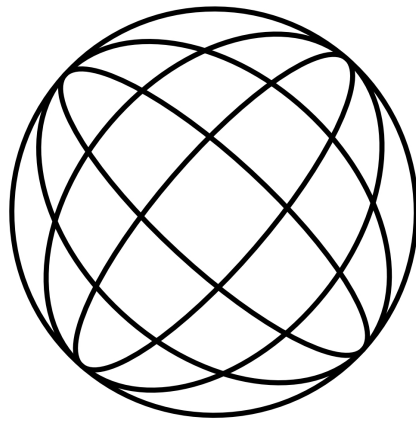




GLOBAL
SALES
SCIENCE
INSTITUTE

PROCEEDINGS OF THE
GLOBAL SALES SCIENCE INSTITUTE
ANNUAL CONFERENCE

“The Future of Sales: Attracting, Retaining, and Exploring”

June 3–5, 2026
Ancona, Italy

CONFERENCE CO-CHAIRS

Prof. Silvio Cardinali, Università Politecnica delle Marche, Italy
Prof. Paolo Guenzi, (Università Bocconi), Italy
Prof. Colleen E. McClure, Ohio University, USA
Prof. Edward Nowlin, Kansas State University, USA

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Agentic AI as Co-Leader: A Multilevel Conceptual Model for Attracting, Retaining, and Re-Imaging Sales Talent	7
<i>Michael Rodriguez (East Carolina University)</i>	
<i>Stefanie Boyer (Bryant University)</i>	
<i>Ricky Fergusson (Middle Tennessee State University)</i>	
<i>Kevin Trainor (New Mexico State University)</i>	
2. AI-Assisted Augmentation in Sales: Effects on Relational Quality, Buyer Trust, and Sales Team Models and Skills	8
<i>Alexander Sventeckis, (Ball State University)</i>	
<i>Jamye Foster, (Ball State University)</i>	
<i>Christopher Wilkey (Ball State University)</i>	
3. Beyond Channel Selection: Unpacking Salespeople's Orchestration of B2B Customer Journeys	9
<i>Chiara Ancillai (Università Politecnica delle Marche)</i>	
<i>Sara Bartoloni (Università Politecnica delle Marche)</i>	
4. Beyond Performance: Judge-Related Bias in the Evaluation of Student Sales Competitions.....	10
<i>Alexander Bauer (Wittenborg University of Applied Sciences)</i>	
<i>Johannes Reiterer (University of Applied Sciences Wiener Neustadt)</i>	
<i>Severin Maurer (University of Applied Sciences Wiener Neustadt)</i>	
<i>Erik Mehl (Kristiania University of Applied Sciences)</i>	
5. Bringing Life to Work: How Subjective Happiness Spills Over into B2B Sales Outcomes	11
<i>Silvio Cardinali, (University Polytechnics of Marche)</i>	
<i>Simone Severini, (University Polytechnics of Marche)</i>	
<i>Alessandro Romoli (University Polytechnics of Marche)</i>	
6. Data Sources to Assess Sales Performance Outcomes	12
<i>Per Ivar Seljeseth (Nord University Business School)</i>	
7. Designing Inside Sales for Value Creation: A Systematic Review of Configurations, Trade-Offs, and Boundary Conditions in B2B Markets	13
<i>Simone Severini (University Polytechnics of Marche)</i>	
<i>Alessandro Romoli (University Polytechnics of Marche)</i>	
8. Expanding Effectual Selling for Solving Regional Issues.....	14
<i>Shinji Hongo (Okayama University of Science)</i>	
<i>Chizuru Taniguchi (Snack Lemonade Inc.)</i>	
<i>Hiyarapitiya Dulina Sandhadev (Okayama University of Science)</i>	
9. Field Study in Human-AI Collaboration in B2B Sales: Enablement, Adaptation, and Performance	15
<i>Victor Rubanovitsch (Aalto University)</i>	
<i>Jaakko Aspara (Aalto University)</i>	

