

Summer '22 Benchmark Report

PreSales Prevails in a Bear Market

vivun.

Intro

At the beginning of 2022, tech workers expected another year of cash-gushing IPOs, and we published a [Benchmark Report on the soaring demand for PreSales talent](#). Since then the stock market tanked, Russia invaded Ukraine, inflation ballooned, and interest rates rose. This report captures how participating PreSales leaders are experiencing current market conditions, and what they are doing to protect their teams and future-proof their companies. We'll dial into the new reality for PreSales.

While participating PreSales leaders are feeling varying levels of impact, the PreSales job market has actually grown notably since January 2022, a leading indicator that demand for PreSales talent isn't slowing down overall. We'll also continue our study of the overall market size for PreSales that we began in our previous report; once again we've benchmarked the PreSales profession against other business to business (B2B) departments.* Our findings reveal PreSales' Year-over-Year (YoY) growth and its penetration across industries, companies, and job postings. We have compared and tracked the growth of PreSales to other dominant personas such as Sales, Customer Success Management (CSM), Product Management, Sales Development Representatives (SDRs), and Support.

The State of PreSales in Summer '22



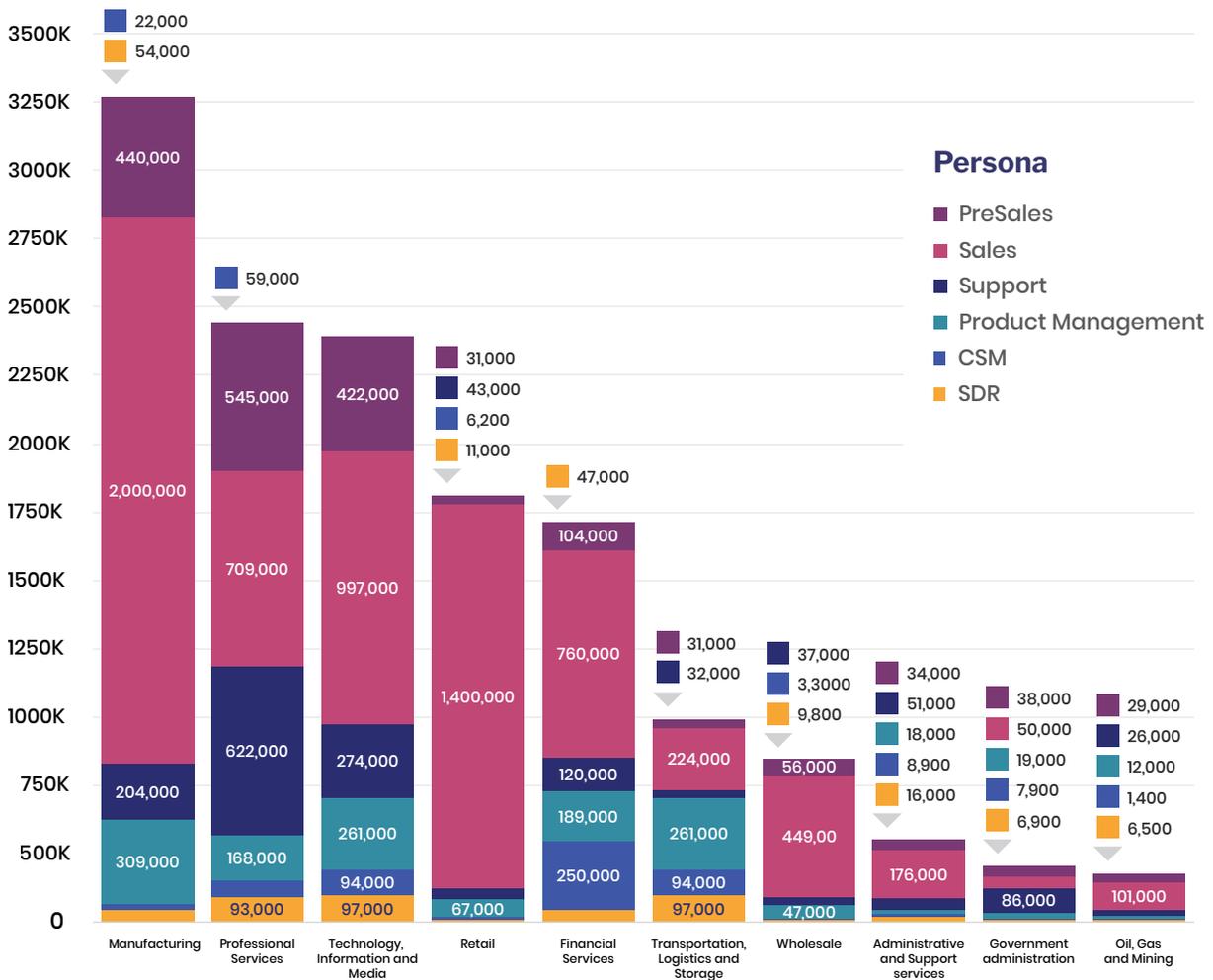
PreSales remains extraordinarily healthy with over 141K PreSales jobs currently posted on LinkedIn, which is a 20K or a 17% increase from the 121K PreSales jobs posted in January 2022. Companies with PreSales employees also increased by 2K and the number of current PreSales employees by 100K. As we'll see later in this report, though market headwinds have had some effect on PreSales growth and some leaders aren't hiring as aggressively, the LinkedIn Insights data indicates the overall profession is still very much growth-oriented.

