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The ROI of Relationship Intelligence

Report | Insights from top dealmakers

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Authenticity in the AI Age

Technology has too often dehumanized and devalued interactions rather than improved them. AI has exacerbated the problem. Nobody likes getting automated boilerplate messages.

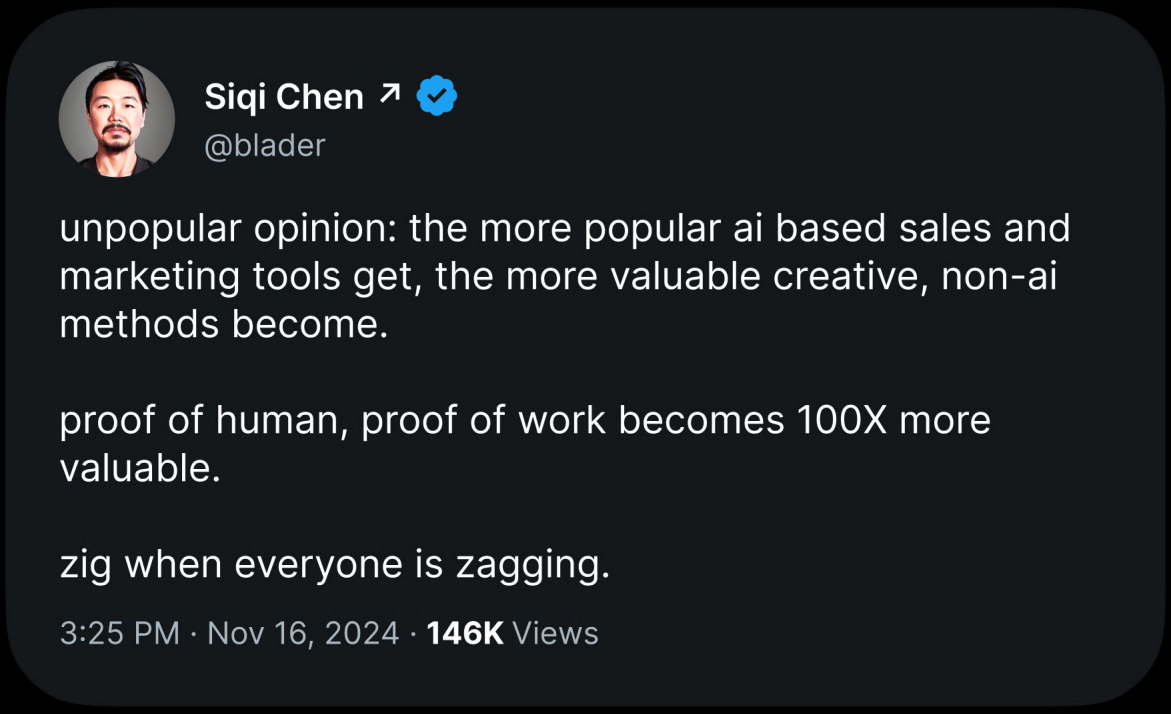
The most rewarding deals are relationship-driven, not transactional. Building valuable relationships is not a numbers game though. The most fruitful and meaningful interactions come from those unplanned and unprogrammed moments. When you connect with the right person, at the right time, in the right way. The exact opposite of mass outreach.

sam lessin
@lessin

AI will indeed spell the end of all human outbound sales jobs. NOT because AI “replaces” them, but instead because AI so poisons the well and no one responds to anything anymore.

9:05 AM · Nov 3, 2024 · **166.7K** Views

We surveyed 75 dealmakers across Commercial Real Estate, Executive Search, Professional Services, Financial Services, and Technology to understand how they're building authentic relationships in the noisy era of AI.



The results indeed confirm the challenges posed by AI-generated inundation, but also the opportunities to leverage technologies like Ren to solve for authenticity. In our report, you'll learn about the techniques, technologies, and strategic thinking that delivers long-term relationships and deals.

Ren is Relationship Intelligence for Dealmakers.

To get actionable intelligence for people and companies you care about, create a free account at rensystems.com.

About Our Participants

Diverse representation

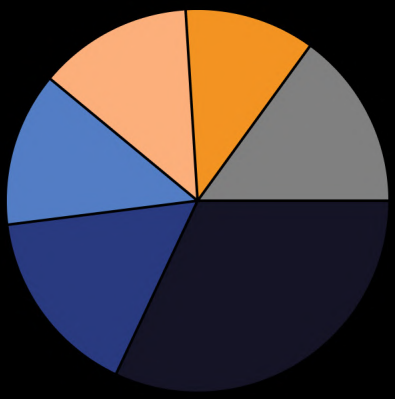
The Ren users surveyed represent a diverse sample of sellers, producers, and contributors from boutique firms to enterprises, and across industries and seniority levels.

