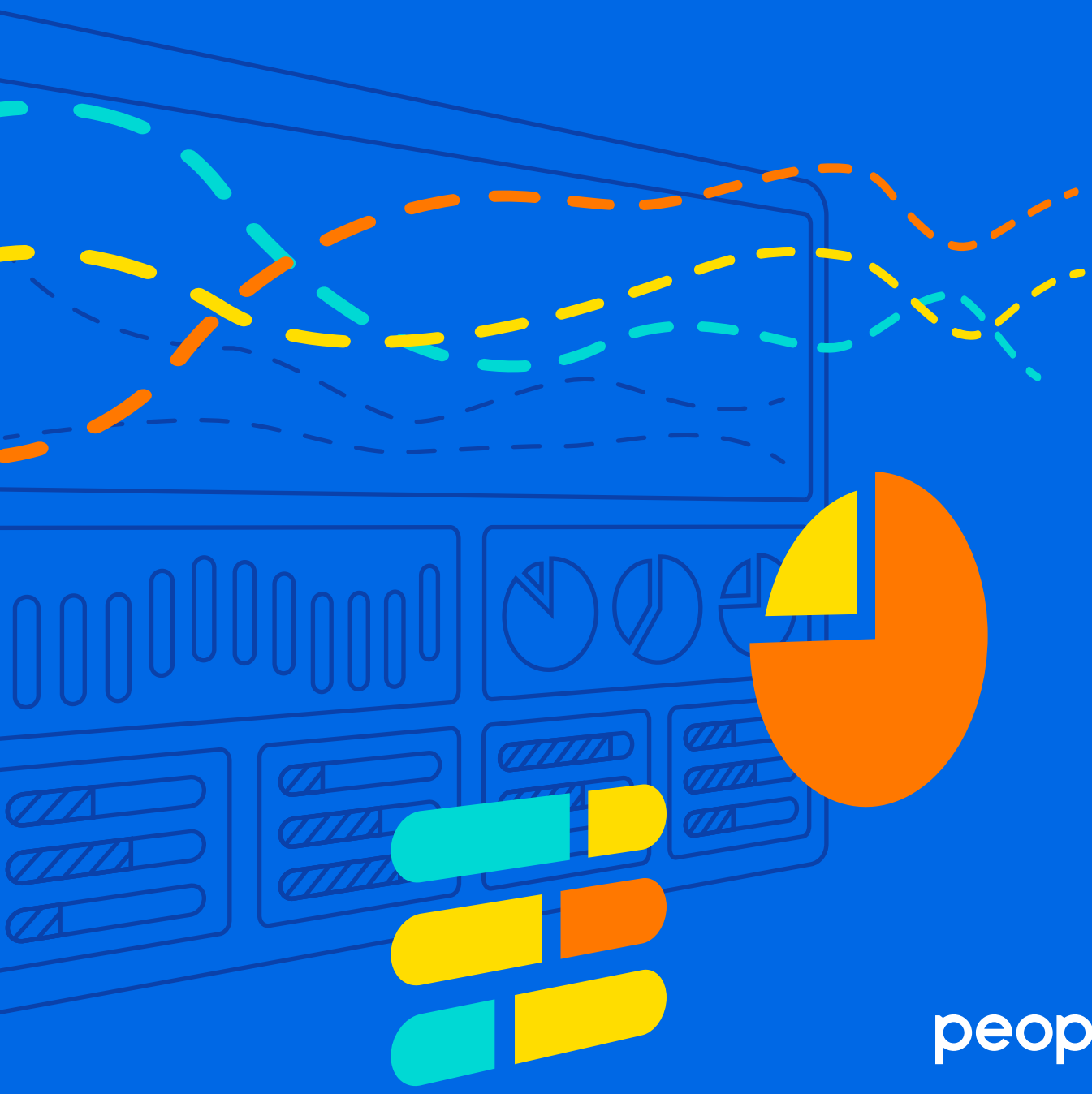
The AI-Augmented Sales Leader

How Sales Leaders Are Moving to Data-driven Coaching and Leveraging AI to Increase Their Team's Effectiveness