10. From "Tool Choice" to Process Design: Decision Logics for Video Calls Across the B2B Selling Process	16
<i>Johannes Reiterer (University of Applied Sciences Wiener Neustadt)</i>	
<i>Timo Holopainen (Turku University of Applied Sciences)</i>	
<i>Eva Török-Beisteiner (University of Applied Sciences Wiener Neustadt)</i>	
<i>Arto Kuuluvainen (Turku University of Applied Sciences)</i>	
<i>Alexander Eigner (University of Applied Sciences Wiener Neustadt)</i>	
<i>Harri Lappalainen (Turku University of Applied Sciences, Finland)</i>	
11. From Myth to Reality: Investigating the Actual Adoption of Artificial Intelligence in Sales Organizations.....	17
<i>Paolo Guenzi (Università Bocconi)</i>	
<i>Paola Caiozzo (Università Bocconi)</i>	
<i>Laura Ingrid Maria Colm (Università Bocconi)</i>	
12. From Reactive to Proactive Adaptation: Conceptualizing Adaptability in the Era of Holistic Selling	18
<i>Bimesh Shrestha (LUT University)</i>	
<i>Titta Matikainen (LUT University)</i>	
<i>Jarkko Niemi (LUT University)</i>	
<i>Anssi Tarkiainen (LUT University)</i>	
13. Go Fast, Go Alone; Go Far, Go Together: How Practice, Education, and Research Jointly Contribute to the Future of Sales	19
<i>Arend-Jan Diephuis (Utrecht University of Applied Sciences)</i>	
<i>Mogens Bjerre (Copenhagen Business School)</i>	
<i>Timo Holopainen (Turku University of Applied Sciences)</i>	
<i>Jaap Feijen (HAN University of Applied Sciences)</i>	
<i>Peter A. Jensen (Customer Agency A/S)</i>	
<i>Jens K. Rasmussen (Customer Agency A/S)</i>	
<i>Thomas Berger (DHBW Lörrach)</i>	
<i>Rikke Carlé (University College of Northern Denmark)</i>	
<i>Peter Fröhlich (University of Applied Sciences Wiener Neustadt)</i>	
14. Hidden Decision Makers in Complex B2B Markets: A Dual-Level Framework for Sales Enablement.....	20
<i>Leonardo Forzoni (University of Florence)</i>	
<i>Alex Dell'Era (CUIRIF Research Center, eCampus University)</i>	
15. How Compliance and Influencers Reshape Sales Processes in Complex B2B Markets	21
<i>Leonardo Forzoni (University of Florence)</i>	
<i>Alex Dell'Era (CUIRIF Research Center, eCampus University)</i>	
16. Information Phishing in B2B Markets: How Customers Exploit Supplier Knowledge Without Buying Intent.....	22
<i>Jarkko Niemi (LUT University)</i>	
<i>Joona Keränen (RMIT University)</i>	
<i>Mark Micallef (RMIT University)</i>	