ORGANIZATION SIZE

- 1-9 12%
- 10-49 23%
- 50-249 28%
- 250-1,000 9%
- 1,000+ 28%

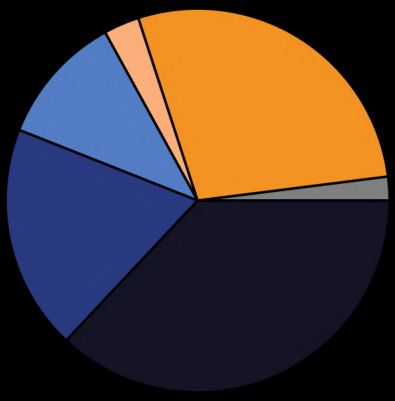
INDUSTRY

- PROFESSIONAL SERVICES 11%
- INVESTING 13%
- EXECUTIVE SEARCH 13%
- TECHNOLOGY 16%
- COMMERCIAL REAL ESTATE 32%
- OTHER 15%



SENIORITY

- IC 28%
- TEAM LEAD 3%
- MID MANAGEMENT 11%
- SR MANAGEMENT 19%
- EXECUTIVE 37%
- OTHER 2%

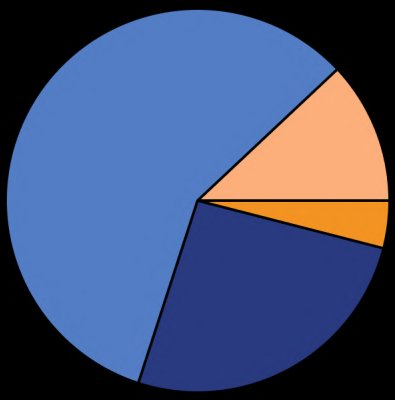


They are a big deal.

Our participants represent the silent majority of dealmakers, overlooked by sales technology that primarily focuses on high-volume, low-value selling.

