

When it comes to signals, more is more

INTRODUCTION

One of the most prominent GTM developments in the past 18 months has been the accelerating growth and increasing sophistication of signals-based selling.¹

Of course, sales and marketing have used discrete signals (e.g., information from trade magazines) for decades, and early SaaS companies pioneered application usage, email open rate, and intent data years ago. However, it is only recently that tools for collecting, synthesizing, and analyzing these signals at scale have empowered leading-edge companies to predictably optimize their GTM.

In response to this transformation, we set out to understand the current state of different signals adoption and the impact GTM teams are seeing today. We asked 39 leaders in RevOps, Demand Generation, and Sales Development about the signals they use currently, the effect those signals are having on their GTM outcomes, and the activities that those signals are enabling.

All of our respondents are using signals in some form and seeing some value from their adoption. As was the case even before the recent transformation, the most popular use cases for signals are prospecting (87% of respondents) and other top-of-funnel activities like campaign triggers (66%) and targeted ads (61%). However, our biggest take-away is that the real value in signals today comes from combining a wide variety of signals to power a wide variety of activities. Organizations using six or more signals are the ones seeing the strongest impact. Additionally, they are also the ones most likely to be using signals across the entire funnel.

¹ Signals-based selling: capturing, collecting, analyzing, and actioning data (1st-party, 2nd-party and 3rd-party) to understand which prospects and customers to engage, when to engage them, and how to engage them.

SUMMARY OF RESULTS

- **100% of respondents are using at least one signal** in their GTM, and ~80% of those are, at minimum, tracking behavior on their websites. (Figure 1)
- **Two-thirds of the companies surveyed are currently using intent data**, a higher proportion than those using product usage (~50%), job change alerts (~44%), or press release / trigger event data (~44%). (Figure 1)
- **100% of respondents are seeing some value** from their use of signals data, with ~20% seeing a strong or very strong impact. (Figure 2)
- **Respondents that are seeing stronger value from signals tend to be using more signals** (~6.5 per company) than respondents that are seeing only a small or moderate impact (~3.5 per company). (Figure 4)
- **Respondents seeing stronger value are also much more likely to use more niche signals** like NPS scores, G2 behavior, press releases, and community activity. Importantly, these are signals that often have use cases across multiple GTM teams (e.g., marketing and customer success).
- **Most respondents are using signals for top-of-funnel activities** like SDR prospecting (~87%), campaign triggers (~66%), and targeted advertising (~60%). Given the substantial investment companies make in advertising today, the increasing adoption of highly-targeted ads is likely to be especially impactful. (Figure 1)
- Meanwhile, **a minority are using signals for mid-stage** (~30%) and late-stage activities (~21%). (Figure 1)
- Companies seeing a strong impact from their use of signals are **much more likely to use signals for mid- and late-stage activities** (~75%) than those reporting a small or moderate impact (~19%).

Today, we consistently find that successful companies are using unified, signals-based tech stacks to deliver insights to all of their GTM teams. Signals help you optimally engage accounts by aligning your different GTM functions and guiding their behavior with actionable intelligence.

GABE ROGOL, CEO OF DEMANDBASE

KEY TAKEAWAYS

1. If your GTM team has not yet realized massive value from signals, fear not—you're in the majority. However, as demonstrated by the ~20% of respondents that are currently using signals to meaningfully improve their GTM, **the upside potential is substantial and attainable enough to merit investment.**
2. If you are starting to synthesize multiple signals to identify higher-level, more accurate insights, **start by combining website behavior data, competitor / industry news, and third-party intent data.** Of the companies we surveyed that are using multiple signals, almost all are using these three. Using these data to guide SDR prospecting and trigger monthly, targeted campaigns is an easy and effective way to dip your toes in the water.
3. Harnessing the full potential of signals will likely require building a system to ingest and analyze a wide variety of data. **The companies seeing the most value today are those combining a broader set of signals** (first-, second-, and third-party data) **to power a wider diversity of activities**, including mid-, late-stage and cross-sell/up-sell activities.

