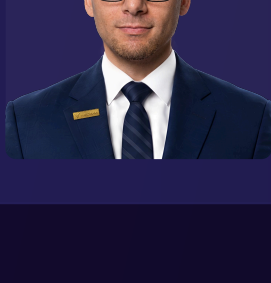


In B2B sales, timing beats talent

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NIIOMA Cognitive AI

The best pitch at the wrong moment loses to an ordinary one at the right moment. Signal scanning is how sellers find the right moment.

Every enterprise purchase starts with a change. A new chief digital officer arrives with a mandate. A company raises funding, enters a new market or announces a restructure. A regulation lands with a deadline attached. A team posts five job adverts for the same skill. A tender goes live.

Each of these is a signal: a visible sign that a business is about to need something it did not need last month. Signal scanning is the practice of watching for those signs continuously, and acting while they are fresh.

Why timing matters more than it used to

B2B buying windows open quietly and close fast. 6sense's 2025 research shows that buyers are well into their journey before they contact anyone, and the vendor they favour at that point wins about four deals in five. In 95% of cases, the winner was on the buyer's shortlist from day one.

95%

Winner shortlisted from day one; and preferred vendor wins 4 in 5 deals

That changes the economics of selling. Arriving late with a better product often means arriving after the decision. Arriving early with a relevant point of view means helping to shape it.

73%

Irrelevant outreach gets avoided

Bad timing has a cost of its own. Gartner found that 73% of buyers actively avoid vendors whose outreach is irrelevant. A message that would be welcome in the middle of a transformation programme is an interruption three months before it starts.

What counts as a signal



Useful signals tend to fall into a few families:

- People. A new executive, a key hire or a departure. New leaders review their vendors and bring their own priorities.
- Money. Funding rounds, budget announcements, earnings commentary and investment plans.
- Movement. New markets, acquisitions, new sites and restructures.
- Pressure. New regulation, compliance deadlines, security incidents and public commitments.
- Demand. Job adverts, tenders, RFPs and procurement notices.

No single signal proves intent. Together, they tell a story. A new CTO, a cluster of data engineering job adverts and a regulatory deadline at the same company is a strong reason to pay attention.

What AI changes

Scanning used to be manual, so most teams did it occasionally or not at all. A seller might check the news for their top 20 accounts. Everything beyond that was guesswork.

AI makes continuous scanning possible across thousands of companies and sources at once: news, filings, job boards, tender portals and company announcements. It can connect separate signals into a pattern and flag the accounts where something is genuinely moving.

It also remembers. A signal that means little today, such as a single senior hire, can matter a great deal three months later when it sits next to a funding round and a new market announcement. Patterns like that are almost impossible to track by hand.

That is market intelligence in its most practical form. In place of a quarterly report on where the market is heading, a seller gets a live view of which buyers are moving this week, and why.

A signal is a reason to listen

There is a trap here. A signal is easy to misuse as an excuse for another automated sequence. 'Congratulations on the new role' followed by a pitch has become a cliché that new executives learn to ignore.

The point of a signal is understanding. It tells you what a buyer is likely to care about now, so your first contact can be about their problem rather than your product. Used well, signal scanning leads to fewer messages, sent at the right time, saying something the buyer actually wants to hear.

That still takes judgement. AI can find the signal and draft the first version. An experienced person decides whether the moment is real and whether there is anything worth saying.

Why it is key to selling

In a market where buyers decide early and screen out noise, signal scanning is how a vendor reaches the shortlist before it closes. It also makes a sales team more efficient in a plain, measurable way. More time goes to accounts where something is happening, and less goes on chasing companies with no reason to buy this year.

Most of all, it changes the question sales starts from. 'Who can we contact?' becomes 'who needs us now?' That question sits at the centre of how NIIOMA runs growth for vendors: read the signals first, then reach the right person with a message worth reading.

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