



| A new year in troubled times

Results Quick Survey |
Benelux 2025

Mercuri BENELUX

Foreword

A new year in troubled times

The year 2024 was marked by profound geopolitical and economic changes that have a far-reaching impact on Benelux industry and sales. Uncertainties with the election of Donald Trump, conflicts in Gaza and Ukraine, political uncertainty and policies in both the Netherlands and Belgium have a major impact on the economic climate.

It is not just geopolitical factors that give our entrepreneurs headaches. Increased price competitiveness and more complex decision-making processes create challenges during our sales processes.

With this in mind, we asked our Benelux customers what the mood was at the start of 2025. We also wanted to gauge the outlook of sales people and their managers for the new year. What challenges do they see and what priorities are being set. The answers give insight into the mindset within our sales departments and provide information to make our sales policy respond to these trends.

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Chapter 1

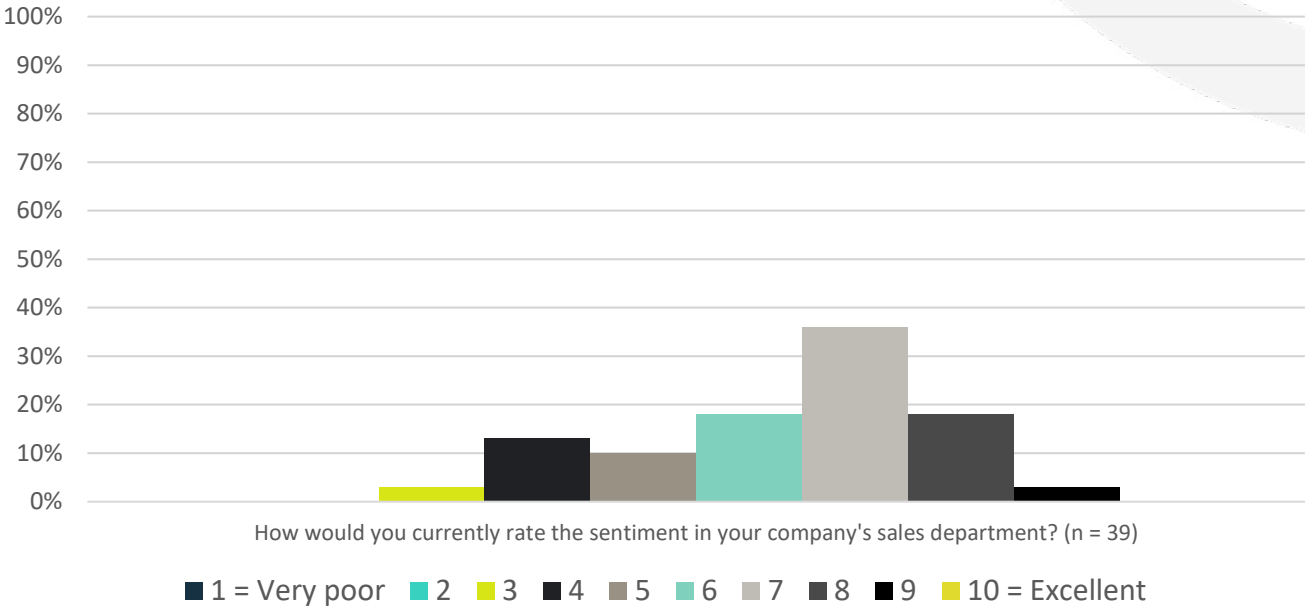
Current mood and participating
sectors

Chapter 1:

Benelux market remains cautiously positive

Vote at the start of 2025

- Vote at the start of 2025.
- The current mood can hardly be called euphoric but still, at 6.36 on a scale of 1 to 10, the average score is rather positive. At 35%, 7 is the most frequently given answer. What is also striking is that the Benelux score is 0.5 points better than that of our German colleagues in a similar survey. This survey shows that the attitude within sales organisations is neutral to slightly positive. Economic uncertainty and increased competitive pressure are indicated as the main challenges. In the next chapter, we will expand on this for the Benelux.
- The 51 respondents came from the following sectors Services 17%, Manufacturing 20.5%, Wholesale 14%, Automotive 14%, IT 10%, Pharma 10%, Banking 5%, Transport & Logistics 4% and 5.5% others.