FIGURE 1 SIGNALS IN USE

All of our respondents are using at least one type of signal, and over three-fourths are tracking behavior on their website and competitor / industry news.

Respondents were asked to list all the signals they use currently

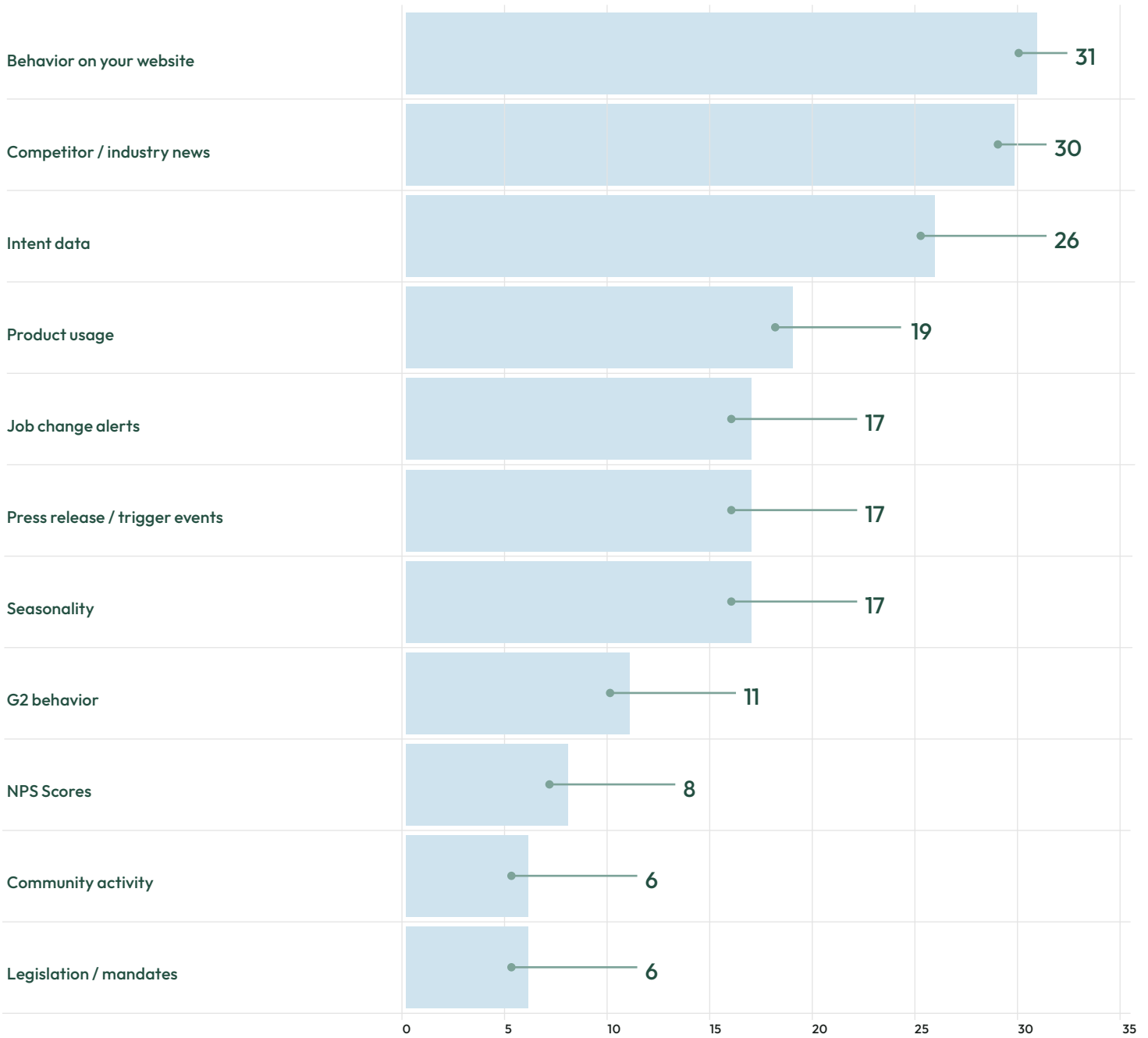


FIGURE 2
IMPACT OF SIGNALS ON GTM OUTCOMES

Though all of our respondents are seeing some value from their use of signals, only ~20% are seeing a strong or very strong impact on their GTM outcomes.

