not just a purchase

Impact on Odds of Making A Bold Purchase Decision

Findings statistically significant at >98% confidence level



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Source: SBI 2024 Commercial Differentiation Survey

Headway Selling boosts commercial performance

33.5% Average
Increase in Win Rate

↑ All Purchases
+143%
*Improved Odds of a
Bold Purchase Decision*

↑ Net New
+292%
*Improved Odds of a
Bold Purchase Decision*

↑ Renewal
+226%
*Improved Odds of a
Bold Purchase Decision*

↑ Expansion
+100%
*Improved Odds of a
Bold Purchase Decision*

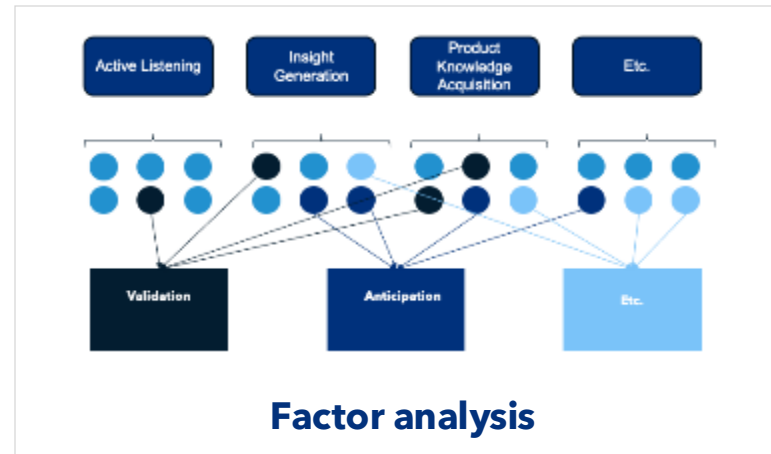
Bold Purchase Decisions

15%
Larger Deal
Size

62%
Increase in
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N = 643 Commercial decisions (net-new, displacement, renewal, expansion)
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Four distinct commercial approaches



Narrowing

- Prescribes buying criteria and steps
- Prevents introduction of additional "noise"
- Establishes a smooth close

Provoking

- Applies an insight-led posture
- Tailors insights to buyer
- Tightly aligns with Marketing

Translating

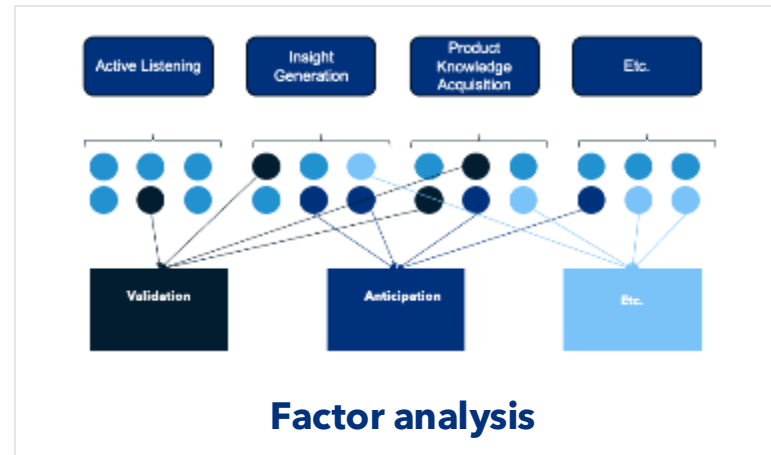
- "Gets it" (what buyers trying to accomplish)
- Quantifies long-term challenges and impact
- Acts as an extension of the team

Anticipating

- Orients towards the future
- Identifies and guides around roadblocks
- Makes buying feel easier