17. Intellectual Authenticity in AI-Enabled Global Selling: What Our 2025 Buyer Evidence Reveals About Trust Across Borders.....	23
<i>Philip Squire (Consalia Ltd – Middlesex University)</i>	
<i>Eddie Guevarra (Consalia Ltd – Middlesex University)</i>	
18. Managing the Emotional Toll of Selling: Integrating Emotional Labor into JD-R and Challenge-Hindrance Stressor Frameworks in B2B Sales.....	24
<i>Scott C. Ambrose (Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University)</i>	
<i>Brian N. Rutherford (Kennesaw State University)</i>	
<i>Armen Tashchian (Kennesaw State University)</i>	
<i>Dave Shepherd (Retired)</i>	
19. Neutralization Techniques and Punishment Severity in Sales Fraud.....	25
<i>Selma Hadzihalilovic (Copenhagen Business School)</i>	
<i>Selma Kadic-Magljalic (Copenhagen Business School)</i>	
20. Paradoxes in International Sales: Practitioner Verification and Empirical Consolidation of a 13-Dimension Structural Framework.....	26
<i>Margarethe Überwimmer (University of Applied Sciences Upper Austria)</i>	
<i>Jorge F.S. Gomes (ISEG Lisbon School of Economics & Management)</i>	
<i>Stefan Wengler (Hof University of Applied Sciences)</i>	
21. Rethinking Sales Performance Indicators in B2B Services: A Nomological Framework Perspective.....	27
<i>Nils M. Høgevold (Kristiania University of Applied Sciences)</i>	
<i>Göran Svensson (Kristiania University of Applied Sciences)</i>	
<i>Rocio Rodriguez (Kristiania University of Applied Sciences)</i>	
<i>Carmen Otero-Neira (Vigo University)</i>	
<i>Jyh-Liang Guan (National Ilan University, Yilan)</i>	
<i>Ke-Lin Chen (National Ilan University, Yilan)</i>	
22. Selling Orientation Across the Customer Lifecycle: When Does Consultative vs. Relational Selling Drive Satisfaction in High-Turnover D2D Contexts?	28
<i>David D'Acunto (University of Verona)</i>	
<i>Valentina Mazzoli (University of Verona)</i>	
<i>Ivan Russo (University of Verona)</i>	
23. Sweating the Stress Away: How Exercise Buffers Effects of Anxiety for Salespeople....	29
<i>Matthew Philp (Toronto Metropolitan University)</i>	
<i>Josh Learn (Toronto Metropolitan University)</i>	
<i>Bruno Lussier (HEC Montréal)</i>	
24. The AI Enabler: Leveling the Playing Field for Non-Native English Speakers.....	30
<i>Michael Kaplan (University of Central Florida)</i>	
<i>Carolyn A. Massiah (University of Central Florida)</i>	
<i>William Steiger (University of Central Florida)</i>	
25. The Evolving Role of the Salesperson in AI-Supported Technological Industrial Sales	31
<i>Tetyana Joergensen (University College of Northern Denmark)</i>	
<i>Michael Fast (University College of Northern Denmark)</i>	

26. The Interplay of Ethical Climate and Personal Regulatory Focus in Sales Manager–Salesperson Ethical Behavior	32
<i>Marta Giovannetti (University of Macerata)</i>	
<i>Karina Burgdorff Jensen (University College of Northern Denmark)</i>	
<i>Elena Cedrola (University of Macerata)</i>	
27. The Limitations of Adopting AI in Sales: Insights from the Literature	33
<i>Roberto Bruni (University of Cassino and Southern Lazio)</i>	
<i>Hanna Soroka-Potrzebna (University of Szczecin)</i>	
<i>Michela Piccarozzi (University of Cassino and Southern Lazio)</i>	
28. The Reconfiguration of the Sales Funnel: A Holistic Perspective	36
<i>Chiara Cantù (Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore)</i>	
<i>Patrizia Musso (Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore)</i>	
29. The Role of Value-Based Selling in Making Sustainability-Oriented Service Innovation Sustainable	37
<i>Paolo Guenzi (Università Bocconi)</i>	
<i>Laura Ingrid Maria Colm (Università Bocconi)</i>	
<i>Edwin J. Nijssen (Eindhoven University of Technology)</i>	
30. The Salesperson as Algorithm Interpreter: A Triadic Model of Human–AI Value Co-Creation in Emerging Markets	38
<i>Sara Hathout (Esca École de Management)</i>	
<i>Chaimae Hathout (Esca École de Management)</i>	
<i>El badia kenza (Esca École de Management)</i>	
31. The Silent Seller Paradox: Assessing Value Based Selling Maturity in Written Sales Proposals	39
<i>Karina Burgdorff Jensen (University College of Northern Denmark)</i>	
<i>Rasmus Åradsson (Intenz)</i>	
32. To Be or Not to Be Humorous in B2B Sales Across Cultures? Cultural Effects on Humor Style in International B2B Buyer-Seller Relationships	40
<i>Laurent Bompar (Kedge BS Bordeaux)</i>	
33. Toward In-Person Presence in Remote Meetings: The Potential of Non-Wearable Telepresence Video Technologies to Enhance Business-to-Business Sales Interactions	41
<i>Jaakko Metsola (LUT University)</i>	
34. Transforming Engagement into Sales: The Role of Artificial Intelligence in Driving Customer Engagement Behaviours	42
<i>Nikeeta Jain (Indian Institute of Management, Shillong)</i>	
<i>Bidyut Jyoti Gogoi (Indian Institute of Management, Shillong)</i>	
<i>Michel Klein (Grenoble Ecole de Management)</i>	

