



WHITE PAPER

AI is solving distribution's pain points today

ssctech.com

The once distant promises of artificial intelligence to transform asset management distribution are coming to life today. Many firms appear to be zooming ahead on their AI journeys. Others are still wrapping their arms around the flood of tools and technologies to harness AI for their organization.

Across the industry, there is a growing acceptance that AI is already changing and will further fundamentally change sales and marketing through a more consistent and detailed understanding of clients. These technologies support this future in several ways:

- Allows firms to gather more data and information from disparate sources (internal, third-party, public, structured and unstructured data sets).
- Allows firms to uncover insights from a greater volume of data.
- Makes insights actionable and specific to the role of the salesperson, marketer or business analyst
- Executes on actionable insights to provide a more personalized and higher value service to clients

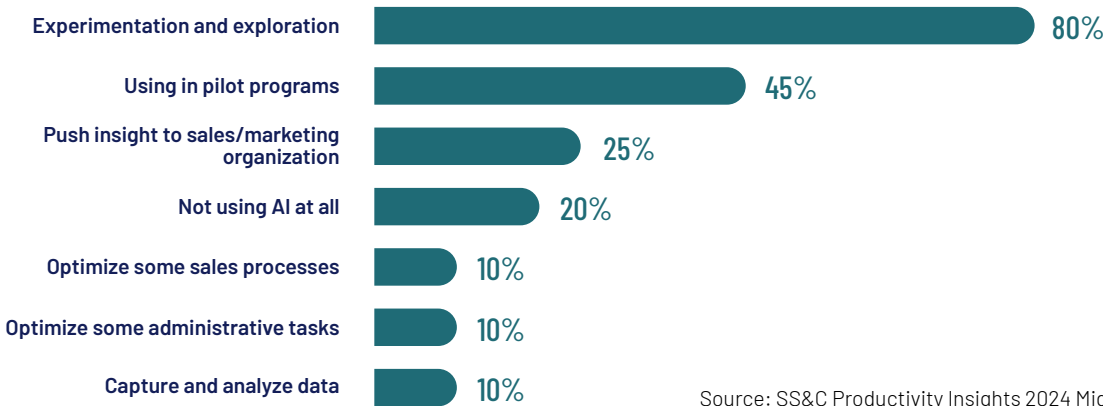
There is a temptation to jump in with pilot projects that seem like low-hanging fruit. Conversely, firms can enter a state of paralysis considering if and where to start.

We see, however, a version of AI that is accessible and transformative to every distribution organization—regardless of their technology prowess or capital budget. This is possible when firms view AI as a facilitator of more coordinated, timely, and enriched sales and marketing processes.

To help distribution leaders think about AI and what it can do to transform how the business executes on its goals, we outline three challenges many, if not all, sales and marketing teams face. These examples are real use cases either in production or active development. Not every tool is needed or feasible for every distribution organization, and some can serve multiple functions.

BUSINESS INTELLIGENCE TEAMS USAGE OF AI

Percentage of Asset Managers Using AI For Task



Source: SS&C Productivity Insights 2024 Mid-Year Survey n=20



CHALLENGE ONE: NO ONE LIKES TO USE VALUABLE TIME TO DO THE ADMINISTRATIVE TASKS NECESSARY TO RUN AN EFFICIENT DISTRIBUTION TEAM

WHY THIS IS A CHALLENGE:



The data needed is scattered across structured and unstructured data sources: meeting notes, email and phone correspondence, website activity and campaign tracking data, transaction and market-share data, spreadsheets and other dashboards from business intelligence, etc.



Natural inconsistencies in entry occur when manually recording data in multiple systems.



Time lags in correspondence and coordination across multiple people.



People not intrinsically motivated to do mundane tasks.



It's not an efficient use of salespeople's time and energy.

REAL AI SOLUTIONS:



Automated data entry: Ensures consistency and quality of data entry across sales team, reduces time lags in being able to act on information from meetings, improves wholesaler morale by reducing mundane workload.



Follow-up correspondence recommendation engine: Speeds process of follow-up correspondence, ensures consistent follow-up that follows established sales playbook, enhances client experience.



Enhanced search functions for sales: More speedy response times for internal requests, can spend more time walking advisors through the content and providing context, and moving the journey forward.



Automated marketing content production: Timely delivery of content, accuracy in the content and alignment with compliance, ability to A/B test campaign tactics in a systemic and consistent way.



CHALLENGE TWO: SALES NEEDS A MORE DYNAMIC SEGMENTATION MODEL THAT INCORPORATES REAL-TIME INFORMATION ON BUYING AND ENGAGEMENT BEHAVIORS—A RESOURCE-INTENSIVE TASK FOR BUSINESS INTELLIGENCE TEAMS ALREADY STRETCHED.