N = 325; sample currently at 6000+
Source: SBI 2024 Seller Skills Survey

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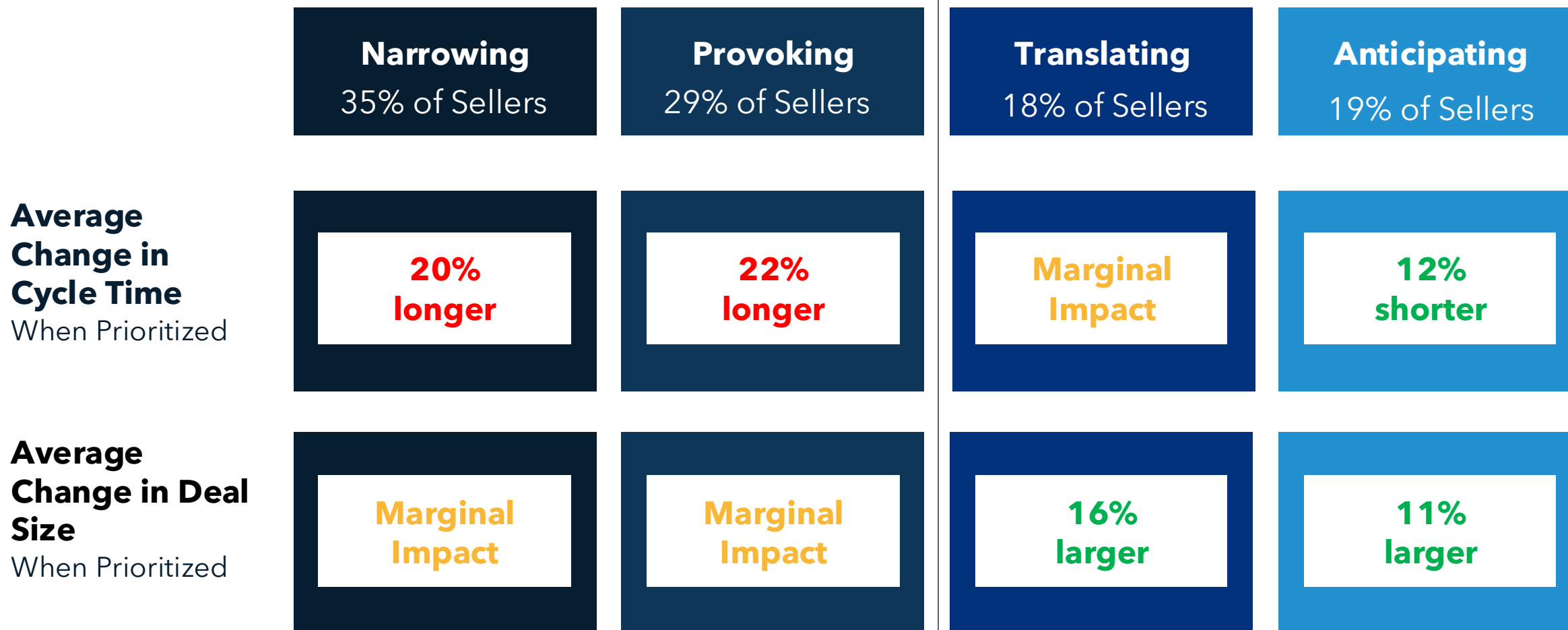
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Headway Selling

Translating and Anticipating drive faster deals and larger deals



N = 325; sample currently at 6000+.
Source: SBI 2024 Seller Skills Survey

Headway Selling

Headway Selling

1

Includes all commercial roles, not just sales

2

Customer success governs the commercial relationship

Focusing the **commercial relationship** on helping customers **successfully evolve their business by executing** their initiatives, aided by your **products and services**.

