

BI WORLDWIDE



“Your SKO inspired the team.
What will help them
put that inspiration to work?”







A great SKO (Sales kick off) creates momentum!

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Foreword

A sales kickoff can do something everyday work rarely allows: bring an entire sales organization together around a shared direction.

Leaders bring the strategy to life. Teams can celebrate what they've accomplished, build relationships, develop new skills, and leave with a clear sense of where they're headed. That live experience matters. And it takes serious work to get it right. Creative storytelling, thoughtful production, effective learning, and meaningful recognition all contribute to an exceptional meeting.

The bigger opportunity is to connect that powerful moment to the work that happens before people arrive and **after they're back with customers**. Research among sales leaders,

enablement professionals, managers, and salespeople found that **high-impact SKOs** are more tightly linked to strategy, more interactive, and more likely to include preparation and reinforcement beyond the event.[1]

An outstanding meeting deserves an equally strong plan for what people will do with it. That's where BI WORLDWIDE's SKO performance solution comes in: building readiness before the live event, extending its impact after, and using connected learning, gamification, competition, coaching, recognition, incentives, and measurement to support business results.

Performance Principle

A great meeting creates **a defining moment.**

The opportunity is to **make that moment count** long after the room clears.

Build on the moment

Picture a strong **SKO**. The message lands. People engage with leaders and colleagues. They recognize what the organization has achieved and understand what comes next. Everyone leaves energized. That's a meaningful accomplishment, and exactly what a well-designed live experience should deliver.

Then Monday happens.
A customer **needs an answer**. A **deal stalls**.
The **inbox refills**. Managers return to **their own priorities**.
People may remember the strategy perfectly well but still lack the practice, confidence, feedback, tools, or timely encouragement to use it consistently.

Momentum doesn't disappear because the meeting failed. It runs into the ordinary pressures of selling.

That's the gap the broader SKO solution is built to close.



The live event isn't responsible for doing every job. Preparation builds knowledge and uncovers readiness gaps before people arrive. The meeting brings people together to focus on shared priorities, strengthen relationships, and gain hands-on experience. Follow-through gives participants reasons and opportunities to apply what they learned and gives leaders evidence of what's taking hold.

Consider a company launching a new strategic offering. The meeting can make the opportunity compelling. But the company also needs people to identify suitable customers, practice positioning, make a first attempt, receive coaching, and keep at it when initial conversations are difficult. The keynote establishes the direction. Consistent practice, coaching, and reinforcement help participants follow it when the next customer conversation arrives.

The question isn't whether the meeting worked. **It's whether the organization has created the conditions for people to act on what made the meeting valuable.**

The question isn't whether the meeting worked. It's whether the organization has created the conditions for people to act on what made the meeting valuable. **What should happen in the first week? What will managers reinforce? What signals will tell leaders whether adoption is growing? What should change when it isn't?**

This isn't an argument for a longer agenda or more work piled onto participants. It's an argument for choosing a few high-value actions and connecting them into a performance journey. The live experience remains essential. What happens before and after gives that meeting a better chance to change what happens on Tuesday, Wednesday, and every day after.

Performance Principle

The real challenge isn't creating excitement at SKO. It's making the next right behavior easier when everyday work resumes.

Start with impact

If your **SKO** is designed to inspire a specific change, the next question is **how you'll make that change** happen in the field.

We start with a business question:

What should change and how will we know?



Participants experience that journey as **Know–Feel–Do–Impact.** The planning team starts with Impact and works backward. That's how a broad aspiration like "**grow strategic-product sales**" becomes a set of specific, coachable actions.

For instance, participants may need to recognize the customer situations where a new offering makes sense (**Know**), believe they can explain its value (**Feel**), and begin using a different discovery question or sales motion (**Do**). Leaders may ultimately care about product mix, qualified pipeline, conversion, or revenue (Impact). Those business measures matter, but they'll show up later than the first behavior changes.

That distinction helps determine what belongs where.

Before
the meeting, baseline assessments and learning missions identify what people already understand.

During
the meeting, immersive exercises and realistic practice can build confidence and shared commitment.

Afterward,
coaching, team challenges, incentives, and recognition reinforce the target behaviors and reveal how consistently they're happening.