*Based on LinkedIn Sales Insights data pulled on June 2, 2022. LinkedIn Sales Insights taps into the world's largest professional network to get an up-to-date view of the size and growth of specific departments and job titles as well as total addressable markets.

This reality can be attributed to the transformation of modern B2B buyers and their demands. These buyers no longer wish to deal with salespeople but rather want to collaborate with solution experts like PreSales, who are uniquely suited for addressing use cases, identifying value propositions, and accurately answering questions and concerns about solutions and their capabilities.

Across 208K companies, there are 1.9M PreSales employees, which is a 6% YoY growth from 1.786M PreSales employees last year. The top five industries PreSales professionals are found in are Professional Services (545K), Manufacturing (440K), Technology, Information & Media (422K), Financial Services (104K), and Wholesale (56K).

Number of Employees by Industry and Persona



In comparison to other personas such as Sales, Support, Product Management, CSM, and SDR, PreSales makes up 25% of all employees across these six personas in the Professional Services industry, while also making up 20% of the Technology, Information and Media industry and 15% of the Manufacturing industry. The number of PreSales employees YoY also increased the most in Technology, Information and Media by 8%, Professional Services (8%), Hospitals and Health Care (6%), Financial Services (5%), and Manufacturing (4%). Across all six personas there are over 13M employees of which 14% or 1.9M are PreSales.

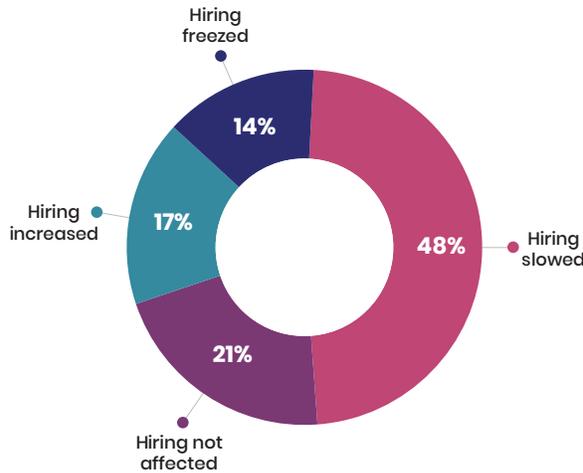
We look forward to revisiting these numbers in our next report!



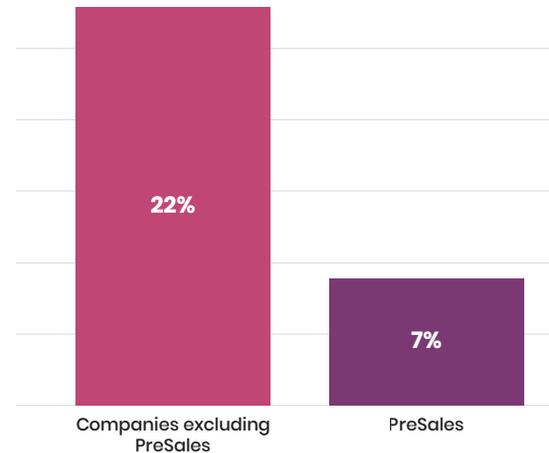
PreSales Prevails in a Bear Market

1. While many of the PreSales leaders report slowing or pausing their aggressive hiring plans, other teams are keeping their foot on the gas—and layoffs are at least 3x less likely to occur in PreSales.