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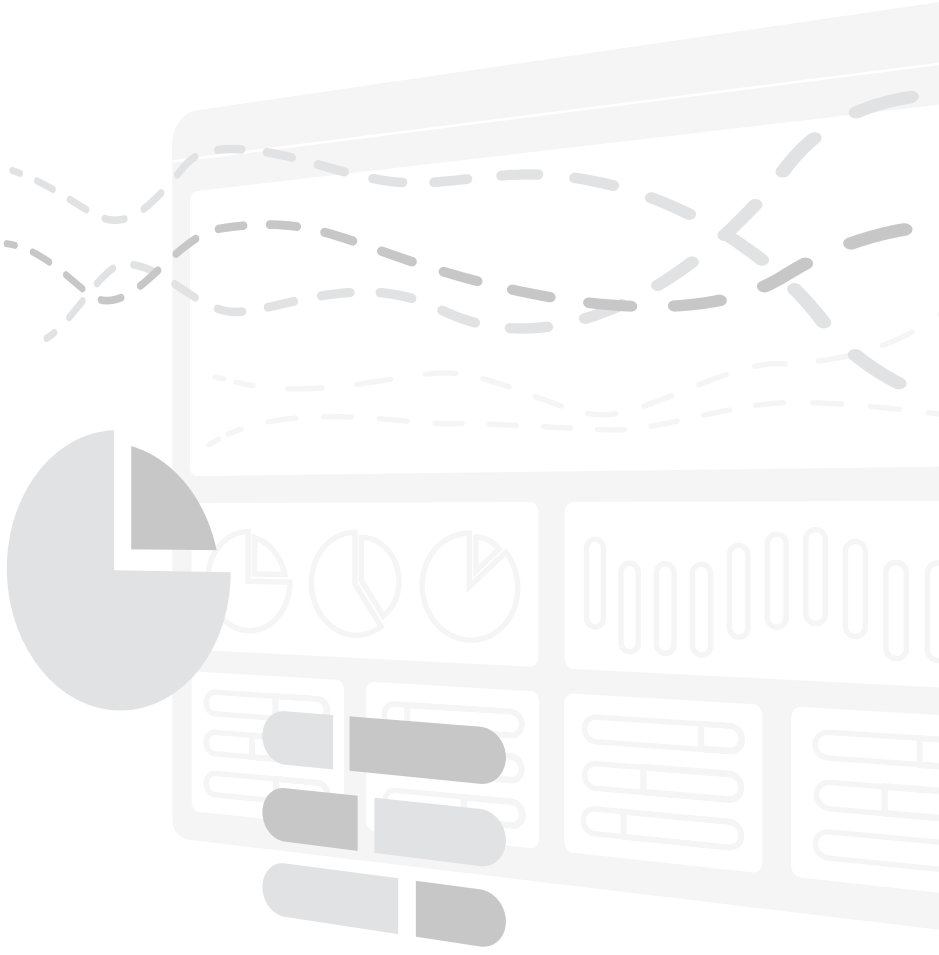


Introduction

Five years ago, Forrester's VP and Principal Analyst Andy Hoar lit a fire under the B2B sales sector with the projection that one million B2B sales positions were to be eliminated by 2020. At the time, more than two-thirds of B2B buyers said they preferred doing business online rather than talking to a salesperson.

Forrester's deadline has arrived, and it looks like Hoar's number may have been too aggressive.

The flipside of his analysis was that sales professionals and managers who learned how to benefit from B2B sales technology would operate at a significant advantage over their peers. Today, they are using sales force automation (SFA) systems to increase rep productivity. Specifically, find that artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning platforms enable reps and managers to be co-pilots in the sales process, rather than putting sales on autopilot (and thus replacing sales positions, as was predicted).

