



GLOBAL SALES SCIENCE INSTITUTE

2014 Conference: Abstracts of Papers



FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF BUSINESS

SESSION 1 Competitive Paper Presentation: International Issues in Selling***International Entrepreneurial Selling - Entrepreneurs' Narratives on International Sales Negotiations - Irene Lehto, University of Oulu***

This study explores international entrepreneurial selling from entrepreneurs' viewpoint in a context of early internationalising firms (EIFs) that expand their businesses abroad through international business-to-business (B2B) sales negotiations. A moderate constructionist narrative approach is taken to analyse how entrepreneurs make sense of their behaviour. An early description of the phenomenon is provided, highlighting adaptation flexibility and speed as the most crucial characteristics of (early) international entrepreneurial selling.

Changes in the global marketplace have led to an increasing internationalisation of growth-oriented firms, and made international sales a vital but complex issue for practitioners (Ingram 2004; Baldauf and Lee 2011), increasing also the need for international sales research (Javalgi, Granot, and Brashear Alejandro 2011). Especially small firms entering their first foreign market struggle to manage growth through foreign sales due to restricted resources and capabilities (Loane, Bell, and McNaughton 2007). Even if one of the most popular topics within the international sales domain is negotiations (Panagopoulos et al. 2011; Ghauri and Usunier 2003), the field does not discuss how small, new firms sell to international customers. Instead of discussing only trained salespeople's skills and behaviour in international negotiations (Simintiras and Thomas 1998), research should also address the question: how do entrepreneurs make sense of international entrepreneurial selling?

An entrepreneurial perspective is recognized as one of the new directions of sales research (Ingram et al. 2005) but the focus is directed to entrepreneurial sales behaviour in established organizations. Entrepreneurial salespeople (Hill and Wright 2000; Altinay and Roper 2005; Schultz and Good 2010) are seen to 'run a business' within the overall corporate operations (Ingram et al. 2005). These professionals exhibit entrepreneurial orientation (EO), when adapting to market changes and seeking new solutions (Morris, Avila, and Teeple 1990; Schultz and Good 2010) in terms of sales approaches and business opportunities (Spillecke and Brettel 2013). In contrast, the entrepreneurship literature has placed strong emphasis on EO within new and small businesses (Schultz and Good 2010), but has neglected the sales aspect. This paper contributes to the entrepreneurial marketing and sales discussion by exploring entrepreneurial selling within the specific context of EIFs.

Managing Complexity in International Business Negotiations. An Empirical Research through a European-Chinese Case- Pascal Brassier and Jing Tang, Auvergne University (EUM-UdA), CRCGM Laboratory

Complexity is not a new concept in international negotiations. But managing complexity is still a hard point that negotiators and managers have to handle carefully. Several approaches have been used with that focus. Nevertheless, do we have necessarily to simplify the maximum of elements in a complex business deal? Based on a case dealing with medical technological transfers between a European country and China, we analyze two different situations: one is a success, one has failed. It appears that being too much focused on trials of simplification may lead to fail negotiations, and that complexity, when it is managed properly, can drive to a good agreement.

***The Role of Listening in the Intercultural Sales Encounter* - Tanya Drollinger,
University of Lethbridge**

In sales text books and popular literature there are a lot of anecdotal examples of missteps when communicating in an intercultural setting. Understanding basic mores and norms of a culture tend to help salespeople avoid making such mistakes but there may also be a more universal skill among salespeople that can help them to be effective intercultural communicators and ultimately relationship builders. Ongoing research supports the notion that listening plays a critical role in effective communication and developing and maintaining trusting, satisfying long term buyer/seller relationships (Aggarwal et al. 2005; Comer and Drollinger 1999; Drollinger and Comer 2012, Pryor, Malshe and Paradise 2013, Ramsey and Sohi 1997).

Because intercultural communication research is limited in the sales literature it is proposed that an exploratory study be employed. More specifically, a qualitative methodology will be used in order to better understand the role that listening plays in an intercultural communication setting. It is proposed that depth interviews be used on a sample of buyers and sellers who have experience in international sales in order to gather data pertaining to the research questions at hand. It is expected that the data will provide a rich source of information regarding the nature and role that cognitive and affective aspects that empathy and listening play in effective intercultural communication.