PreSales Hiring Trends



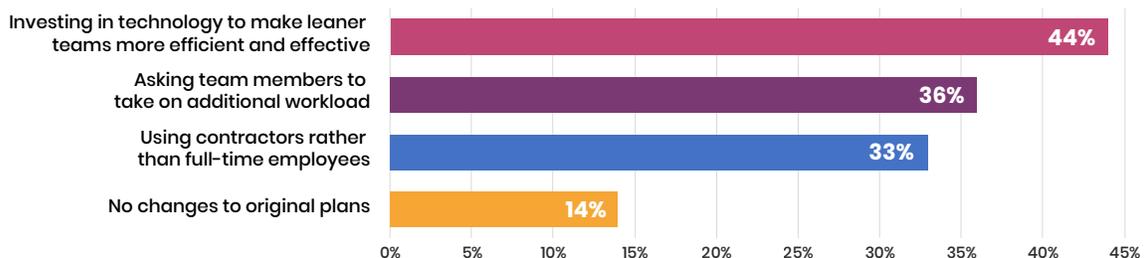
Frequency of Layoffs



While hiring slowed or froze in 62% of PreSales departments, 38% report that hiring plans increased or remained status quo. Layoffs occur 3x less in PreSales when compared to all other departments. 22% of respondents say that their company, excluding the PreSales department, experienced layoffs, while only 7% say that PreSales did. Given how difficult it is to acquire and retain top talent in this highly coveted field, PreSales isn't usually the first department on the chopping block. In uncertain times, industry leaders recognize this group is integral to a company's sales motion and sustaining revenue growth efficiently.

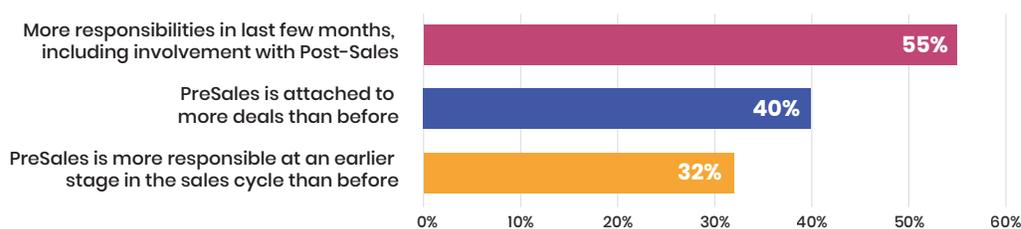
2. Most PreSales departments are being forced to do more with less as the demands for their skills continue to grow despite hiring slowdowns.

How PreSales Departments are Doing More with Less



Regardless of whether their plans for growth are negatively impacted, most PreSales leaders are being forced to do more with less. A near majority of leaders, 44%, report investing in technology to make leaner teams more effective when headcount must remain the same or decrease. Another 36% of leaders say that they've asked team members to take on additional workload, and 33% say they're using contractors more in lieu of hiring full-time employees. Only 14% say that recent market forces haven't caused them to change their original plans from the beginning of the year.

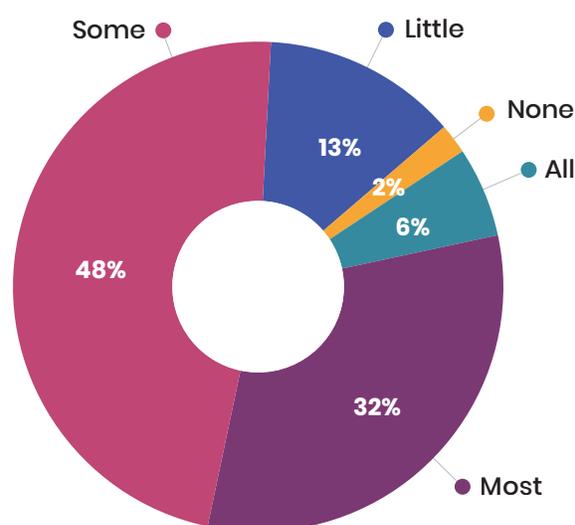
New Realities for PreSales Departments



New realities are taking hold in PreSales departments: 55% of leaders report PreSales is taking on more responsibility in the last few months, including increased involvement with Post-Sales. 40% report PreSales is attached to more deals than before, and 32% report PreSales is more responsible at an earlier stage in the sales cycle than before.

3. PreSales is being tasked to own the buyer experience and tapped to influence C-Suite strategy and the product roadmap.

Modern B2B buyers no longer buy from salespeople themselves, and instead, they want value at every step, total transparency, and the ability to run the sales process their way. The buyer experience, which encompasses the journey from initial interest through evaluation, purchase decision, and ongoing expansion, must be reimagined to meet these demands. This is done successfully through achieving product-field alignment, scaling expertise, demonstrating undeniable value,