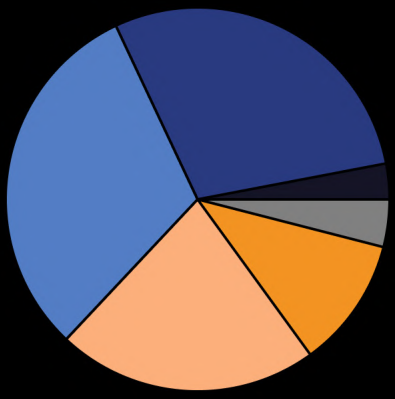
OF DEALS WORKED ON ANNUALLY

- 1-2 4%
- 3-10 26%
- 11-100 58%
- 100+ 12%



TYPICAL DEAL SIZE

- $100M+ 4%
- $11M-$100M 11%
- $1M-$10M 22%
- 100,000-$1M 31%
- 10,000-100,000 29%
- <10,000 3%



Relationship Advice

A day in life of a dealmaker

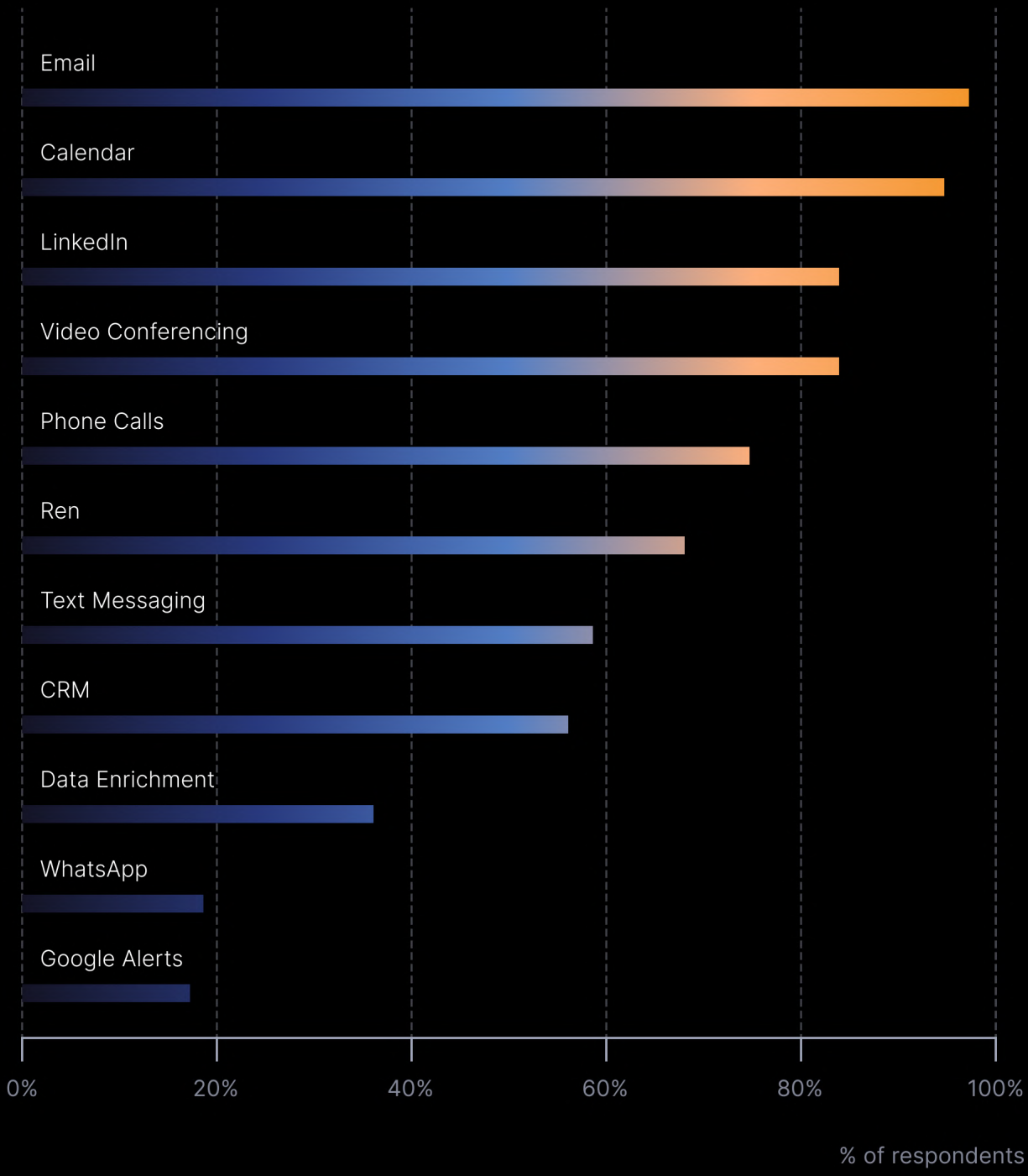
Winning large deals means building long-lasting relationships. To do so, dealmakers invest in timely, value-added, multichannel touchpoints, prioritizing in-person face time. Survey participants reported that such an approach was even more effective than mutual references and having a differentiated offering.

Correlation between deal size and years to establish relationship with buyers

	< 12 months	12-24 months	24+ months
< $10,000	50%	50%	—
$10,000 - $100,000	43%	52%	5%
$100,000 - $1M	57%	30%	13%
$1M - $10M	13%	81%	6%
$11M +	18%	73%	9%

Scheduling more meetings is a top priority. Dealmakers use more than a half-dozen communication and software tools every day to network and build relationships.

Tools used daily



There is no beating direct communication.
Top dealmakers research their targets, write emails, and pick up the phone.

Impactfulness for making new professional connections

#1 Email
#2 LinkedIn
#3 Referrals
#4 Phone
#5 Video Conferencing
#6 Ren
#7 CRM
#8 Text Messaging
#9 Conferences
#10 Data Enrichment
#11 Google Alerts

Impactfulness for strengthening existing relationships

#1 Email
#2 LinkedIn
#3 Phone
#4 Ren
#5 Referrals
#6 Video Conferencing
#7 Text Messaging
#8 CRM
#9 Conferences
#10 Google Alerts
#11 Data Enrichment

Impactfulness of techniques

Dealmakers say that outreach at the right time is more impactful than having a differentiated service to offer.

Timely outreach after key activity or milestone

In-person meetings and/or catch-ups

Mutual connections that can act as references

Ability to offer differentiated service

Periodic outreach to keep in touch

Biggest challenges

“Having insights to share that compels them to respond”

—

Individual Contributor at Executive Search

“How to personalize content to stand out from the mass outreaches most executives receive.”