A few leading measures make the approach practical: **demonstrated readiness**, **completion of relevant practice**, **first use of a new process**, **quality of sales activity**, **manager observations**, or **adoption of a tool**. Pair those with downstream business measures rather than treating activity as proof of revenue impact.

The same framework also helps prevent disconnected tactics. A gamified challenge shouldn't reward something unrelated to the strategy. An incentive shouldn't promote volume when the business needs quality. And a follow-up email shouldn't introduce a new priority when people are still learning the first one.

Executive check: five questions for your next SKO

1. What specific behaviors should people put into practice more often after **SKO**?
2. How will we know what participants understand before they arrive?
3. Where will they practice those behaviors during the live experience?
4. What will we reinforce in the first 30, 60, and 90 days?
5. Which leading indicators will help us improve execution before the **final results arrive?**

Performance Principle

Start with the business result.

Work backward to the behaviors and build every phase to support them.

3 Connect the three phases

The **work starts before SKO** and **continues when everyone gets back to business**. Each phase has a different job, and each should make the next one stronger. **A North Star**—a shared business priority that guides the language, behaviors, and experiences across every touch point—provides a consistent direction, while ongoing measurement keeps each phase connected.

Five connected steps behind the journey

1. ALIGN AND IGNITE
Establish readiness and early engagement before participants arrive.

2. ACTIVATE
Build confidence and give people opportunities to apply the strategy during the live experience.

3. CALL TO ACTION
Make the first field behaviors, expectations, and responsibilities clear.

4. SUSTAIN AND ACCELERATE
Reinforce those behaviors with learning, coaching, competition, recognition, and incentives.

5. MEASURE
Track readiness, adoption, and business signals throughout, adjusting while there's time to make a difference.



These **five steps** fit within the simpler **before/during/after** story. Measurement runs through every phase rather than waiting until the end.

1

Before:
Build readiness and participation

Before a sales kickoff meeting, a company has a chance to move people beyond passive awareness. Instead of arriving cold to a new strategy, participants can show up knowing the essentials, understanding the business priority, and ready to spend their time together on higher-value conversations and experiences.

That may start with a brief leadership challenge, targeted knowledge checks, short learning modules, a product or strategy mission, confidence assessments, team formation, or goals that participants will revisit after the event.

The difference isn't the existence of a teaser or a pre-event email; those are familiar tools.

The difference is connecting preparation to actual readiness and giving leaders visibility into what people know, where they're struggling, and who needs support.

BIW brings immersive learning, communications, and gamification and performance technology into that preparation. Relevant missions turn key knowledge into action. Team-based challenges create shared accountability. Progress indicators encourage participation, while participation and assessment data help organizers target support rather than guess which topics will land.

Imagine two groups heading into the same product launch. One has already completed a short customer-needs challenge, practiced core language, and identified its most difficult objections. The other is hearing everything for the first time. Both can enjoy a great meeting. The prepared group can use more of that scarce face-to-face time to test ideas, get feedback, and solve harder problems.

The goal is to make better use of the time everyone has together and **establish a meaningful starting point for what happens afterward**.

2 During:

Activate, practice, and connect

The live experience remains the heart of an SKO. It brings the strategy to life in a way an email or online course can't: shared attention, leadership connection, team energy, recognition, and the chance to experience new ideas together. Our SKO performance work builds on that experience, connecting the preparation that precedes it to the reinforcement that follows.

Performance activations bring the strategy to life through: **immersive simulations**, **customer scenarios**, practice sessions, **team competitions**, **learning challenges**, and **real-time feedback** tied to the same business objectives established beforehand. They give a chance to try the desired behaviors, not just hear about them.



RAIN Group found high-impact SKOs were 2.7 times more likely to be highly interactive and 2.8 times more likely to devote significant time to realistic role-play.[1]

One **BI WORLDWIDE** life sciences experience involved **400 field representatives and ten immersive activations**, including role-play, sensory experiences, puzzles, and hands-on learning tied to a critical selling moment[2].

Recognition also plays a strategic role. Celebrating achievement honors the people who brought the organization this far. Connecting that achievement to future priorities helps participants see what excellence can look like next.

The goal isn't to turn an awards experience into a lecture. **It's to give both celebration and forward direction a coherent place in the story.**

Importantly, the North Star shouldn't debut onstage. Participants should recognize the same priorities, language, and ambitions from their preparation, see them brought to life during **SKO**, and carry them forward when they return to work.