3

Prioritizing customer success creates commercial opportunity



Putting Headway Selling into action

Three keys to implementing Headway Selling

**Deeply understand the
buyer**

**Immerse the team in the
logic of Headway
Selling**

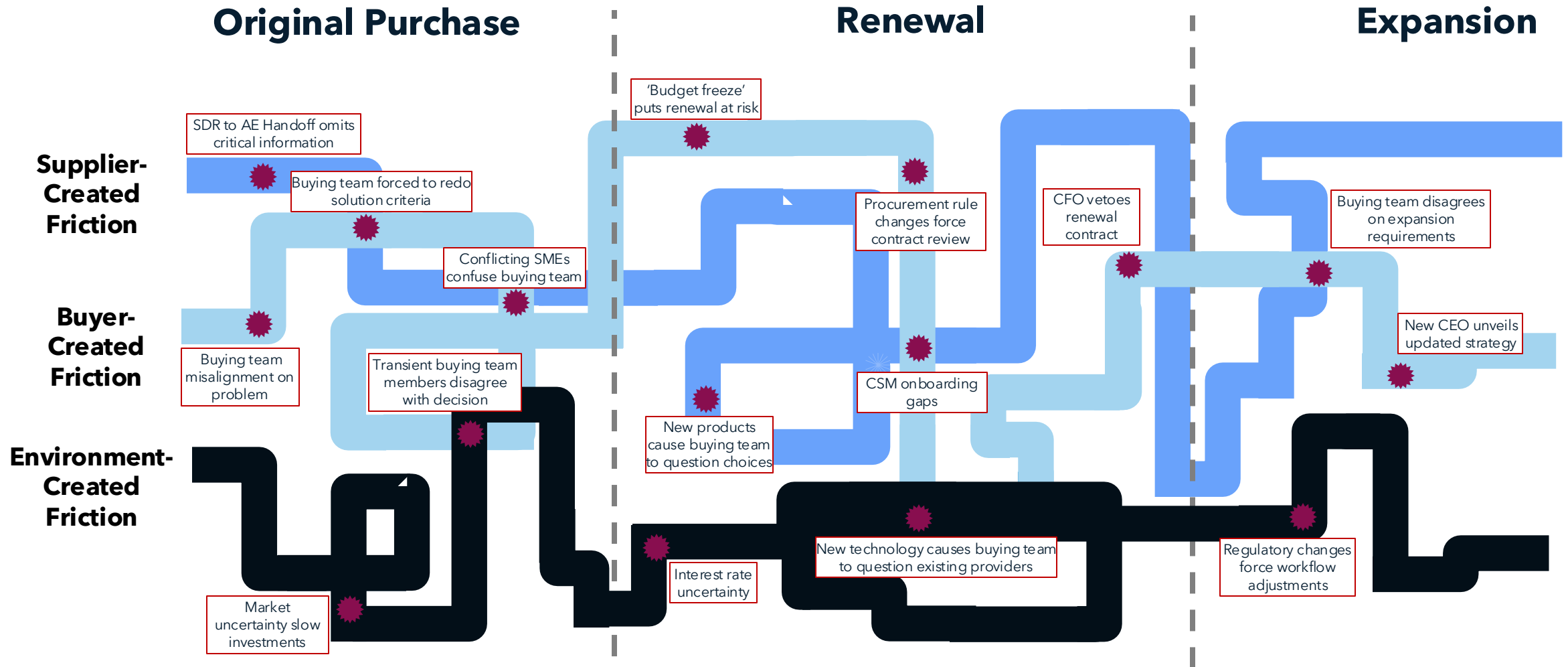
**Create an environment
where the frontline
prioritizes Headway
Selling**