AI-augmented sales leadership has become a core function of today's B2B environment.

In order to remain competitive, sales leaders must first increase their team's efficiency through the automation of repetitive tasks such as activity logging and contact creation, as well as enable them with an accurate, "evergreen" CRM.

Furthermore, sales leaders will need to be equipped with the capability of intelligently inspecting their team's deals, optimizing their priorities, proactively coaching with leading (not lagging) indicators, and providing their team with the ideal buyer's path to increase their win-rate and accelerate their deals.

In this ebook, you'll learn a few of the key ways sales leaders are enabling their teams through the power of AI-augmentation as well as the roles AI and humans play in generating revenue.

If you're interested in learning more about how People.ai can drive success for your sales team through the power of AI-augmentation, please visit our website **www.people.ai** today and request your free demo.

We hope you enjoy this ebook!

Best,

The People.ai Team

The New Age of the AI-augmented Sales Leader

While historically AI and machine learning tools have been segregated to technical data science and development roles, the past several years has seen a democratization of these tools to more business-centric roles, including sales.

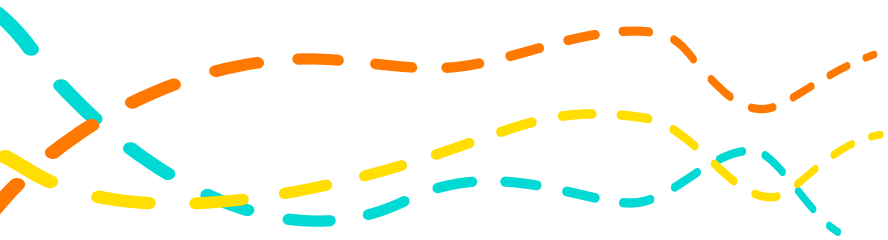
This new-age of AI and ML technologies offer the front line sales manager predictive insights to more consistently build sales pipeline and forecast their team's deals.

AI analyzes and learns from the behaviors of top-performing reps in order to benchmark and predict the health of deals. Looking at indicators of deal engagement such as the number of upcoming meetings, and what titles are involved in a deal, AI solutions can alert sales managers of things like "phantom deals" in their forecast or potentially healthy deals that could get pulled up into the current quarter.

In addition to alerts, sales managers are able to have a better understanding of how their team spends their time. Using AI to aggregate their team's activities and match those activities to deals and accounts in their CRM, sales managers have the ability to monitor not just the number of activities (number of emails, phone calls, meetings, etc.), but rather are they conducting the right activities. Using this information sales leaders can monitor things such as the time reps spend "hunting vs farming," or time spent working specific accounts.

Using AI to both capture data and deliver insights on their team's performance, sales leaders have the ability to surface previously hidden patterns in their team's behavior. These patterns and insights allow sales leaders to optimize their seller's playbooks, benchmark rep activities, and ultimately coach their teams with data rather than emotion.

In the following sections of this ebook, we'll be exploring how sales organizations are leveraging AI to both capture the data they need to gain these insights, as well as specific use cases of how sales leaders are using this data.



How Can Sales Leaders Use AI to Augment Their Team?