3 After:

Translate commitment into field execution

This is where the broader **SKO** solution starts making a real difference. Once people return to customers and daily responsibilities, enthusiasm competes with established habits. **Organizations need more than a recap email; they need clear first actions, manageable practice, relevant feedback, and reasons** to keep going.

A 30/60/90-day path focuses attention without overwhelming anyone.

In the first 30 days, participants might complete a targeted mission, try a new customer approach, and receive coaching. Over the next 30 days, teams could work toward measurable adoption or practice goals, compare progress, and get recognition for improvements.

By day 90, leaders can review leading indicators alongside business results, reinforce what works, and adjust where adoption is lagging. The exact timing and mix depend on the sales motion.

Different BIW capabilities make that continuity practical.

Learning specialists create bite-sized reinforcement and practice.

Gamification delivers challenges, feedback, progress visibility, and team competition.

Communications keep priorities recognizable.

Managers use coaching prompts and relevant performance data. Recognition and incentives reinforce the actions the organization needs, while research and measurement help identify where the approach is working and where to adapt. Spacing learning and practice over time has research support.[3] In one BI WORLDWIDE insurance program, more **than 17,000 agents** completed over one million gamified learning missions.

Highly engaged agents increased policies written year over year by nearly 20 percentage points more than unengaged agents.[4]

That's an example of the kind of sustained engagement a connected approach can support.

The best follow-through feels like the next chapter of the same story, not another unrelated initiative. Participants know what's expected, managers know what to coach, and leaders see the difference between completion rates and real behavior change.

Performance Principle

Before builds readiness.
During brings the strategy to life.
After makes it easier to act.
North Star guides all three.

Turn the momentum into execution

Four performance accelerators help turn an **SKO priority** into everyday action. We use four distinct levers: **team-based competition**, **gamification and performance technology**, **immersive learning**, and **incentives and recognition**. Each can help on its own. **They're more powerful when we align them with the same behaviors and business result.**

1 Team-based competition

A well-designed team challenge gives people a common goal and a reason to help one another improve.

It focuses attention on strategic priorities, encourages collaboration, and builds accountability beyond an individual leaderboard.

Teams might work together to qualify opportunities for a priority product, demonstrate a new customer approach, or reach a shared readiness milestone.

Competition needs the right rules. A contest built around raw activity can reward the wrong thing if the business needs better-quality conversations. Our **Contests and Incentives** and **Gamification** teams structure challenges around relevant goals, fair measures, timely feedback, and rewards that matter. **Creative** and **Communications** keep the challenge connected to the **SKO story**, while managers use team results to **recognize progress and coach gaps.**



2 Gamification and performance technology

People need to know what to do next and whether they're getting better. **Gamification turns a large strategic priority into achievable missions, milestones, feedback and visible progress across the weeks before** and **after SKO**.

Performance technology helps participants follow their progress and gives leaders a window into readiness, participation, and adoption.

The game mechanics aren't the strategy. A leaderboard alone isn't useful unless moving up reflects something the business wants more of. **Our Gamification team builds connected challenges and progress experiences,** while **Learning** shapes the knowledge and practice behind them and **Contests and Incentives** aligns recognition and rewards.



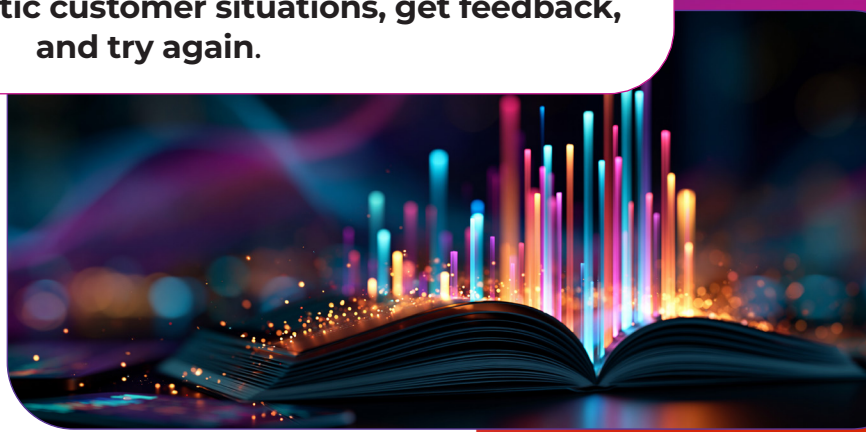
Research has found positive learning effects from gamification, although results depend on how it's designed and used[5].