WHY THIS IS A CHALLENGE:



Segmentation is a time-consuming process, requiring integration of disparate sets of data and an agreement on how to prioritize different data points/signals to score advisors.



National Sales, National Accounts, Marketing and BI often look at similar data but through very different lenses specific to their role. This can lead to different applications of a common segmentation or prioritization scheme.



The speed and efficiency of receiving data across groups makes it hard to apply dynamic segmentation, next-best actions, etc. A suggestion is made for national sales which would be different if the analysis reflected recent data from marketing, for example.



Data overload makes it difficult to separate noise from real signals.



Lack of data governance and ownership over workflows leads to suboptimal trust in the data available to make decisions upon.

REAL AI SOLUTIONS:



Dynamic segmentation model supports: Engagement and coverage that is tailored to the enterprise relationship value/opportunity—not just prior transactions. Quicker ability to capitalize on changes to advisor's behavior or business model that open sales or relationship opportunities.



Enhanced next-best-action dashboards: Alignment across sales and marketing on advisor engagement – no more marketing sends out content and wholesaler walks in talking about something different, consistency in activity aligned with established sales playbook, audit trail and ability for system to improve suggestions based on documented outcomes. Also speed in response, salespeople and marketers aren't working on strategies based on transactions behavior that took place months ago.



Smarter follow-up marketing campaigns: Internals are more efficient in their follow-ups, balancing this task with other outreach or service tasks that can also move the needle. Marketers get a better sense of outreach ROI to more efficiently use budget.



CHALLENGE THREE: ADVISORS ARE TAKING FEWER MEETINGS, AND HAVE HIGHER EXPECTATIONS FOR SERVICE FROM THE ASSET MANAGERS THEY DO ALLOW IN. ASSET MANAGERS WANT TO PROVIDE PERSONALIZED SERVICE BUT STRUGGLE WITH GETTING DETAILED INFORMATION TO TAILOR ENGAGEMENT WITH CONSISTENCY.

WHY THIS IS A CHALLENGE:



Asset managers not meeting advisor expectations for meeting value.



Asset managers receive low scores on understanding of business and ability to solve problems.



No good “360 view” of advisor because of disparate, inconsistent data on different product vehicle usage.



Hard to remember details about hundreds of advisors/teams on demand.



Wholesalers can come off as rushed, disorganized or inconsistent in their engagement and service delivery.

REAL AI SOLUTIONS:



Improved sales prep tools: Salespeople walk into meetings with real-time data on the advisor’s buying behavior and practice considerations, advisors receive a consistent message and personalized service.



Personalized marketing journeys: Speedy and relevant marketing content, increased engagement with “long tail” of advisors with little to no wholesaler coverage, data sets for appropriate KPIs/real time analysis of marketing efforts.

WHAT DO ALL OF THESE SOLUTIONS SOLVE FOR DISTRIBUTION LEADERS AND THEIR ORGANIZATIONS?

- Greater **confidence** in decision making because there is easy access to the entirety of data in a format that is easy to work with (with prompts) and understandable (not a black box, can explain outputs or recommendations)
- **Speed** to make and execute decisions vs waiting for data to be ingested, aggregated, normalized, processed, analyzed and exported to a usable format
- **Adaptability** to design territories that align with current dynamics and expectations for the future—some of which blur the traditions and uniformity of coverage across geographies and advisor types. Ability to customize coverage
- **Awareness** of developments that should affect sales and marketing strategy in as close to real-time as possible—not trying to sell a product to an advisor after data suggests they have gotten their fill from a competitor, or jumping on an opportunity to support an advisor’s transition to RIA or adoption of ETFs as a primary investment vehicle


AI-powered sales prep makes personalization at scale possible

Tools like SS&C's Generative AI-Powered Sales Prep give wholesalers a fast and user-friendly way to walk into a meeting with the right conversations that reflect the advisor's business needs at that moment.


A wholesaler is in his hotel room getting ready for a day's worth of meetings. He opens up his sales prep tool and types in:

Tell me about Mike Jones.


...



The program pulls data from a host of disparate data sources: third-party sales and market share data, CRM and engagement data, and marketing campaign data, as well as any analytics produced off of that data.



The tool produces a bullet-point list of important attributes of the advisor: what he's bought and in what vehicles, whether he works on a team and, if so, what his role is on the team, his educational background and certifications, and what platforms he has access to at his broker-dealer. It also provides a summary of their last meeting.



Another prompt gives the wholesaler information about other members of the team and the overall size of the practice, in case there is an opportunity to ask for an introduction.