35. Understanding Sense of Purpose in B2B Sales and Selling: A Multi-Perspective Exploration	43
<i>Tim Kalwey (University of Auckland)</i>	
<i>Drew Franklin (University of Auckland)</i>	
<i>Joona Keränen (RMIT University)</i>	
<i>Martin Krämer (University of Houston)</i>	
<i>Anna Salonen (University of Jyväskylä)</i>	
<i>Herbert Sima (University of Auckland)</i>	
36. Understanding the Effects of Mentoring on Protégé Outcomes: The Role of Trust & Sales Learning Goal Orientation	44
<i>Stephanie M.L. Kunst (Baylor University)</i>	
<i>Stephanie M. Mangus (Baylor University)</i>	
<i>Emma Zhao (University of Virginia)</i>	
37. Universal Application of a B2B Selling Competency Model: Evidence from Europe and North America.....	45
<i>Thomas Berger (DHBW Loerrach)</i>	
<i>Timo Holopainen (Turku University of Applied Sciences)</i>	
<i>Pentti Korpela (Turku University of Applied Sciences)</i>	
<i>Michel Klein (Grenoble Ecole de Management)</i>	
38. What Do Buyers Want	46
<i>Dr. Jay Mulki (Northeastern University)</i>	
<i>Dr. Divakar Kamath (SVKM's Narsee Monjee Institute of Management Studies (NMIMS))</i>	
<i>Professor Dr. Jobst Görne (Hochschule Aalan)</i>	

AGENTIC AI AS CO-LEADER: A MULTILEVEL CONCEPTUAL MODEL FOR ATTRACTING, RETAINING, AND RE-IMAGING SALES TALENT

Michael Rodriguez (East Carolina University)

Stefanie Boyer (Bryant University)

Ricky Fergusson (Middle Tennessee State University)

Kevin Trainor (New Mexico State University)

Abstract

Building on emerging sales research on autonomous AI agents and AI-enabled coaching, we develop a conceptual model that explains how agentic AI capabilities and sales system design jointly reconfigure leadership functions (coaching, control, and strategic decision-making). We theorize how this leadership redistribution shapes salesperson experiences (support, trust, role identity) and, in turn, drives three future-of-sales outcomes: (1) attracting the next generation of sales professionals, (2) retaining and supporting talent in a burnout-prone environment, and (3) exploring new hybrid human–AI sales roles. Managerially, we translate the framework into design principles (governance, transparency, human-in-the-loop escalation, and blended coaching) that help organizations capture productivity gains while sustaining ethical oversight and salesperson well-being.

AI-ASSISTED AUGMENTATION IN SALES: EFFECTS ON RELATIONAL QUALITY, BUYER TRUST, AND SALES TEAM MODELS AND SKILLS

Alexander Sventeckis, (Ball State University)
Jamye Foster (Ball State University)
Chrisopher Wilkey (Ball State University)

Abstract

AI-assisted selling is rapidly transforming sales processes by enhancing efficiency through automation, personalization, and scalability. However, this shift introduces a critical tension between efficiency gains and relational quality in buyer–seller interactions. While AI can streamline tasks and improve responsiveness, it may also diminish perceived sincerity, trust, and presence. This paper defines AI-assisted augmentation (AI-AA) as the strategic use of AI to support human sales efforts while maintaining strong relationships. It examines when AI enhances versus undermines relational outcomes, offering insights for designing hybrid sales models that effectively balance technological efficiency with the human elements essential for trust, authenticity, and long-term relationship development.

BEYOND CHANNEL SELECTION: UNPACKING SALESPEOPLE'S ORCHESTRATION OF B2B CUSTOMER JOURNEYS

Chiara Ancillai (Università Politecnica delle Marche)
Sara Bartoloni (Università Politecnica delle Marche)

Abstract

This study examines how B2B salespeople orchestrate digital and physical touchpoints along increasingly fragmented and non-linear customer journeys. Moving beyond a customer-centric perspective, it adopts Resource Orchestration Theory to analyze how salespeople structure, bundle, and leverage touchpoints as heterogeneous resources. Based on 22 qualitative interviews, findings show that salespeople configure interaction portfolios, integrate channels into coherent sequences, and deploy them strategically to manage complexity, coordinate multiple actors, and sustain relationships. The study highlights that value does not lie in individual channels, but in their dynamic orchestration, adapted to context, journey phases, and commercial priorities.