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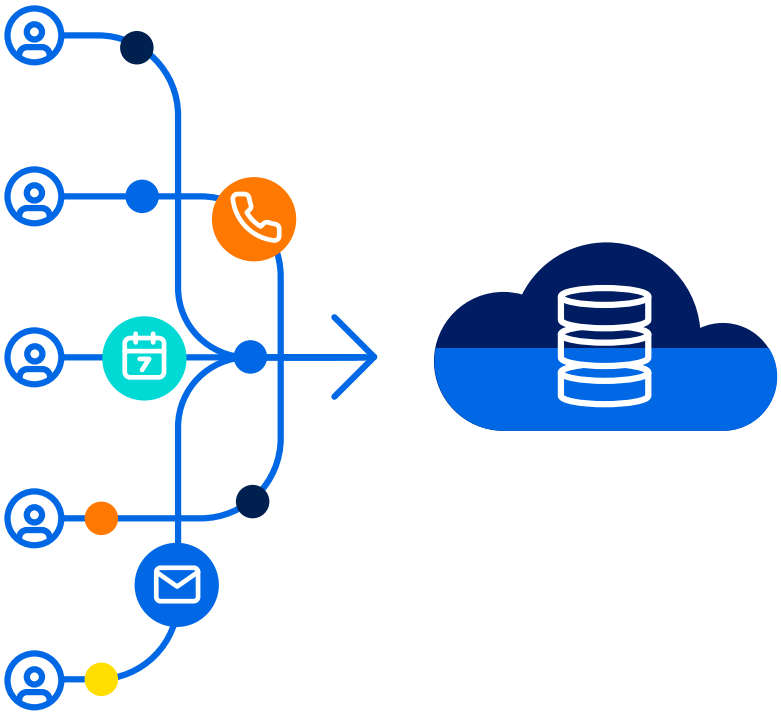
1. Boost Team Productivity With Automated Contact and Activity Capture

Complete and accurate CRM data is the lifeblood of sales reporting and business decisions.

Historically, sales leaders have relied on their sales reps to individually update their CRM and log their activities (calls, meetings, emails, etc.). This manual data entry has been shown to consume up to 30% of a reps day, taking away valuable time which could be used for selling.

To both boost team productivity and ensure CRM data accuracy, People.ai works behind the scenes to capture, create, and update contact and activity data in your CRM.

How? By using APIs to securely integrate into your organization's email, calendar, telephony, and collaboration systems, and automatically capturing and logging all contact and activity data from prospect and customer interactions into your CRM.



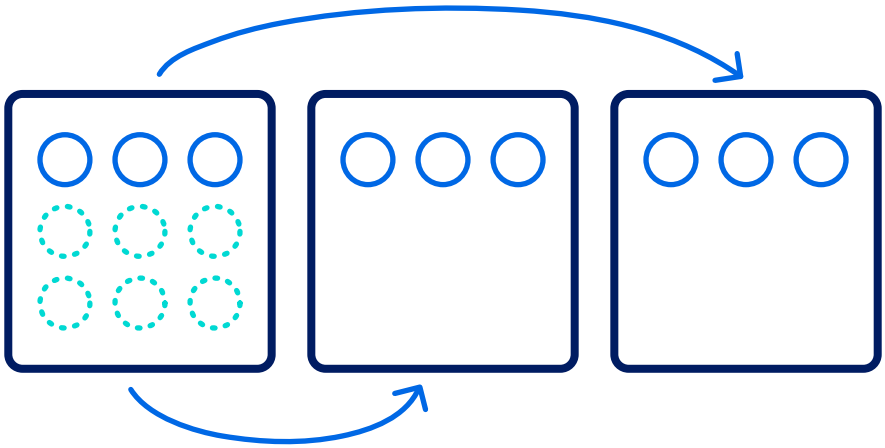
2. Improve Team Selling Capacity by Optimizing Account Allocation

In enterprise B2B sales, the sales process can be dramatically different and range in complexity from account to account. Account Executives assigned to target accounts and regions can easily become overburdened by accounts needing additional attention, while other reps might have the bandwidth to take on more target accounts.

This imbalance can go unnoticed and can lead to unintentional neglect of target accounts and a decrease in the team's selling capacity.

People.ai provides complete and accurate sales activity data for each rep so sales leaders can see and optimize the yield of target accounts. Using predictive notifications, alerts, and customizable dashboards, all fueled by this activity data, sales managers can truly understand how, and where their reps spend their time.

People.ai equips sales managers with insights to know which reps are maxed out, and which have the bandwidth to take on more accounts. Using these insights, sales managers have the ability to reassign unworked accounts, and coach teams to maximum selling capacity.