A woman with dark, curly hair is wearing a white button-down shirt and dark pinstriped trousers. She has her arms crossed and is looking upwards and to the right with a slight smile. The background is a solid light blue color.

Chapter 2:

2025 outlook and challenges

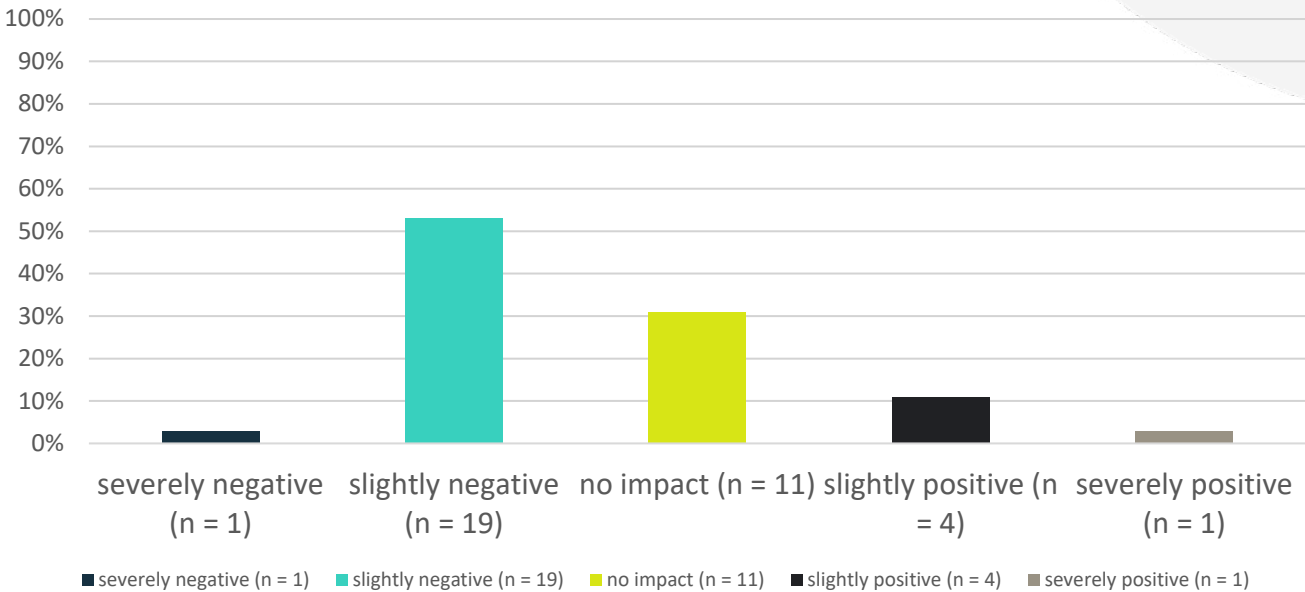
Chapter 2:

2025 outlook and challenges

- Notwithstanding the year 2024 was marked by persistent economic and geopolitical uncertainties, 57% of respondents scored 7 or higher on the scale of 1 to 10.
- This mindset is important because sales is the face of the company. If they fail to convince customers of their services or products, this reflects on the entire company and its results. By using a value-oriented approach and customer-centric strategies, companies can sharpen their unique selling points and approach their target groups more effectively.

- This says something about the current situation but what about the expectations towards 2025. In doing so, the results indicate a rather cautious attitude, 56% are more likely to say they are slightly negative to negative and over 30% are convinced that current developments will have no impact on sales results. 14% are optimistic and are convinced that current developments will have a positive to very positive impact.

What impact do you expect from current developments, such as changes in the US or local political challenges, on the sales success of your company?