We should measure target behaviors, not just points, clicks, or logins.

3 Immersive learning

Knowing the strategy isn't the same as being ready to use it.

Participants need to make decisions, test language, work through realistic customer situations, get feedback, and try again.



Our Learning team builds practice into preparation, creates immersive activations that complement the live experience, and continues learning through short, relevant reinforcement afterward.

The same learning challenge can become more useful as the journey progresses. A **pre-SKO** assessment identifies tough objections. A live simulation gives participants a safe place to practice. A follow-up mission asks them to apply the new approach, and coaching helps improve it. **Meetings & Shows** brings the live experience to life; **Learning** and **Gamification** help turn the strategic message into practice that carries into the field.



4 Incentives and recognition

Business results take time to appear.
Recognition and incentives keep the actions that lead to those results visible in the meantime.

That could mean recognizing someone for successfully using a new discovery approach, rewarding progress toward a qualified-pipeline goal, or celebrating teams that demonstrate meaningful product adoption.

Our Contests and Incentives team connects incentive structure, rewards, and recognition to behaviors the business can influence. **Gamification** and **Communications** keep progress and achievements visible; managers add context with coaching and timely recognition.

In one BIW sales incentive, weekly targets, personalized communications, game mechanics, rewards, and daily scorecards were associated with **41%** of participants improving productivity over baseline, **$11 million** in revenue, and a reported **17:1 ROI.**[6] Those figures describe that program; they aren't a promise of typical results.

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Managers, communications, and measurement connect all four accelerators. Readiness results inform learning. Competition and mission data surface where people are participating or struggling. Managers reinforce the right behaviors, and incentive and business results show where to adjust. That feedback loop turns separate activities into one coordinated approach.

Performance Principle

Competition creates shared focus.
Gamification makes progress visible.
Immersive learning builds confidence.
Incentives and recognition encourage people to keep going.



Integration is the advantage

Many organizations have strong event partners, learning teams, platforms, and incentive programs.

Having the pieces isn't the same as having them operate as one system.

Different owners, schedules, data, and success measures can unintentionally turn one strategy into several separate experiences for the same sales force.

That's where **BI WORLDWIDE** has a differentiated story to tell. Our **Meetings & Shows**, **Learning**, **Contests and Incentives**, and **Gamification** teams bring distinct strengths to the same business priority. **Meetings & Shows** creates powerful live experiences; **Learning** develops understanding and confident application; **Contests and Incentives** focuses effort and recognizes progress; and **Gamification** connects participation, feedback, challenges, and progress across time. Together with **creative**, **communications**, **research**, and **measurement**, those solutions work as one coordinated system, not four disconnected programs.

The North Star keeps these experiences aligned around one business priority. The priority established before **SKO shapes the experiences participants have during it.**



What people practice during SKO informs the missions, coaching, and incentives that follow. Feedback and performance signals then tell teams what to strengthen or change. Each part has a distinct role, and what we learn in one informs what happens next.

For a strategic product launch, it might look like this: pre-event learning reveals which objections are hardest; immersive practice at the SKO targets those objections; managers receive coaching tools after the meeting; gamified missions encourage application; recognition celebrates early examples of effective selling; and adoption data helps leaders refine the plan. It's one business priority moving through a connected set of experiences, not six campaigns competing for attention.

That connection gives leaders a clearer view of what the investment is producing. They see whether people arrived ready, practiced the right skills, adopted the intended behaviors, and made progress toward the business outcome. They also identify gaps early enough to improve the approach, instead of waiting for quarter-end results.

A great meeting is a powerful investment.

The question is **whether the rest of the system is designed to compound its value** or **leave each piece to work alone.**

Performance Principle

One strategy.
One North star.
Connected BIW solutions built to turn SKO priorities **into measurable action.**

Conclusion

A great **sales kickoff** deserves to be **memorable**. It **brings people together, celebrates achievement, makes the strategy real**, and **creates a shared sense of possibility**.

Then Monday comes. The teams that turn **SKO** into sustained performance are deliberate about what participants know before they arrive, what they can practice together, and what support follows them back into the field.