No impact was also an option, though it was not selected by any respondents

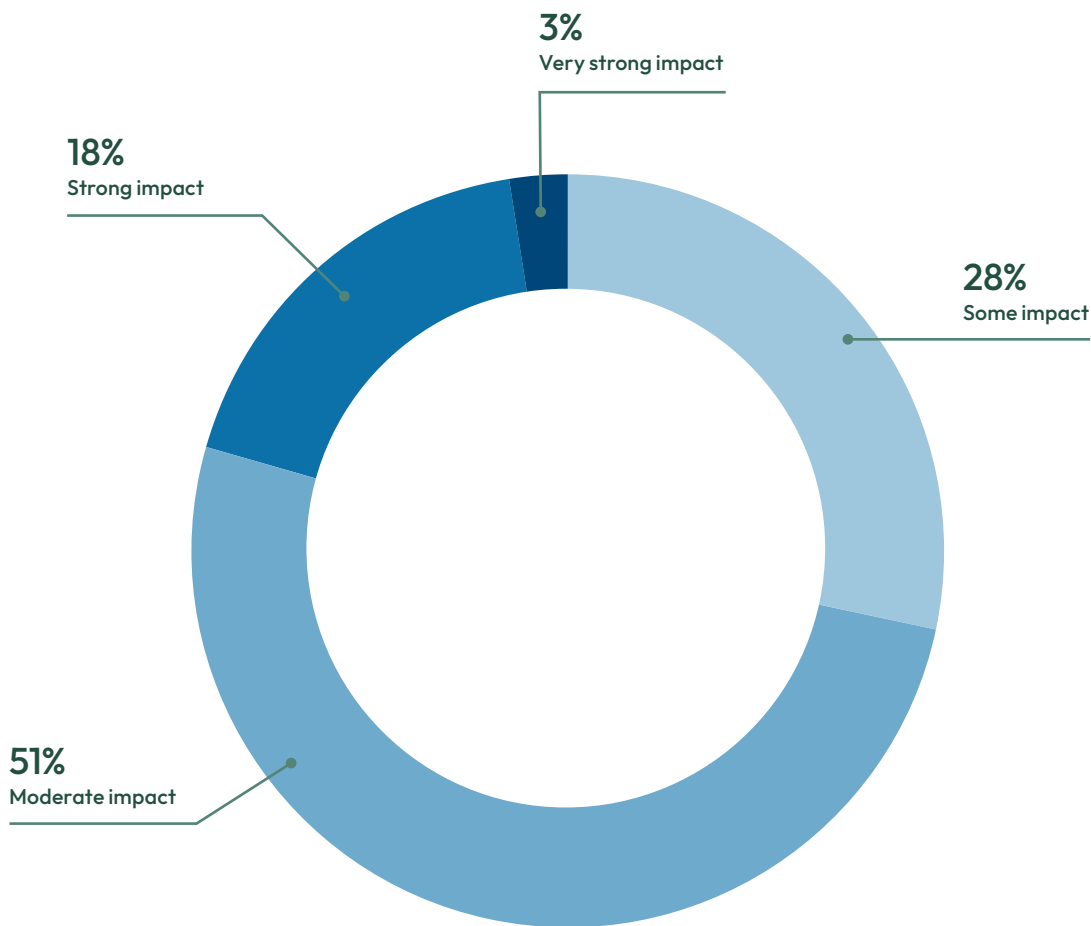


FIGURE 3 ACTIVITIES POWERED BY SIGNALS

Respondents are much more likely to be using signals to guide top-of-funnel activities (SDR prospecting, campaigns, and targeted ads) than middle- or bottom-of-funnel activities.