—

Individual Contributor at Professional Services Firm

“Being unique when first connecting.”

—

Executive at Professional Services Firm

“Establishing raport and distinguishing myself apart from everyone else who is trying to get their attention.”

—

Executive at Insurance Firm

“Knowing it is the right timing to reach out and what is the current trend within the industry and how that would affect the IT department.”

—

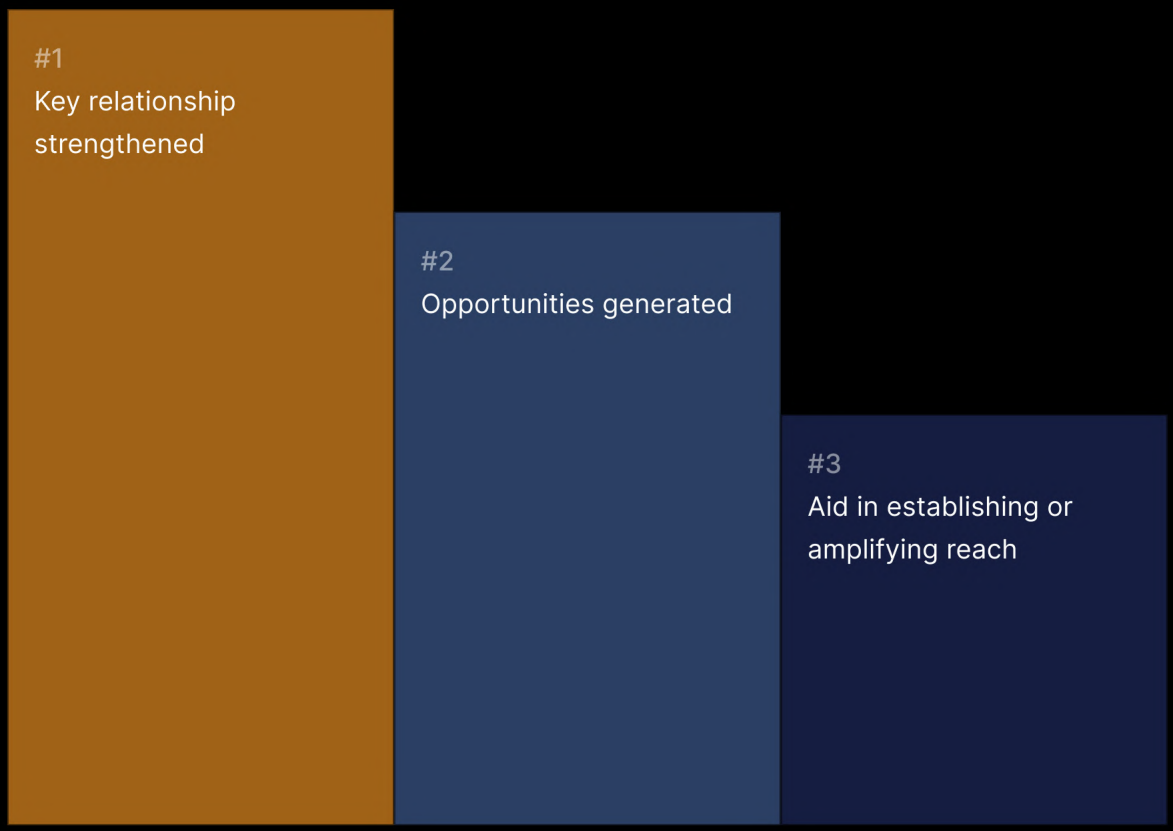
Sales Development Representative at Technology Firm