Through **Meetings & Shows**, **Learning**, **Contests and Incentives**, and **Gamification**, **BI WORLDWIDE** connects the experience to **practice**, **feedback**, **motivation**, and **measurement**—all organized around the business result. When every part of the **SKO** experience works toward the same business result, **the impact extends far beyond the meeting itself.**

Make the most of the moment.
Then make the next move count.

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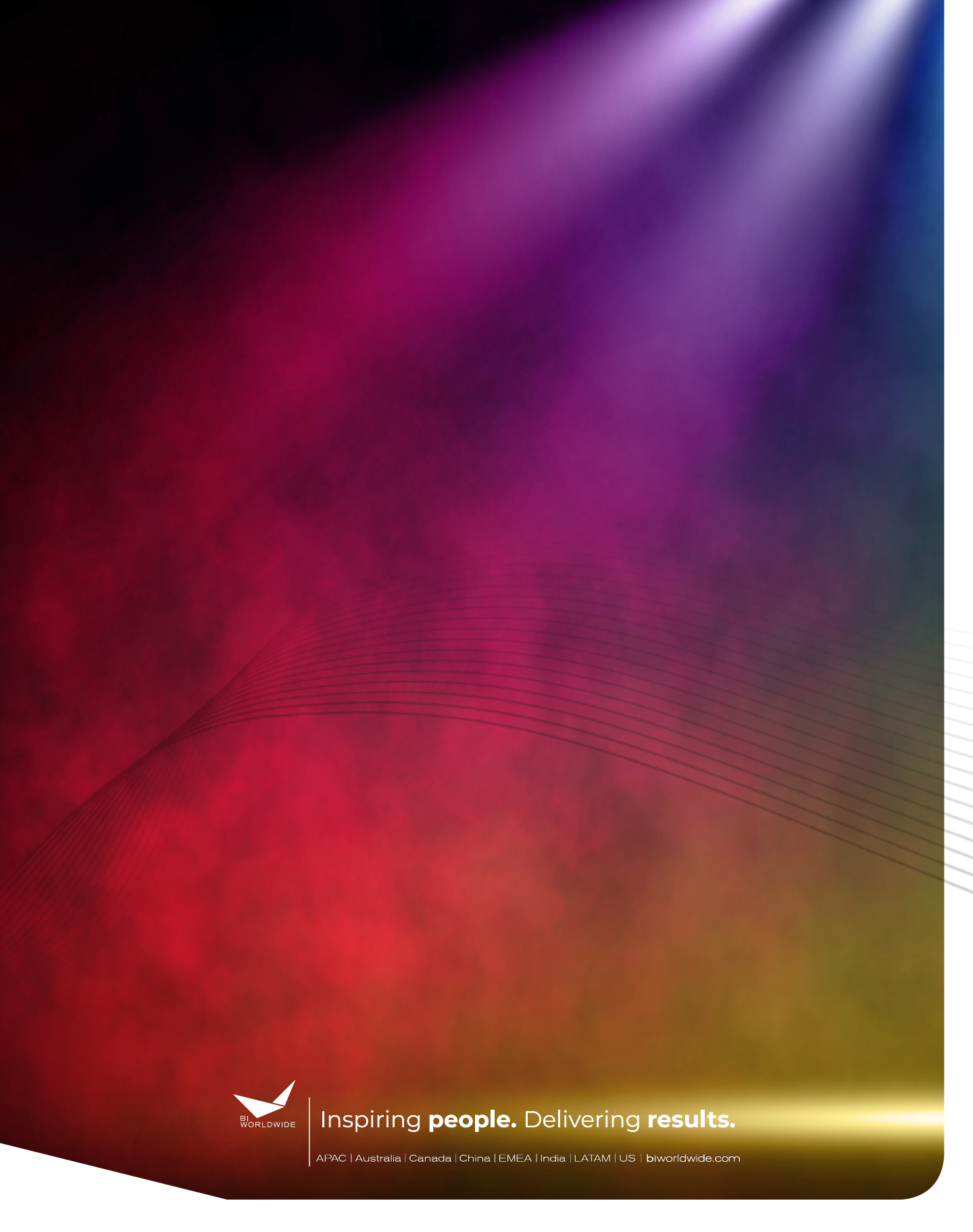
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