Degree of PreSales Leadership Ownership over the Buyer Experience

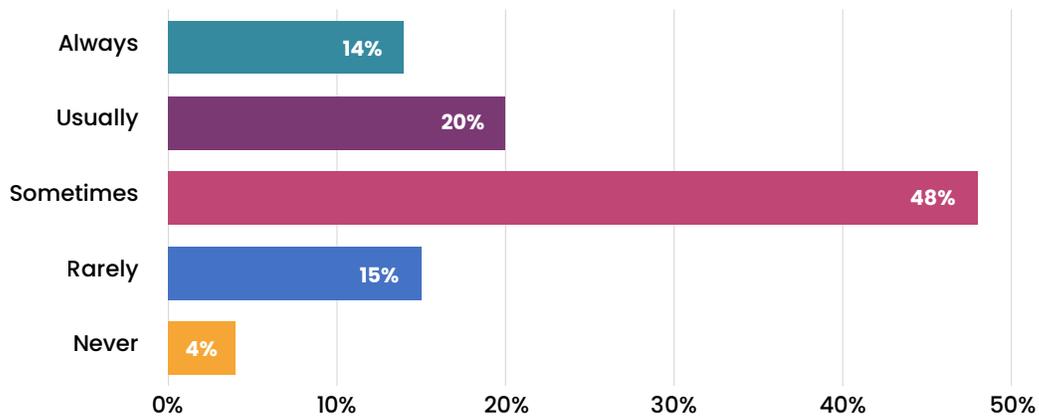
getting hands-on with the buyer, and building trust and transparency that drive long-term commitments.

According to survey data, PreSales is becoming the true champion for buyers with 38% of PreSales leaders reporting that they own most to all of the buyer experience, and 90% of PreSales leaders reporting they want to take some ownership of the buyer experience.

A PreSales leader's vision of how PreSales should impact the buyer experience:

“We would definitely hope to be more involved as a trusted advisor to build better relationships. There is a disconnect with the AE team around what our products can and cannot do and that has created significant gaps in buyer expectations vs experience. We need to be involved sooner to create the proper expectations upfront.” -AJ Waters, VP of Industrial Solutions at InEight

Frequency of PreSales' Influence on C-Suite Strategy



PreSales leaders are also being tapped to influence C-Suite strategy. 34% report that they at least usually influence C-Suite strategy, initiatives, and conversations, with only 19% saying they rarely to never are involved at this level. In conversations surrounding the product roadmap, 46% of PreSales leaders report at least usually influencing the discussion, with 43% sometimes and 12% rarely to never.

Discussion

The bear market is forcing companies to reckon with new challenges. The C-Suite is increasingly tapping PreSales to affect high-level strategy, influence the product roadmap, and take on more responsibility with deals and strategic aspects such as creating product-field alignment. PreSales is leveraging this tremendous opportunity to rise above being simple sales assistants or demo jockeys.

This is paving a path for PreSales to own the buyer experience from initial interest through evaluation, purchase decision, and ongoing expansion. PreSales professionals' unique combination of technical and sales acumen and proximity to the buyer make them ready to transition into spearheading the buyer experience and its modern transformation. PreSales leaders welcome this increased responsibility with over 90% reporting they want to take some ownership of the buyer experience.

Yet, PreSales leaders will only be successful with the right resources, processes, and data. In our last report, 56% of PreSales leaders reported that lack of data was the biggest challenge to getting PreSales budget approved, followed by time and organization (34%). If leaders don't have a frictionless way to get the data they need and can't free up time in processes, for example, by applying automation to their team, they'll have a hard time driving strategy at the highest levels.

When the baton for ownership over the buyer experience is handed off to PreSales, it must be done with a clear strategy and plan for success. It's helpful to build a strategy around accomplishing the five desired outcomes that CEO of Vivun, Matt Darrow, has identified for successful PreSales ownership of the buyer experience:

- 1. Creating seamless alignment between R&D and Sales**
- 2. Delivering expertise earlier than ever—even when you can't be on Zoom or in the room**
- 3. Empowering buyers to get their hands on products as soon as possible**
- 4. Fostering transparency and ensuring mutual accountability between the buyer and seller**
- 5. Ensuring an uninterrupted transition to Post-Sales, where value is readily realized by the customer**

As a PreSales leader, owning the buyer experience is an opportunity to elevate your department, influence C-Suite strategy, and accelerate revenue. It's never been a better time to take your place at the executive table. In doing so, you can own and transform your company's buyer experience and drive consumption, value, and revenue from first touch to ongoing expansion.

Participate in the Next Benchmark Report

We invite you to be a part of our next Benchmark Report and receive a full report on all the answers to our questions. When you sign up, we'll send you an invitation to participate in our next Benchmark Survey—then ensure that you receive a full list of answers with all the respondent data.

Let's unlock the full strategic value of PreSales together!

To receive and / or be part of the next Benchmark Report, enter your info here. vivun.com/benchmark

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Hero by Vivun

Vivun is a global provider of Buyer Experience (BX) software. Its AI-powered platform supports a family of products that enables B2B businesses to meet the demands of today's sales-proof buyer, differentiate from the competition, and accelerate revenue. With PreSales at the forefront of the buyer experience, companies can align Sales with Product, provide repeatable workflows for their solution experts, deliver on-demand product expertise, and win more deals with transparency and trust.

Leaders at Okta, Autodesk, Dell, Snowflake, Elastic, Fivetran, and Harness are powering incredible buyer experiences with Vivun. To learn more visit www.vivun.com

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