READY SET EXEC

Sales Compensation Study

Clarity and insight into what revenue leaders earn, and why it matters in 2025

Presented by
Ready Set Exec

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INTRODUCTION

Why compensation transparency matters

Sales has never been more critical to business growth — and never more scrutinized. As organizations face global competition, AI-driven customer acquisition, and tightening budgets, sales leaders are expected to deliver measurable impact with precision. This has reshaped how companies structure compensation, especially at the executive level.

The goal of this study is to provide clarity and context. Salaries alone don't tell the full story — bonuses, equity packages, and long-term incentives often double or triple total earnings. Geography, industry, and company stage add further complexity.

Whether you are:

- An executive candidate preparing for negotiations, or
- A hiring leader building competitive offers to secure top talent,

this report will help you navigate the evolving compensation landscape with confidence.

BEYOND SALARY

Compensation Beyond Base Salary

In 2025, most sales executives see total on-target earnings (OTE) made up of several components:

Annual Bonus

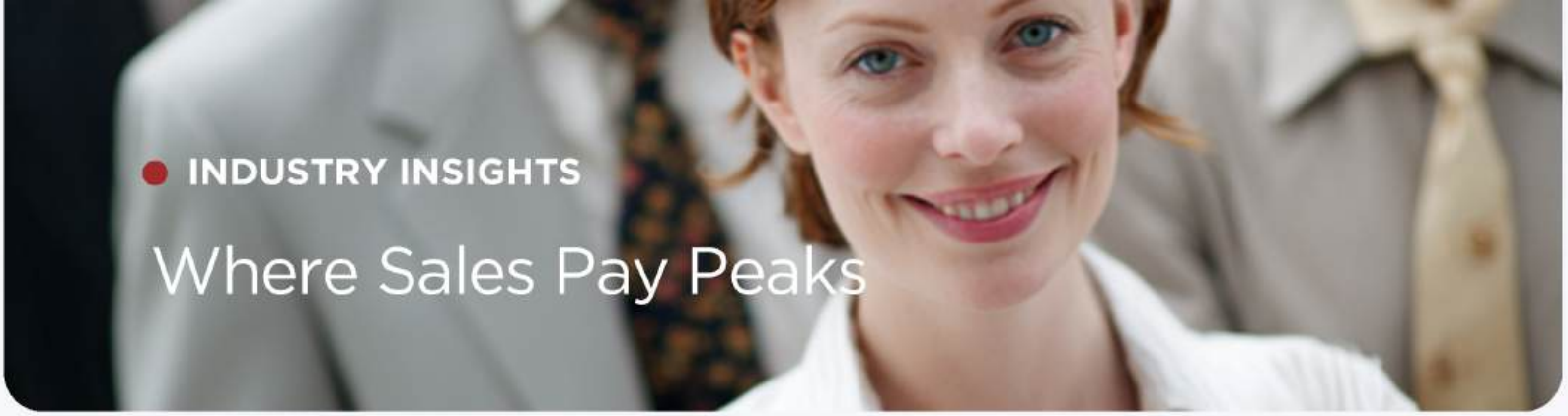
- Typically 20–30% of salary, with 50% at the high end.
- Calculated based on company performance (EBITDA, revenue growth) and individual/team KPIs (topline revenue, margins, customer growth).

Long-Term Incentive Plans (LTIPs)

- Increasingly important in growth-stage companies where base salaries may lag market rates.
- Include equity shares (RSUs, PSUs, SARs), phantom shares, or profit-sharing agreements.
- For high-growth startups, equity can outweigh salary over time — but comes with risk.

Additional Perks

- Healthcare, parental leave, wellness stipends, professional development allowances are becoming standard.
- Relocation, housing, or vehicle allowances remain common for roles in non-metro regions.
- Flexibility (remote/hybrid options) is increasingly a top “perk” that influences executive decisions as much as cash.



INDUSTRY INSIGHTS

Where Sales Pay Peaks

Compensation varies significantly by sector, largely tied to the percentage of revenue spent on marketing.

Technology

- Historically among the highest-paying sectors, though recent market corrections have cooled wages.
- High demand for enterprise & outbound BDR/SDR representatives.
- Average BDR revenue is ~US$1.0-2.0 million/year from closed business (for high performers in mid-stage enterprise SaaS).
- Quota-to-OTE Ratio: For BDR/SDR roles, it's quite common in tech to set quotas that are 5×–8× the On Target Earnings (OTE). That helps to make sure the plan is motivating but achievable. Tech (especially SaaS) tends toward shorter cycles but higher churn risk

What this means for candidates: Be prepared to negotiate equity-heavy packages in startups, while enterprise firms still offer premium base salaries for proven leaders.