SESSION 2: Is Sales Ready for a Certification***Professionalization and Scientification of Sales Engineering - Jobst Görne, Aalen University of Applied Sciences***

Sales Engineering is a part of B2B sales, covering the selling of complex engineering products to industrial customers. In order to be successful, the sales force has to combine profound technical, commercial and selling knowledge (United States Department of Labor, 2012). Up to now there is little or no specific education for sales engineers. Given the estimated size of 5-10 trillion EUR in sales per year, the need for professionalization is great. In order to base the education upon objective rules and findings instead of upon best practice, scientific research in the field of sales engineering has to be established.

It is the author's conviction that the field of sales engineering as a science needs investigation industry type by industry type in order to come to significant and relevant findings.

SESSION 3 Competitive Paper Session: Importance of Knowledge in Selling***Sales and Knowledge: A Research Agenda* - Hans Dekker, HZ University of Applied Sciences and Kurt De Blick, ScienceforSales**

Sales research is lagging behind if we consider the importance of sales as a business function, and if we look at the output of other related business functions. Improving cooperation between sales researchers and practitioners is identified as an important solution to this problem. Current discussions and paradigms regarding the research-practice gap are provided, and the lack of similar research in a sales context is pointed out. After depicting an overview of relevant discussions, a research agenda is provided by identifying two relevant areas of research and addressing preferred qualitative research approaches.

Contextual Utilization and Performance Expectancy of Sales-CRM Technology In An International Sales Organization - David Baker, University of Louisiana at Lafayette

Building on established sales technology utilization research, this study theorizes and tests multi-dimensional contextual technology utilization in a multi-national business-to-business sales organizational setting. The model includes four distinct factors of utilization including accessing, analysing, internal communication, and external communication. These factors are measured in terms of frequency, emphasis, and confidence and posited to relate to the dependent variables of Individual Performance Expectancy and Collective Performance Expectancy. Individual Performance Expectancy is posited as a significant antecedent to Collective Performance Expectancy.

Impact of CRM on Sales Process Behaviors: Empirical Results from US, Europe, and Asia - Rob Peterson, Northern Illinois University, Michael Rodriguez and Vijay Krishnan, Elon University

The diffusion of customer relationship management (CRM) systems across the globe, over the last decade, has created a need to improve the understanding of CRM influence. The authors examine how CRM impacts the sales process (creating opportunity, managing opportunity, and managing relationships) in three regions of the world (US, Europe, and Asia). Results surprisingly suggest no differences exist in how CRM affects the sales process across the regions. Thus, conventional wisdom regarding the impact that culture and other influencers have on the sales process may not pertain when it comes to CRM. Managerial implications are provided regarding the potential power CRM has regarding the sales process.

SESSION 4 Competitive Paper Session: Managing the Customer

***Reciprocal Value Propositions in Professional Service Sales Encounters* - Jasmin Baumann and Kenneth Le Meunier-FitzHugh, University of East Anglia, Alexander Haas and Nina Stübiger, University of Giessen**

This study explores the notion of reciprocal value propositions in customer-salesperson interaction in a B2C service context, and examines whether each party's value proposition is congruent with the value sought to be co-created by the respective counterpart. Responding to calls in the recent literature for qualitative and segment-specific value proposition research, we found that B2C service customers actively offer and communicate value propositions to the salesperson. However, while the customer's value proposition is largely consistent with the value sought by the salesperson, a marked discrepancy was found in the reverse case, i.e. between the salesperson's value proposition and the customer's desired value. These findings indicate that there can be a difference in the mental models of value propositions between customers and salespeople. Accordingly, salespeople need to constantly question and adapt their value proposition communicated to customers to avoid the incongruences encountered in this study. They should regard customers as contributing partners in joint value realization rather than just passive receivers of standardized value propositions. This study provides insight into value propositions by confirming the concept's reciprocity in B2C service markets and clarifying the roles of both customer and salesperson in the formation and communication of value propositions.