Our typical view of the buyer journey



What the buyer journey actually looks like

Buying Friction Events Across the Customer Lifecycle



Buyer journey maps need to reflect buyer friction



Buyer Objectives

Stage-Specific Actions

Friction that Buyers Face

Always-On Actions Across the Journey

Information the Buyer Needs

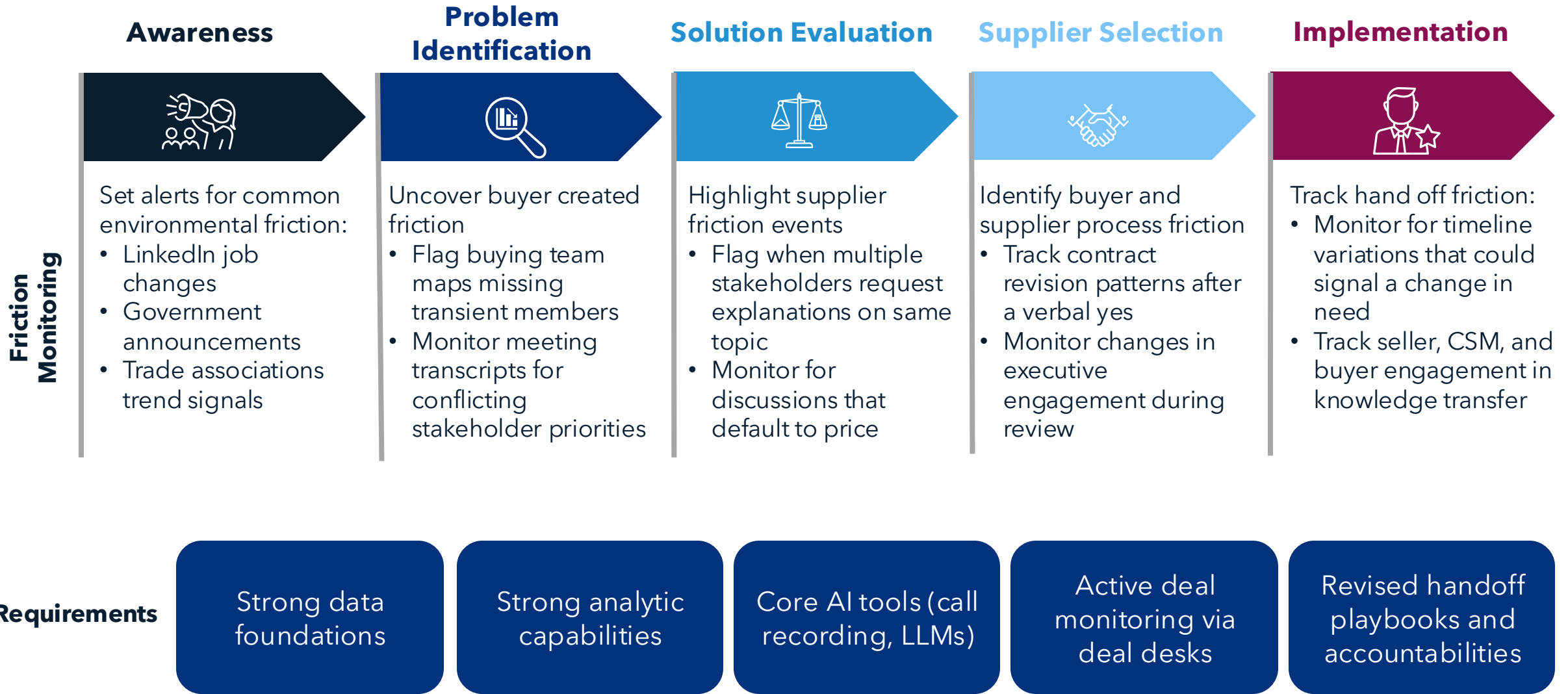
Directly document points of friction across the journey

Actions that were previously stage-specific (like consensus-building) now cut across the entire journey

Avoid the “Provoking” approach by clearly documenting the specific information needs based on buyer stage.

