Why tech companies win and lose deals

In the past year, Ideba has conducted more than 190 win/loss interviews with established, tech-focused companies to uncover what really drives vendor selection. Read on to learn how buyers choose their SaaS and service partners, why deals are won and lost, and how your organization can end up on the winning side.

Three consistent win/loss themes

Comparing this year's insights with last year's report, we found three consistent themes:

1. **Product fit is critical:** Innovation, integration, specific capabilities, and UI/UX remain central to vendor selection.
2. **Familiarity and relationships matter:** Prior experience with a company, product, or representative strongly influences favorability.
3. **Sales reps can make or break a deal:** How effectively sellers connect cost to business value has a direct impact on conversion.

New themes for 2026

Evaluations are becoming more multifaceted as buyers seek solutions that:

- Integrate seamlessly with their unique workflows
- Automate existing processes
- Scale as their organizations grow
- Signal long-term partnership through collaboration on product improvements, consultation, customer engagement opportunities, and effective support

AI as a vendor-selection criterion

The strongest AI use cases included capabilities embedded naturally within existing UI/UX and workflows. These were seen as helping to improve user adoption while minimizing change management challenges and risk.

- AI influences an increasing number of deals but is rarely primary in decision-making
- Evaluation teams responded positively when providers connected AI capabilities to tangible operational benefits
- Enterprise leaders viewed AI-enabled processes as a baseline expectation for modern technology

Consistent themes



Product fit



Familiarity and relationships



Sales reps

Why deals are won



1. **Buyers want solutions that align with their needs**

   Primary reasons for purchasing include:

   - Seamless integrations
   - Automation and reporting capabilities
   - Scalability
   - Ability to consolidate solutions/vendors
   - Other capabilities that ensure solutions fit naturally within existing environments and workflows

2. **Buyers appreciate familiarity and existing relationships**

   Buyers favored vendors with whom they had:

   - Successful prior experience
   - Established workflows
   - Trusted relationships with company representatives, peers, and partners

3. **Price wins only when paired with value**

   Price and value were cited together, with virtually no deals won or lost on price alone. Won deals combined competitive pricing with:

   - Demonstrable ROI
   - Efficiency gains
   - Reduced manual work
   - Risk mitigation and long-term value

4. **The sales experience plays a meaningful role**

   Buyers were influenced by:

   - A strong discovery process
   - Tailored demos
   - Responsiveness
   - Transparency
   - Consultation
   - Low-pressure, collaborative approach to selling

Why deals are lost



1. **Buyers perceive product and capability gaps**

   Prominent sources of lost deals include:

   - Missing integrations and APIs
   - Limited enterprise scalability
   - Insufficient flexibility or customization
   - Industry-specific gaps
   - Shortcomings in automation or AI capabilities

2. **Poor perception of value**

   Losses based on value involved:

   - Lower-priced competitors
   - Enterprise pricing inappropriate for smaller organizations
   - Migration or implementation costs
   - Insufficient value to warrant a price premium

3. **Poor sales experience**

   This is the most preventable reason for losses, and includes:

   - Generic demos
   - Failure to address stated priorities
   - High-pressure sales tactics
   - Inability to clearly articulate value

4. **Prospect business conditions and lack of urgency**

   Unforeseen business circumstances can derail a deal:

   - Some deals classified as losses were effectively "on hold" due to changing priorities, unavailable budgets, shifting business needs, or insufficient implementation readiness

How to increase sales conversion and overcome barriers to entry

1. **Align pitch with customers' environments and established processes**

   Use in-depth discovery processes to tailor demos to the prospect's workflows, integrations, automation needs, scalability requirements, and implementation readiness. Demonstrate how the solution fits into and improves the way they currently work.

2. **Effectively articulate value**

   Equip sales teams to discuss ROI, customer success metrics, case studies, and time-to-value examples. Pricing conversations should consistently connect investment to efficiency, risk reduction, and long-term value.

3. **Nurture relationships as a long-term growth strategy**

   Build meaningful engagement before, during, and after the sales process through industry events, customer advisory boards, quarterly business reviews, and ongoing client satisfaction initiatives. Maintain relationships with prospects whose deals stall due to timing or budget. Recognize that a deal "on hold" is not the same as a loss.



Ideba partners with organizations to understand both prospect needs and market dynamics that influence vendor selection. We translate these insights into actionable next steps that help you win and keep customers, increase revenue, and improve your bottom line.

If your organization wants a clearer view of what is driving buyer decisions and specific actions to improve win rates, Ideba can help.

Reach out to us at lees@idebamarketing.com or connect with Ideba on LinkedIn to discuss how a Win/Loss research program could support your team.