“Do Salespeople Matter in the Information Age? Using the Elaboration Likelihood Model to Understand How to Influence Informed Consumers”- Bryan Hochstein, Florida State University

According to many industry experts, the information age is on the verge of making Arthur Miller’s famed story “Death of a Salesman” in need of a re-title to “Death of the Sales Profession.” One marketing expert exclaims that “selling, as a profession and function, is slowly sinking like the Titanic” ([Ries and Ries 1998](#)). Another predicts that the number of sales jobs in the United States will decrease 600% by the year 2020 ([Gschwandtner 2011](#)). Meanwhile, other experts are confident that the sales profession is actually thriving and will add two million jobs by the year 2020 ([Pink 2012](#)). The question is obvious, who is correct? In the information age do salespeople still matter?

The overall purpose of the current study is focused on the sales process. It is important to gain insight into how buyer informedness impacts the sales interaction and what value the salesperson can provide the informed buyer. This is especially important because in many situations involving complex products informed customers are required to interact with salespeople who are trained to persuade consumers to purchase an item ([McFarland et al. 2006](#); [Weitz 1981](#)). In this scenario, the informed buyer’s purpose during the interaction is no longer to gather information, but rather to simply complete the sale. Conversely, the goal of the salesperson is to provide information and influence decision-making through influence strategies. This paradox leads to the previously mentioned questions and the disagreement concerning the future of the sales profession. The Elaboration Likelihood Model is proposed as a theoretical underpinning to resolve the questions and differences concerning informed buyers and the sales interaction.

“The Buying Center in the Field of Service” Proposal of a Modified Role Concept Demonstrated via Personal Business Services - Arndt Borgmeier, Katharina Filipenko, Samantha Fuchs, Birgit Rief, Wiebke Schäfer, Aalen University of Applied Sciences

This project is about a newly conceived Buying Center Model which is adjusted to the requirements of the Service Industry. The target of this work is to define new roles and their tasks within a Buying Center with focus in the division of Services, improving the purchase process and its satisfaction rate.

A Buying Center is defined as “a group of people in an organisation which are responsible for the purchase of industrial goods”. The traditional **Buying Center Role Concept** is often referred as originally introduced by *Webster*, *Wind*, and *Cardozo*. It is composed of at least five different roles: The Initiator, the Gatekeeper, the Buyer, the Influencer and the User. Due to the change in society to service oriented patterns, this classic Buying Center Model and its roles have become can be adapted to the special characteristics of services and the challenges that it creates. Applying the concepts of *Webster* and *Wind* as the basis theory to this new social context, a hybrid model is created appealing to the current service oriented trend of society. New roles are created and the classic Buying Center looks in at the division of Services testing new horizons leading the service purchase into the 21st century. Some disadvantages are eliminated and opportunities are taken as the traditional Buying Center for industrial goods turns into “The Buying Center in the Field of Service”. In a modern corporate environment, production and workflow efficiency are key to a sustainable business model. Here, four new roles that change the Buying Center into its Service oriented version are presented.

SESSION 5 Competitive Paper Session: Networking in Sales

How Social Media Literacy Affects Sales Behavior Performance: The Role of Organizational Influences - Melanie Bowen, THM Business School, Alexander Haas, University of Giessen and Jan Freidank, THM Business School

Social media has been suggested to create great opportunities for improving salesperson performance by researchers and managers alike (e.g., Rapp and Panagopoulos 2012). But there is no research to date that investigates how social media affects the performance outcomes of salesperson behaviors. Against this background, we investigate how salespeople's social media literacy, a key determinant of social media usage, influences salesperson behavior performance. Specifically, we develop a conceptual model in which social media literacy moderates the performance outcomes of four prominent salesperson behaviors (i.e., prospecting, customer-oriented selling, adaptive selling, and proactive postsales servicing). The model also includes organizational facilitators (i.e., employee autonomy and top management support) and social norms as potential influences of the moderating effect of social media literacy.

Abrupt Salesperson Driven Network Formation: The Case Study of Kagome's Regional Marketing - Kenichi Hosoi and Kenneth Ichiro Tsuye, Hiroshima University of Economics, Miho Miyauchi, Chukyo University and Yoritoshi Hara, Meiji University

In 2011, “The Great East Japan Earthquake” impacted large changes within Japanese business networks. Kagome Co. Ltd., a Japanese food manufacturer, is one firm that suffered dramatic changes within their business network. This case study will discuss how such network change brings substantial business opportunities far beyond normal product development and what should salespersons do in such a network reorganization. In this case, salespersons performed a central role in forming the network. We conclude the paper by discussing the implications of this case.