Indicators of Stage Transition

Automatic 'friction monitoring' allows for dynamic updates to the buyer journey



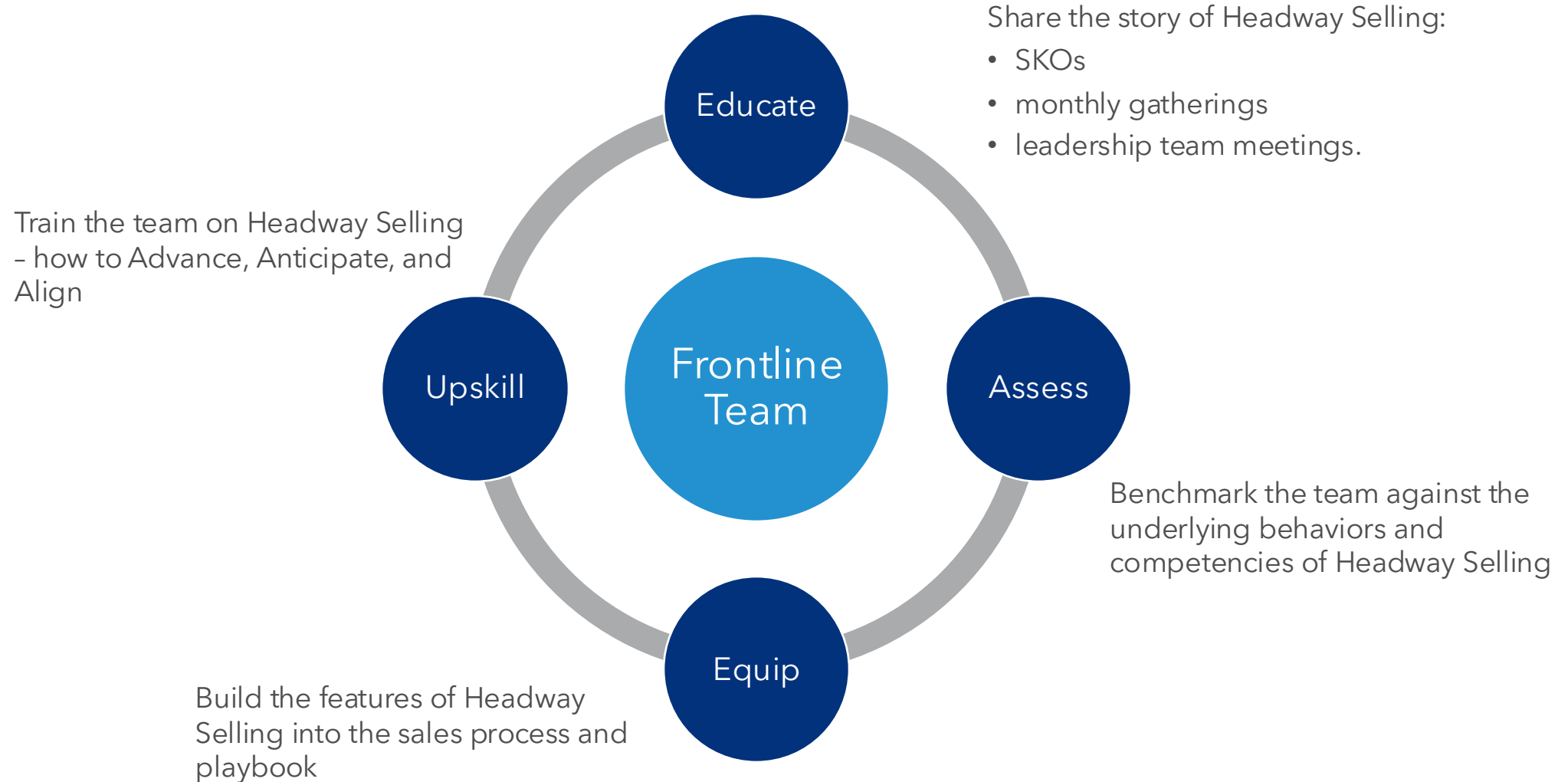
Three keys to implementing Headway Selling

Deeply understand the
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**Immerse the team in the
logic of Headway
Selling**

Create an environment
where the frontline
prioritizes Headway
Selling

Surround the team with Headway Selling



Three keys to implementing Headway Selling

Deeply understand the
buyer

Immerse the team in the
logic of Headway
Selling

**Create an environment
where the frontline
prioritizes Headway
Selling**

Our analysis revealed two leadership-driven sales environments

Structured Environments

- **A blueprint for success.** Leaders translate goals into specific seller actions.
- **Scalable tools to help focus.** Leaders supply support and tools to help sellers prioritize and execute.
- **Rewards for sellers who succeed.** Leaders regularly update compensation plans to reward sellers who succeed following the blueprint.