Pharmaceuticals & Biotechnology

- Average BDR revenue is ~US$500,000-1.5 million/year, depending on product type, market, and regulatory complexity.
- Strong pay due to regulatory complexity and the need for precise communication with both HCPs and consumers.

Roles emphasize compliance, data-driven campaigns, and patient education.
What this means for candidates: Deep knowledge of healthcare regulations can command significant premiums. Pharma tends to have longer sales cycles, more compliance/training needed.

Financial Services

- Average BDR revenue is ~US$1.0 million/year, particularly in fintech or wealth management verticals with digital products.
- High demand for client acquisition reps who can sell regulated financial products or digital financial services.
- Teams are central to customer acquisition, retention, and digital transformation.
- Compensation skews higher in firms investing heavily in fintech and digital-first strategies.

What this means for candidates: Expect compensation tied tightly to customer acquisition metrics and ROI.

INDUSTRY INSIGHTS

Consumer Packaged Goods (CPG)

- Average BDR revenue is approximately US$500,000-1,000,000/year for a high performer in mid-sized or large CPG firms (volume of smaller, frequent deals rather than big enterprise contracts).
- Top demand is for Retail/Key Account Managers, National/Regional Sales Directors, Field Sales Reps capable of omni-channel execution, and E-commerce / DTC Sales Managers who can bridge traditional and digital retail.
- Sales insights: performance depends heavily on negotiating trade/promotional spend, managing relationships with retailers, reacting quickly to consumer trends (price, sustainability, private label), mastering data & forecasting, and aligning with inventory & supply chain realities.

What this means for candidates: Experience closing many smaller deals (or managing many retail accounts), negotiating trade terms, and fluency with data & analytics tools are key differentiators. If you can show success in omnichannel sales (brick-and-mortar + online) and managing P&L or gross margin under pressure, you'll command premiums.

Luxury Goods

- Average BDR Revenue: ~US$250,000–750,000/year (focused on high-value but lower-volume sales).
- Top Demand Sales Roles: Boutique Sales Consultants, Key/Private Client Managers, Regional Sales Directors, E-commerce/Omnichannel Sales Managers, Clienteling & CRM specialists.

What this means for candidates: Emphasis on exclusivity, high-touch client relationships, margin protection (minimal discounting), repeat customer value, and cultural/linguistic fluency. Omnichannel and VIP client management are increasingly critical.

Media & Entertainment

- Average BDR Revenue: ~US$500,000–1,000,000/year (pipeline tied to ad sales, partnerships, or subscription growth).
- Top Demand Sales Roles: Ad Sales Reps, Subscription/Membership Specialists, Partnerships & Licensing Managers, Digital/OTT Sales, Influencer & Creator Partnership Managers, Account Managers for large advertisers.

What this means for candidates: Sales driven by audience growth, digital monetization (ads, subscriptions, licensing, merch), and data analytics. Roles require agility in fast-changing ecosystems, ability to sell across multiple revenue models, and comfort with contract/rights negotiations.

TRENDS

Trends to Watch in 2025

- **AI-enabled sales tools are reshaping quotas —** reps fluent in AI-powered prospecting, pipeline automation, and predictive analytics are commanding premiums.
- **Comp plans are shifting toward profitability metrics —** bonuses increasingly tied to margin protection, deal quality, and multi-year contract value rather than pure top-line bookings.
- **Equity is still attractive in startups —** but senior sales leaders are negotiating hybrid packages with guaranteed accelerators or retention bonuses to hedge against volatility.
- **Flexibility as compensation is growing —** remote/hybrid structures and lighter travel loads are being traded against higher base or commission percentages.
- **Cross-functional fluency is in demand —** sales leaders who can partner with product and marketing on GTM strategy are seeing stronger pay growth.
- **Customer success integration —** more sales comp plans now include renewal and upsell incentives, reflecting the shift to recurring revenue models.