Powered by Ren

Relationship Intelligence

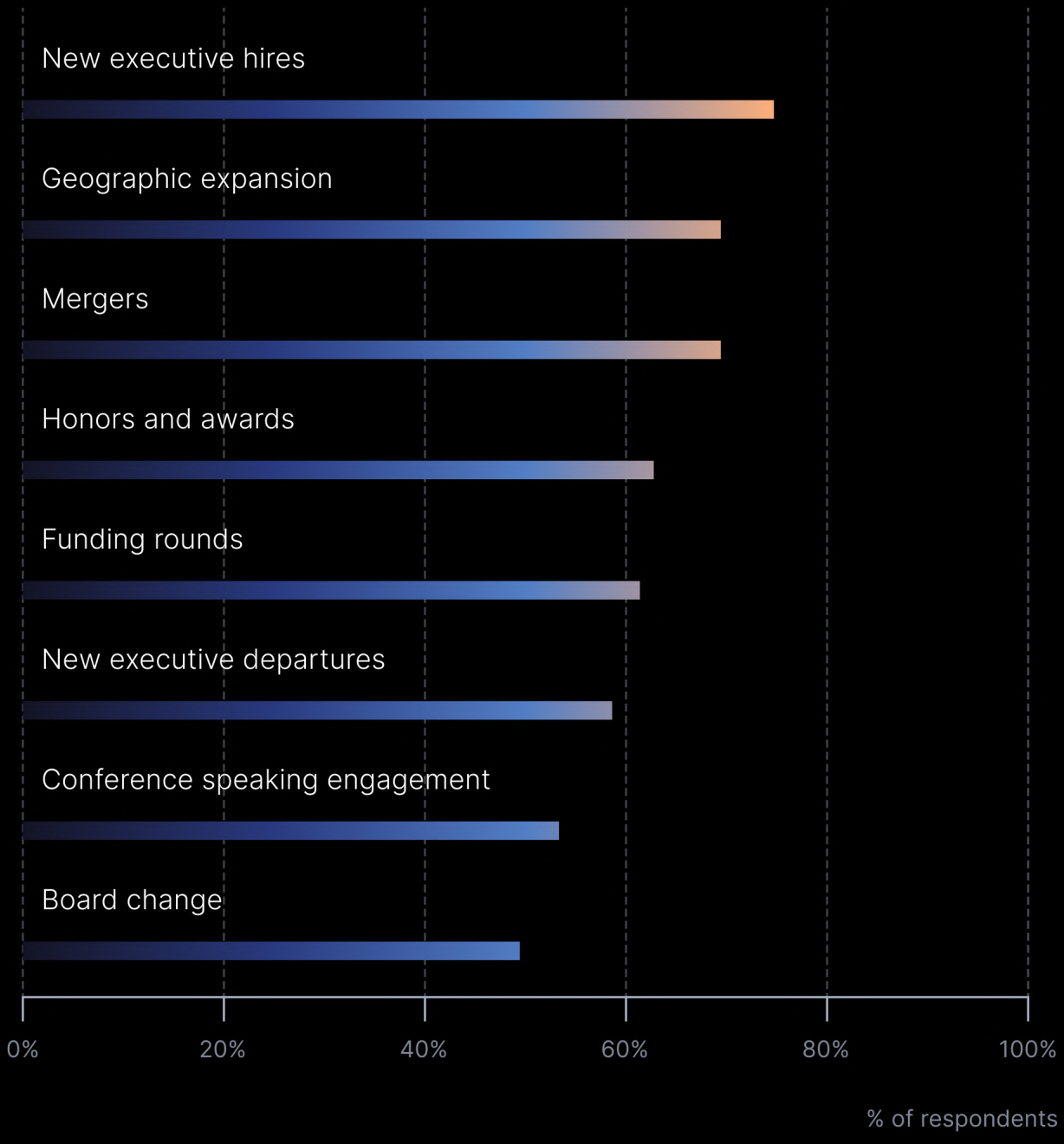
68% of survey participants reported using Ren daily to establish and strengthen relationships. The reason is simple: Ren gives dealmakers the insights that they can't find elsewhere to generate thoughtful, value-added outreach to key contacts.

Most common benefits of Ren



New executive hires is the most actionable topic for survey participants, followed closely by geographic expansion, M&A, and awards.

Key news topics for building relationships



Advice to other dealmakers

“Your network is your net worth. Reputation is everything. Give first without any anticipation or expectation of the return. It's all about who you know and how well.”

—
Manager at Executive Search Firm

“Invest time in getting to know the person not just the buyer”

—
Senior Manager at PE Firm

“Follow up and follow through”

—
Executive at Venture Capital Firm

“Lead with value. Ask as much as possible about their world.”

— Individual Contributor at boutique Commercial Real Estate Firm

“Follow up, be timely, and have something new or different to offer”

—
Executive at Professional Services Firm

Parting Thoughts

The one thing that AI, by definition, cannot replace is human-to-human relationships. If you work in a relationship-driven industry today, you have an unprecedented opportunity to stand out and discover deals that nobody else does – by building and strengthening your network.

How? Get informed about what's happening in the lives of the people you care about and start reaching out with what matters to them.

The only way to win in sales:

1. Be relevant. Reach out with context that is timely and valuable.
2. Play the long game: build relationships.
3. Do business with people who know and trust you.

REPEAT

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