Respondents were asked to list **all** the activities for which they use signals

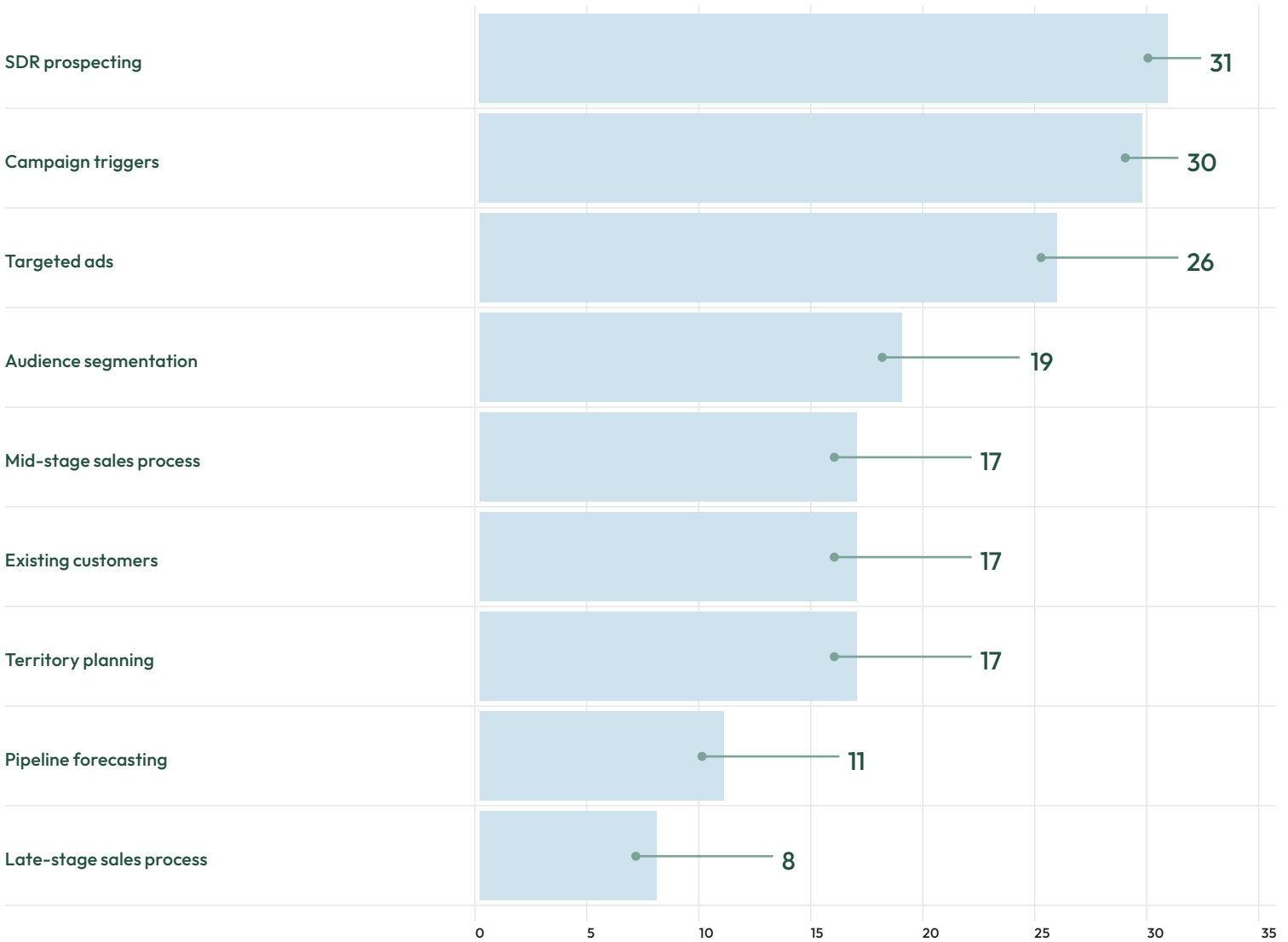


FIGURE 4 USAGE OF SIGNALS AND SIGNAL-BASED ACTIVITIES BY SELF-REPORTED IMPACT

Companies seeing a strong impact from their signals adoption are using more signals to power more activities than those experiencing a lesser impact.

The number of signals-based activities in use corresponds to the number of activities a respondent indicated they use signals for (see **Figure 3** for more details)