OUTCOMES:

- Wholesaler knows what sort of questions he needs to ask about the advisor's practice and potential needs based on most current data
- Wholesaler avoids discussing products that the advisor may not have access to
- Wholesaler can reference content and products the advisor has expressed interest in via website activity
- Wholesaler presents to advisor a sense that he, and his firm, are prepared, organized and able to add value to his practice

Prospects	Upsell	Cross-Sell
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[Load more](#)

Joel Smith The Smith Group

Cresswood Capital 101 Broadway, NY, NY 10025

Key Score Drivers

- Joel has the highest Green Space of all prospects in the territory
- He is increasing his sales overall and in international equity and equity income
- Joel is open to new managers in his book

98

PROSPECT
SCORE

Top AUM Holdings

As of 01/31/2025

Strategic Income	Limited Term Muni	International Equity
\$2.71M	\$2.30M	\$455K

Top AUM Opportunities

Global Opportunities	Strategic Income	Limited Term Muni
\$4.45M	\$2.90M	\$1.14M

Need to Know About Joel Smith

- Joel is a **Managing Director, Partner and Investment Decision Maker** on **The Smith Group** team at **Cresswood Capital**, holding the **CIMA** designation.
- Diana Levitt** is also a **Decision Maker** and **Kevin Stark** is a **top Influencer**.
- Joel's total 12 month sales is **\$146.2m** (Company Sales of **\$13.9m**), and total AUM is **\$1.626b** (Company AUM is **\$23.6m**).
- The Smith Group's total 12 month sales is **\$146.2m** (Company sales is **\$11.2m**), and total AUM is **\$1.626b** (Company AUM is **\$32.7m**).
- Joel predominately **invests in mutual funds**. His branch office **invests in SMA**. His firm **invests in ETFs**, the top 2 active ETFs are the **NextGen Income ETF (NTXQ)** and the **Cleanridge International Equity (CNRG)**.
- 89% of Joel's sales are in **recommended list products** at Cresswood Capital. This is **well above average**. Products on rec list: **High-Yield Income, Large Growth Fund & Foreign Value**.
- Like you, Joel has a passion for the **financial services industry** with over **30 years of experience**. He enjoys **golfing and reading**, hobbies you both share.

Last 2 Contacts with Joel Smith

- Video call 24 Aug 2024
Researching equity income products, sent follow-up materials. Offered PM call. → [Full Note](#)
- In-person lunch 01 Jun 2024
Interested in international equity. Sending follow-up materials. → [Full Note](#)

Improving efficiency and effectiveness via meeting annotation

Some AI-enabled tools are designed for either increasing efficiency or boosting effectiveness of distribution activities. But a deeper look shows how, with the right infrastructure, a more efficient process can unlock opportunities for more effective sales and marketing engagements.

A wholesaler walks into a meeting with an advisor. She asks if it's OK to record the meeting to make it easier for follow-up, and the advisor agrees.



A program listens to the meeting for key points, products discussed, agreed next steps, etc. Once the meeting ends, the program produces a bullet-point summary of the meeting that the wholesaler can approve for input into CRM. The program also is linked to the asset manager's content library, and suggests relevant pieces to deliver to the advisor in a follow-up email, which it also can create.



The meeting annotation tool can be connected to any number of other AI systems, such as agentic AI meeting schedulers and business analytics dashboards to update next-best-action dashboards. Wholesalers can also access the meeting notes by prompting generative AI sales prep programs.



OUTCOMES:

- Tool speeds up admin tasks, makes them less cumbersome so wholesalers can spend more time with clients or developing strategies to optimize their engagements
- Improves NBA programming by having real time data entry to this (likely) AI driven (probably ML) business intelligence journey mapping
- Improves upon timely follow-up to FA based on meeting commitments/discussion (reduced or eliminated time lag)
- Creates consistency with the marketing org in terms of corporate messaging and content provision
- Creates consistency within sales in terms of following established sales protocols/playbooks based on meetings, starts to build a data trail for KPI analysis and further optimization of strategy

Bringing AI from pilot into practice: A foundation in data

Firms can get some efficiency benefits from applying AI tools to things like meeting notation, correspondence and content creation. However, to have true end-to-end process transformation—to deliver a level of sales precision and service excellence otherwise unattainable—firms must consider the universe of data upon which AI learns to do its job.

Firms can enhance the value and nuance of their AI analysis and insights by giving it the most detailed and comprehensive information you can gather about your clients. This could include advisor teams and team decision-making dynamics; sales and market-share across investment vehicles; or details about their retirement businesses.

It's not just about the quantity of data, of course. The quality of that data in the form of reliability, consistency, access and ease of use is paramount to AI's ability to draw accurate conclusions at a level of detail that humans or even traditional business analytics tools cannot.