***Networking and Career Success: Does Gender Matter?* - Gerrard Macintosh, North Dakota State University**

Over the past few decades, the number of women in professional selling has grown significantly. This trend has stimulated a fair amount of research examining potential differences in attitudes, behavior, and outcomes between male and female salespeople. An important conclusion from some of this research is that gender can moderate the relationships between key antecedents, work attitudes, and outcomes (e.g., Babin and Boles 1998; Boles et al. 2003). One set of behaviors that is considered important in sales, is networking. Surprisingly, very little research attention has been given to networking behaviors and their benefits in sales (Flaherty et al. 2012; Seevers, Skinner, and Kelley, 2007). Since the literature suggests potential differences in both how men and women network and in how they may benefit from networking (Forret and Dougherty, 2004; Van Emmerik et al. 2006), research on potential differences in sales would be beneficial. Thus, this exploratory study examines networking behaviors, individuals' attempts to develop and maintain relationships with others who have the potential to assist them in their work or career (Forret and Dougherty 2001), as potential antecedents of career success in sales.

SESSION 6 Competitive Paper Session: Leadership and Performance Management***Exploring Leadership Styles and Salesperson Performance: A Review and Framework-* Karen Boehnke Peesker and Javier Marcos-Cuevas, Cranfield School of Management**

This article examines the effect of leadership styles on sales performance. A systematic review of the literature is conducted to gather insights on how salesperson performance is impacted by leadership styles and behaviours. The study focuses in understanding under what conditions leadership behaviours and styles influence the performance of salespeople, and in identifying the mechanisms through which this influence occurs. Key behaviours within the transformational, transactional, and other leadership styles identified from 56 seminal articles included in the review. The findings show the importance of context in this field, the need for research with a more integrative approach that focuses on followers, and the requirement for a better understanding of the effect of leadership behaviours in the new digital sales environment. A framework that maps relevant behaviours in leading sales forces, and the mechanisms by which sales leader behaviour influences sales person performance is presented, arguing that to understand the impact of sales leadership on salesperson performance, focus needs to be placed on the specific behaviours that underpin existing conceptualizations of leadership.

Towards a Model for the Transformation of Leadership in Sales - Philip Squire and Anne Feeney, Consalia and Javier Marcos-Cuevas, Cranfield School of Management

Much has been researched and written about the pace of change affecting sales organisations and the importance of adapting and transforming business models to survive and grow. In this paper we explore the role that sales managers play in sales transformation, what is required to be a transformational sales leader and how effective current learning & development practices are in equipping sales managers with the skills required to manage transformation in their businesses. We posit that sales leaders play an increasingly influential role in both shaping and executing organisational transformation strategies through their sales practices and processes. The ability of sales leaders to realise transformation at the organisational and personal level are critical in modern sales management. We argue that traditional approaches to learning & development do not equip sales leaders to cope with the fast changing nature of the markets in which they operate and thus are limited in fostering meaningful transformation. We present the case of the Sales Transformation Programme, pioneered between an international sales consultancy and a UK university, and show how an innovative values-based approach combined with participative and work-based learning design can generate significant transformation as well as bring about sought after financial returns for sales organisations.

Towards A Framework of Performance Measurement Effectiveness In Sales - Peter Kerr and Javier Marcos-Cuevas, Cranfield School of Management

Sales performance measures play a critical role in sales force compensation, motivation, alignment and control. The types of measures selected and used in an organization are associated with the attainment of a range of individual and organizational outcomes. These outcomes can be negatively affected if contextual variables are not sufficiently taken into consideration when performance measures are chosen and implemented in sales organizations. The selling environment faced by business to business sales people has grown in complexity and intricacy, and how it affects the way in which performance is measured has received limited attention. Specifically, the literature is silent on how combinations of situational factors will influence the relationship between organizational outcomes and sales performance measurement properties. This paper presents a framework specifying the range of outcomes associated with performance measures and the situational factors that must be considered when selecting such measures. Findings indicate that performance measurement properties are associated with outcomes including individual performance, employee task behaviour, and psychological effects such as role alignment, ambiguity, tension and conflict. The paper proposes a contingency approach to the selection and implementation of performance measures to assist sales organizations increase sales performance measurement effectiveness in a context of increasing contextual volatility driven by globalization, competition, technology and more sophisticated customer expectations.