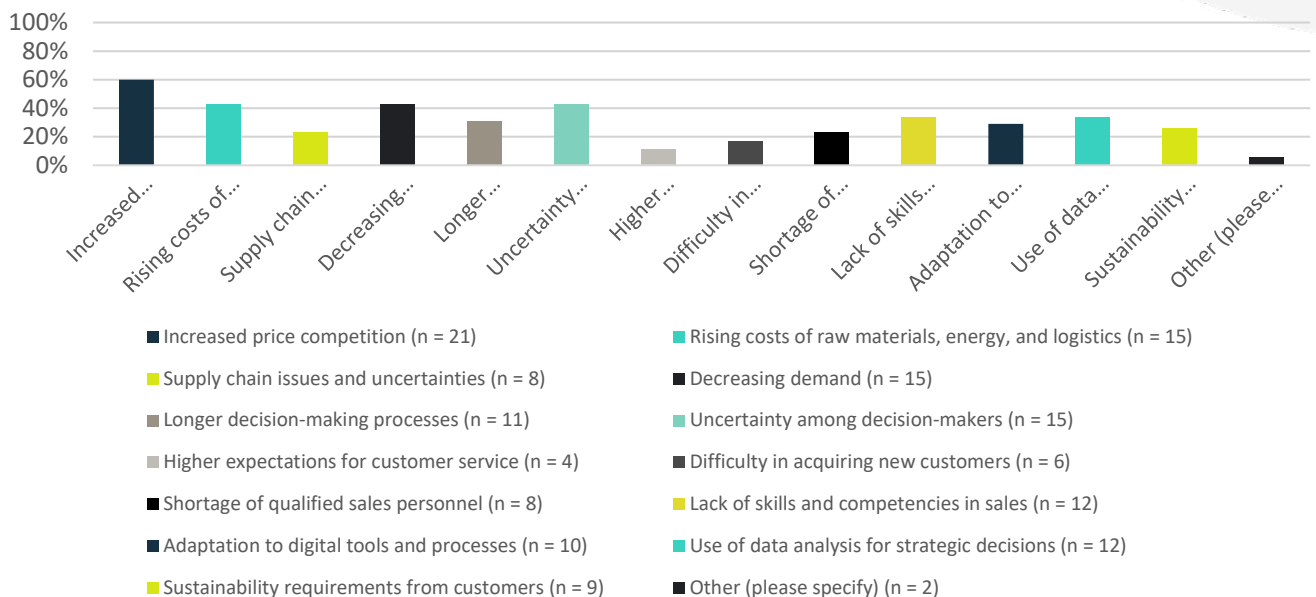


Chapter 2:

2025 outlook and challenges

- Despite ongoing uncertainties around the world, in the Netherlands and Belgium, the outlook within sales departments towards 2025 appears to be cautiously positive rather than negative. At the same time, many companies are facing structural challenges such as a shortage of skilled labour and digital transformation that are testing their ability to adapt to market dynamics. Therefore, we also asked the question: What key challenges do you expect in terms of sales in 2025? Here, participants were allowed to indicate more than 1 answer.
- The survey shows that the competitive environment will be further tightened in 2025 which is initially characterised by a further increase in price competitiveness. This is indicated by 59% of participants as the most important challenge for sales environments. In a shared 2nd place, 42% of respondents indicated the following challenges: rising costs, declining demand and uncertainty among decision-makers. 33% also indicated that the lack of sufficient sales competence is an issue and that they see an increase in data analytics when making strategic decisions....
- Since price competitiveness is the biggest challenge, sales departments should focus on developing strategies to offer competitive prices without compromising on margins. This can be done by further segmentation that may include the following criteria: 1. price sensitivity, 2. focus on value selling, 3. developing negotiation skills. In turn, declining demand and uncertainty among decision-makers indicates the need for a proactive market approach in which it is essential to properly analyse customer needs, professionally manage the players in the DMU and offer a distinctive solution. For the latter, the Mercuri 6 Battelfields can provide an answer.