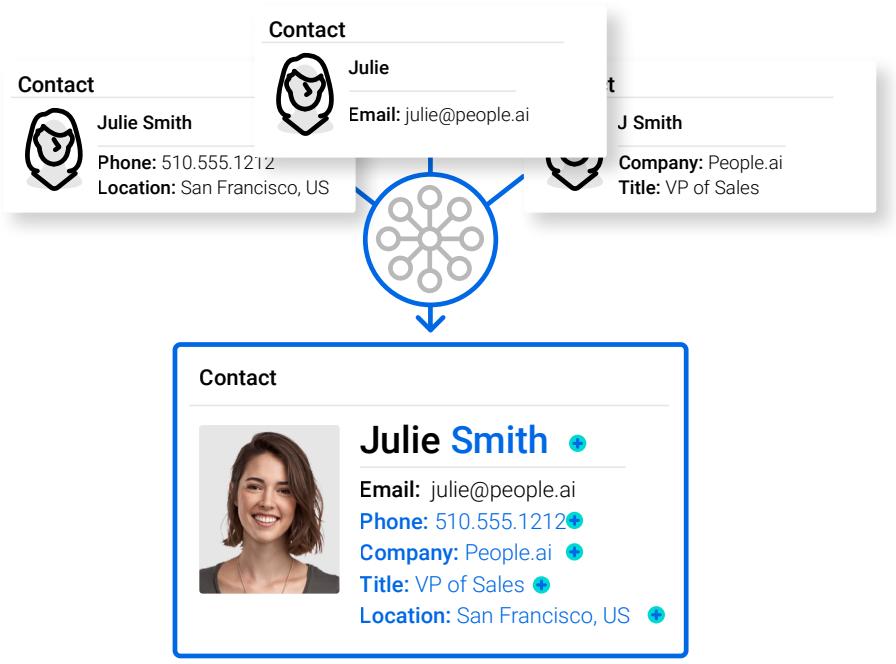


3. Maintain an "Evergreen" CRM

Most CRMs are notoriously outdated and filled with stale data. With 1 in 4 contacts in the typical database containing critical errors, sales reps end up wasting time correcting inaccurate data and spend too much time searching multiple sources for the correct information.

Without a solution that maintains an evergreen CRM that updates data in real-time and cross-references contact info to assure accuracy, sales teams will never be able to fully rely on their CRM.

People.ai ensures you have an evergreen CRM by using proprietary PeopleGraph™ technology to validate and enrich the contacts it creates with systematically verified titles, phone numbers, state, and country values. When a contact's information changes, such as their job title or phone number, People.ai detects the change and automatically updates your CRM, so your sales team always has a reliable, evergreen CRM.



How Sales Leaders are Using AI to Become a Data-Driven Coach

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1. Unlock Leading Indicators

Sales leaders are constantly faced with having to coach their teams based on outcomes from the past weeks and months of reps' activities. These outcomes are based on the behaviors of their team. But, relying on these data points puts the manager in the role of a reactionary disciplinarian, rather than a proactive data-driven sales coach. There is a better way.

Using data-driven leading indicators, sales leaders can answer questions such as, are reps spending their time prospecting into new accounts or only talking to people who are associated with open opportunities? Or, are they spending all of their time on only a few of their assigned accounts and neglecting potential opportunities?

People.ai can help you analyze metrics such as the number of accounts touched, new business meetings held, cold emails sent, and executives vs individual contributors engaged, so managers can learn what "good" activity looks like for the top-performing reps and use historical data to define coaching benchmarks and ramp new hires faster.

"Building a reliable and repeatable sales process starts with empowering sales leaders with data and insights. Historically, sales leaders have been forced to coach on reps' qualitative feedback and general sales output. Using the activity data automatically ingested from People.ai, I'm able to equip our sales leaders with leading indicator insights. Having these insights allows sales leaders, to define benchmarks that predict high rep performance and coach struggling reps before it's too late."