Discretionary Environments

- **A personal connection.** Leaders help sellers feel connected to their company, colleagues, and customers.
- **Holistic support.** Leaders provide a support structure that nurtures both their professional and personal growth.
- **Consistent and reasonable expectations.** Sellers feel trusted to use their judgment, and they believe their goals are achievable.

N = 325

Source: SBI Seller Skills Survey

Discretionary environments are key for Headway Selling

Change in Likelihood of Showing Strong Sales Approach Performance

Headway
Selling

Translating

Anticipating

Structured
Environment



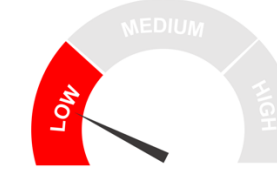
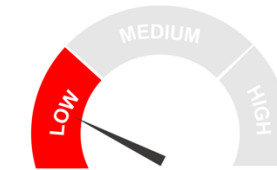
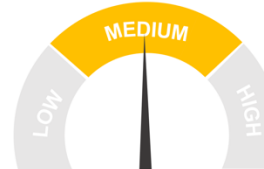
Discretionary
Environment



Headwinds
Selling

Narrowing

Provoking



N = 325

Source: SBI Seller Skills Survey

The environment we create shapes how our sellers think

Structured Environments

Sellers feel their success comes from the direction they're given



"My tools make it easier to be productive and make me successful."

"My company told me where to spend my time, I just needed to follow their directions."

"My plan tells me what I should do."

Discretionary Environments

Sellers feel their success comes from using their own judgment



"I know what leaders want, and they trust me to use my judgment to succeed."

"I really care about these customers; I wonder if I can find a different way to solve their problems."

"My manager helps me connect my work and personal goals. I can't imagine a better place to work."

A discretionary environment checklist

1

Showcase Real-World Impact

Foster a personal connection
by celebrating how sellers
drive impact.

- ✓ **Company:** Go beyond revenue and show how sellers help advance the company's strategic goals and values.
- ✓ **Customers:** Display how sellers' efforts impact customers by integrating testimonials into internal sales communications.
- ✓ **Colleagues:** Create collaborative learning hubs where sellers can swap ideas with peers and share ways to succeed.

2

Develop People Holistically

Integrate holistic support
into regular coaching
conversations at all levels.

- ✓ **Develop:** Show frontline managers how to grow beyond deal coaching and truly develop individuals and foster a healthy team.
- ✓ **Lead:** Help sellers understand the intersection of their personal & professional goals.

Remember this

Buying Teams Need...

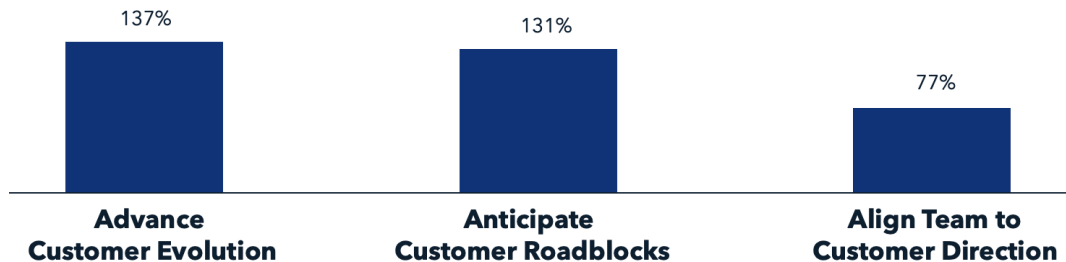
... help looking beyond their problems today to reach their goals for tomorrow

Commercial Teams Succeed By...

...adopting Headway Selling approaches to smooth friction and advance customer evolution

Headway Selling

Reducing Friction



Translating

- "Gets it" (what buyers are trying to accomplish)
- Quantifies long-term challenges and impact
- Acts as an extension of the team

Anticipating

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- Identifies and Guides Buyers Around Roadblocks
- Makes Buying Feel Easier