Which of the following challenges do you expect for your company's sales in 2025? (Multiple choices possible)





Chapter 3:

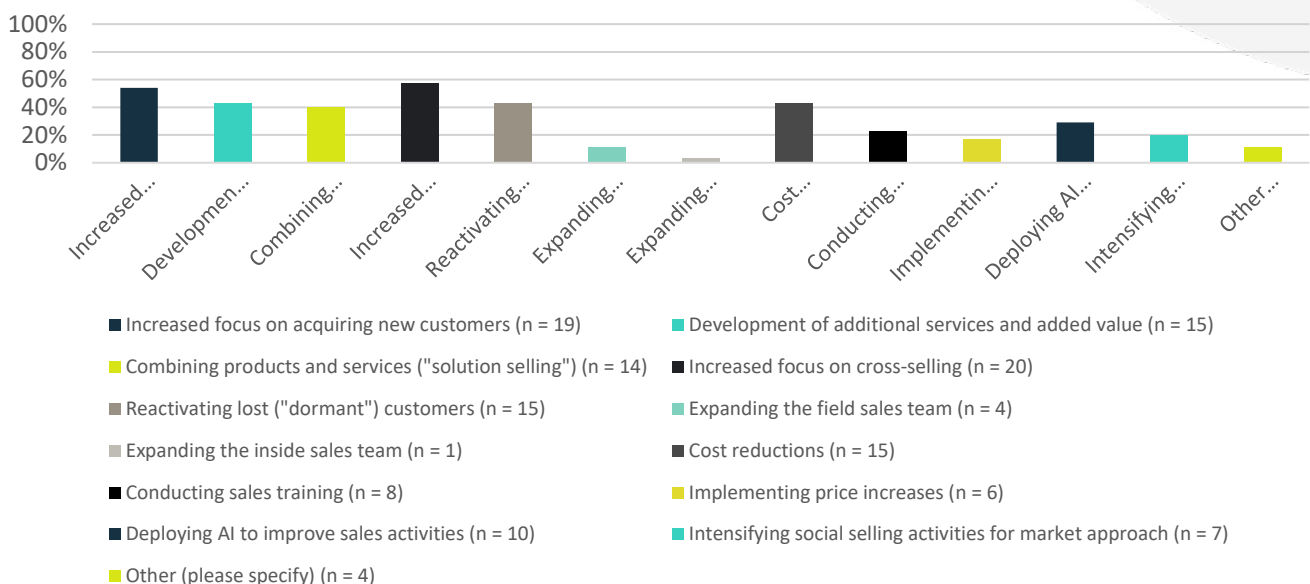
Sales focus for 2025

Chapter 3: Sales focus for 2025

The 2025 focus reflects our companies' readiness to respond to challenges and intensified competition. This focus is more than just a response to current challenges, it is the continuation of an already existing need to work with the right focus in sales activities to take a proactive market approach to secure market share, protect margins and generate growth over a longer term. The number of sales efforts we can make is limited for everyone, therefore a proactive focus on the combination of quantity, quality and direction remains essential. More so than integrating AI into the sales process or Social Selling, which is a focus area for 28% and 22% respectively.

The focus for 2025 of our sales departments is Cross-Selling, which is selected by 55% of respondents. Closely followed by focus on new customers with 52%. Remarkably, only a small minority indicate that the sales department will expand and a striking difference with the past is that only 17% indicate they want to increase the sales price. In addition, 42% say they want to reduce costs and/or develop additional services and added value for their customers.

What is your company focusing on in 2025 to address these challenges? (Multiple choices possible)





Chapter 4:

Management Summary

Management Summary

- _ The overall context is that 2024 was marked by profound geopolitical and economic changes. Political uncertainty in Belgium and the Netherlands also had an impact on our sales environment.
- _ Despite these challenges, you rate the current situation in 2025 cautiously positive, with an average score of 6.36 on a scale of 1 to 10
- _ The key challenge for 2025 is price competitiveness. It highlights the need to develop strategies and sales skills to set competitive prices without sacrificing margin
- _ Other key challenges include: rising costs and uncertainty among decision-makers.
- _ Cross-Selling and new customers are the focus for 2025. Only 17% are thinking about implementing price increases. Integrating AI and Social Selling are mentioned but are less prominent.
- _ Sales teams should focus on better understanding customer needs, professionally managing decision-makers and providing distinctive solutions.
- _ To address challenges such as declining demand and decision-maker uncertainty, a proactive market approach is essential. Given the shortage of sales skills, investing in sales skills development is essential.
- _ In short, sales departments in the Benelux should focus on combining proactive market approaches, value creation and improving sales skills to maintain competitive advantages and address challenges such as price pressure and customer uncertainty by 2025.



Thank you very much for your participation and the important and fascinating insights you have provided in this Quick-Survey.



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