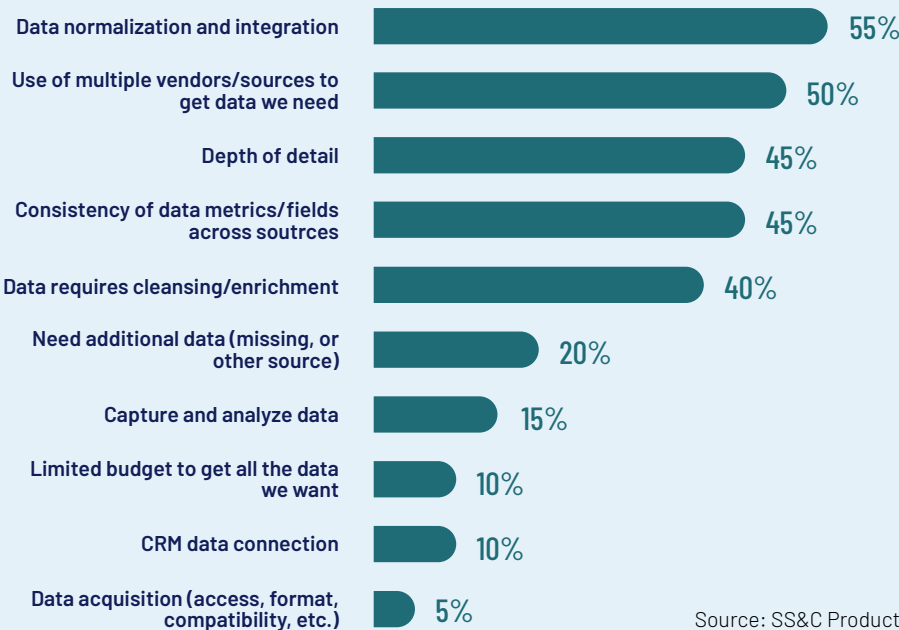
Firms must consider how they expect wholesalers, marketers and other end-users to consume this data—on its own and via AI tools. Adopting a common taxonomy for those data sources will help users understand and apply insights from the data into their strategy.

Finally, the focus on data and technology cannot overshadow the need for leadership and clarity on goals. What does your firm seek to gain from this additional efficiency and insight? If part of the strategy is to free up time for higher-value work, what is that work and how do you communicate that to staff? What sort of KPIs confirm that AI tools are achieving their outcomes, and who is responsible for monitoring the programs?

AI machines need a framework of desired outcomes, a properly designed prompt, to function effectively and improve over time. Leadership must provide that vision and empower everyone to progress toward that vision with training and accountability standards.

MOST COMMON DATA CHALLENGES

Percentage of Asset Managers Ranked in Their Top 3



Source: SS&C Productivity Insights 2024 Mid-Year Survey n=20

CONCLUSION

Asset managers of all sizes can, today, harness artificial intelligence technologies to make their distribution organizations more efficient and effective in addressing their biggest challenges.

Firms already are using AI to log meeting notes into CRM systems, automate follow-ups to clients, and quickly and accurately serve up information needed for inbound sales calls. Managers and technology providers have developed tools to link disparate data sets for wholesalers delivering personalized advisor service. These tools are making wholesalers more efficient and providing improved experiences to financial advisors.

The rise of agentic AI has some firms exploring ways to automate processes like scheduling meetings and suggesting next-best-actions after meetings.

An asset manager's AI journey must start with the challenges they hope to address and what processes are holding them back. This will lead executives to the tools, data and leadership necessary to drive down the chosen path.

Distribution leaders need not have all of the resources and knowledge at their fingertips immediately. Even the largest organizations are partnering with experts to develop comprehensive approaches to AI.

SS&C's expertise in delivering actionable data and insights on advisors, and its leading automation technology platform, can support asset managers in transforming their distribution team with proven AI and enterprise data management solutions.

ABOUT SS&C

SS&C is a leading innovator in technology-powered solutions and operational services for the global investment management industry. We are the largest global fund administrator, entrusted with over \$2 trillion in assets under administration. We are also the world's largest transfer agent, servicing US\$17 trillion in mutual funds globally. SS&C builds, owns and operates all the technology that underpins our services, and continually reinvests a substantial percentage of annual revenue in technology research and development.

SS&C serves a worldwide clientele with a network spanning the major financial and commercial centers of North America, Europe, the Middle East, Asia and Australia.

SS&C's Distribution Solutions team is the industry's leading provider of data management, analytics, and technology solutions to support intermediary distribution. With more than 25 years of experience and over 100 dedicated associates, asset management firms can rely on SS&C to deliver information on their distribution partners that is trusted and fit-for-purpose.

 **Learn more at ssctech.com/distribution**