Vadim Zakiyan
Head Of Sales Operations
at LivePerson

LIVEPERSON

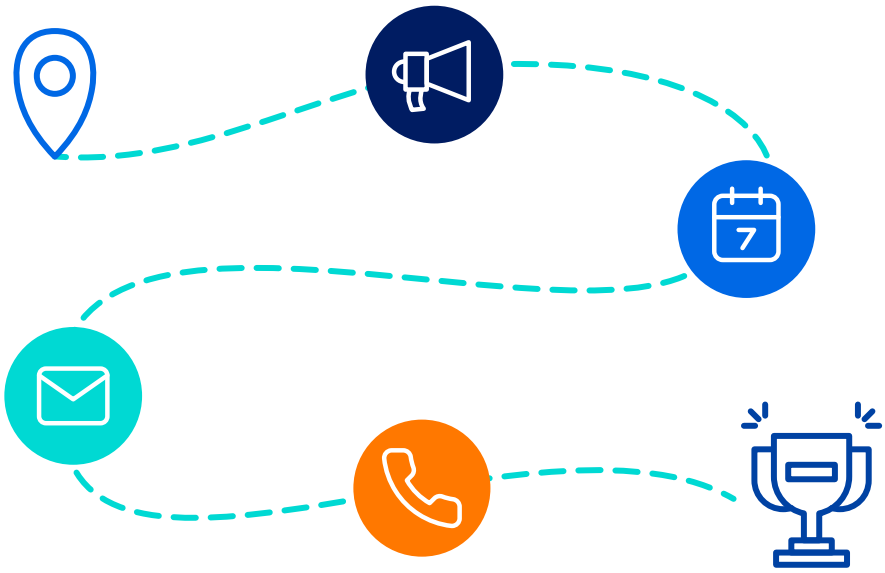
2. Increase Deal Velocity Through Data-driven Coaching

In a world of complex sales cycles and growing sales teams, leveraging AI and data over emotion and hunches to coach teams is becoming more important every day. So much so, that in the Harvard Business Review survey, Accelerating Sales And Marketing Efforts Through Artificial Intelligence, 43% of respondents reported that the single biggest benefit of AI in business will be data-driven coaching.

Using AI and the data from your company's past successes, sales leaders are able to coach to an ideal buyer path and dramatically increase the likelihood and velocity of more closed-won deals..

People.ai aggregates the activities of your reps and matches their activities to open opportunities vs renewal vs accounts with no open opportunities, giving you the ability to view where reps are spending the majority of their time.

Additionally, People.ai makes it easy to view this data in a simple "Hunting vs Farming" dashboard that offers insight into how reps are spending their time. Having this information allows sales leaders to be proactive and jump in and reprioritize a rep's accounts and activities to focus on new business when necessary.



3. Monitor If Reps Are Spending Their Time "Hunting vs Farming"

Depending on your organization's maturity, sales leadership and sales operations must profitably grow revenue from both "new-logos" and existing accounts. To accomplish this, sales reps' responsibilities range from acquiring new business (hunter), retaining and growing existing business (farmer), or both (hybrid).

While some organizations have definitive roles for hunting and farming reps, many organizations have sales reps that do both. But, do you know how much time your reps are spending on expanding accounts vs landing new logos?

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People.ai is Here to Help

People.ai accelerates enterprise growth through the power of AI. With the industry's only Revenue Intelligence System™, People.ai frees all customer-facing teams, including sales, marketing, and customer success, from manual data entry by automatically capturing all contact and customer activity data, dynamically updating your CRM and other systems of record, and providing actionable intelligence across management tools to realize the full selling capacity of the enterprise.

Looking to build out your AI-augmented sales function?

Schedule a Demo today.

Are you ready to start leveraging the power of artificial intelligence to close more deals?

Find out how People.ai helps Sales Leaders gain visibility, increase their team's productivity, and close more deals by scheduling a demo of the People.ai solution today.

Learn More **Request a Demo**

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