Developing An Implicit Theories Of Selling Ability Measures - Corinne Novell, Karen Machleit, and Jane Z. Sojka, University of Cincinnati

We propose and develop an individual difference measure of Implicit Theories of Selling Ability (ITSA) which examines the extent to which a salesperson believes he/she can change his/her selling performance. The goal of developing the ITSA is to initiate and guide proper examination of the relationship between implicit theories and goal orientations in a sales performance setting. The current research develops and tests the new ITSA measure and seeks to answer the following questions: Are ability beliefs regarding selling conceptually distinct for beliefs regarding general intelligence? And does ITSA predict an important construct in motivation and sales performance, work goal orientations (Silver, Dwyer, & Alford, 2006)? We present some preliminary findings that support these questions and then discuss the broader relevance of ITSA for personal selling effectiveness and sales management for firm performance improvement.

From Managing Sales Activities to Managing Luck: Can We Attribute Sales Performance to Luck? - Joel LeBon, The University of Houston

This research investigates an unexplored area of the attribution theory which should help young salespeople, sales managers, and sales educators understand better the relationship between believing in luck and becoming successful. That is to say, if inexperienced salespeople are willing to remain positive, and continuously try in the face of failure while also recognizing the importance of luck to their success, they should become better learners, and achievers.

Building on qualitative interviews conducted with young and experienced salespeople, sales students, and data collected from the latter involved in a customer relationship management course requiring a real field sales assignment, we offer new insights to enhance young salespeople's motivation and performance. More specifically, we suggest that inexperienced salespeople are better learners and performers if they attribute sales success to effort conjointly with *accidental luck* and *provoked luck*.

SESSION 7 Competitive Paper Session - Trends in Sales Education

Does Sales Teaching Really Lead to Future Success?- William Bolander, Cinthia Saturnino and Leff Bonney, Florida State University

Sales education is on the rise and for good reason. Statistics say that sales jobs will continue to grow at a rapid rate over the next few years. Many universities are preparing their students to start their careers in the professional selling function through the inclusion of sales education in their business curriculum. Yet little research exists that investigates the relationship between sales education and sales performance on graduating from a college of business. This article seeks to fill this void in the sale pedagogy literature by assessing, empirically, the relationship between what is learned in university sales programs and the actual selling behaviors of recent graduates from these programs (vs. students who did not receive formal sales education in their undergraduate programs). Likewise, the relationship between sales education and extrinsic and intrinsic performance indicators is investigated. The findings suggest that university sales education is a significant contributor to sales rep performance. However, the results on the behaviors taught and those used in day-to-day selling were mixed.

Teaching Sales Students to Direct Their Own Learning - Stephanie Boyer, Bryant University

This research aligns the theoretical framework from adult education with the practical application of a self-directed learning project in the sales classroom at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. The findings from the sales student learning projects correlate with adult education findings: implementing self-directed learning into the training and learning toolkit leads to improved levels of learner internal locus of control, self-efficacy, motivation, support and performance.

Settings as a Design Parameter to increase Effectiveness of Sales Role Plays in Higher Education - Uwe Jäger, University of Medien

Sales courses in higher education are laden with several major challenges: On the one hand the reputation of sales in society is still negative. On the other hand, complexity of communication in sales, particularly in negotiations is perceived to be considerably high, even for students. The combination of social, rhetorical, economical and technical requirements in sales is a challenge for the teaching staff as it is difficult to organize integrative learning modules. Role-plays are therefore an important didactic tool, because they allow students to address all these dimensions in a relaxed atmosphere. Still the use of role-plays bears some risks when participants are not fully committed. As the settings of sales role-plays may be used to vary the aspiration level and the working atmosphere for participants, they may also affect the commitment of sales course students. The purpose of this paper is to provide a systematization of settings and to explore how this could affect aspiration level and commitment