The Ready Set Exec Edge

Compensation is not one-size-fits-all. At Ready Set Exec, we help executives prepare for negotiations with data, strategy, and confidence. Our role is to:

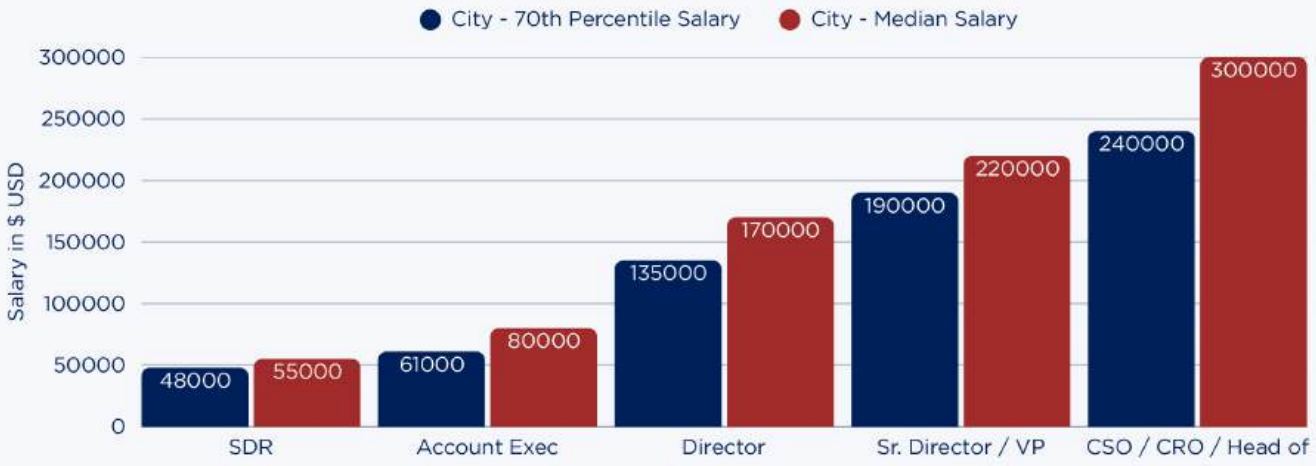
- Provide up-to-date market intelligence across industries and geographies.
- Guide executives in evaluating total compensation packages, not just base salary.
- Support hiring leaders in designing competitive, sustainable offers that attract and retain top talent.

Whether you're negotiating your next role or building a team, our mission is to make compensation transparent, strategic, and fair.

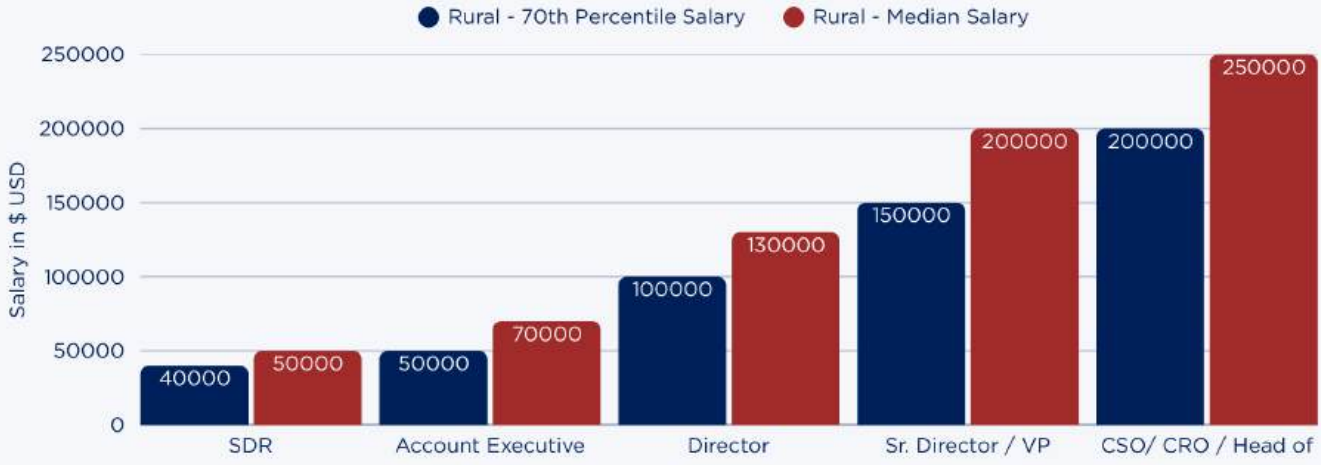
Sales Roles - The numbers

Premium Locales (NYC/LA)

Large Cities



Rural Areas



ABOUT US

About Ready Set Exec

We're not recruiters. We're growth enablers.

Ready Set Exec helps scaling organizations find senior leaders who drive real results. From C-Suite to high-impact departmental roles, we deliver not just candidates, but **confidence**. Founded by Patrick Shea and John Pezoulas, we've built teams, scaled companies, and helped over 10,000 people find roles they thrive in.

Visit readysetexec.com for more insights or follow us on LinkedIn.
If you're working as a fractional executive, let's talk.