BEYOND PERFORMANCE: JUDGE-RELATED BIAS IN THE EVALUATION OF STUDENT SALES COMPETITIONS

Alexander Bauer (Wittenborg University of Applied Sciences)
Johannes Reiterer (University of Applied Sciences Wiener Neustadt)
Severin Maurer (University of Applied Sciences Wiener Neustadt)
Erik Mehl (Kristiania University of Applied Sciences)

Abstract

This research investigates judge-related bias in international student sales competitions, exploring how evaluators' professional backgrounds—academic versus industry—and cultural origins systematically influence scoring. Drawing on cognitive bias, social identity, and equity theories, the study will analyze data from the 2026 European Sales Competition using hierarchical linear modeling. By isolating factors such as panel composition and personal leniency, the authors address a critical gap in sales education literature. The findings provide practical insights for maintaining fairness and pedagogical integrity in experiential learning assessments.

BRINGING LIFE TO WORK: HOW SUBJECTIVE HAPPINESS SPILLS OVER INTO B2B SALES OUTCOMES

Silvio Cardinali (University Polytechnics of Marche)
Simone Severini (University Polytechnics of Marche)
Alessandro Romoli (University Polytechnics of Marche)

Abstract

This study examines how subjective happiness spills over into B2B sales outcomes. Drawing on spillover theory, it conceptualizes happiness as a life-domain psychological resource that shapes job satisfaction, sales performance, and turnover intention. The proposed model argues that subjective happiness enhances job satisfaction, which in turn reduces turnover intention and improves sales performance, while also exerting a direct effect on performance. It further investigates toxic workplace environment and learning orientation as boundary conditions. Using a three-stage design—literature review, survey-based SEM, and follow-up qualitative interviews—the study advances understanding of well-being in high-pressure B2B selling contexts across Europe and practice.

DATA SOURCES TO ASSESS SALES PERFORMANCE OUTCOMES

Per Ivar Seljeseth (Nord University Business School)

Abstract

Sales performance outcomes are among the most important variables in sales research and sales management, used to identify performance drivers and guide managerial action. High-quality research and effective sales leadership therefore depend on reliable outcome assessment. The outcomes can be assessed through four data sources: company records, sales managers, salespeople, and customers. However, these sources vary significantly in their ability to assess different outcomes accurately. To support stronger assessment practices, this study conducts a systematic literature review of how researchers assess B2B sales outcomes and proposes guidelines for selecting the most appropriate data sources to assess various sales performance outcomes.

DESIGNING INSIDE SALES FOR VALUE CREATION: A SYSTEMATIC REVIEW OF CONFIGURATIONS, TRADE-OFFS, AND BOUNDARY CONDITIONS IN B2B MARKETS

Simone Severini (University Polytechnics of Marche)
Alessandro Romoli (University Polytechnics of Marche)

Abstract

Digital technologies are reshaping B2B selling, making inside sales a key mechanism for expanding coverage, responsiveness, and customer interaction across digital channels. Yet research remains fragmented, with overlapping labels and limited cumulative clarity on what inside sales is, which design levers define it, and when it creates value. This study addresses these gaps through a PRISMA-guided systematic literature review and an abductive ADO (Antecedents–Decisions–Outcomes) synthesis, developing an integrative framework that clarifies the construct, maps its main drivers and outcomes, and supports future research and sales-system design.

EXPANDING EFFECTUAL SELLING FOR SOLVING REGIONAL ISSUES

Shinji Hongo (Okayama University of Science)

Chizuru Taniguchi (Snack Lemonade Inc.)

Hiyarapitiya Dulina Sandhadev (Okayama University of Science)

Abstract

Population decline and aging in rural areas are common challenges facing developed nations. In these shrinking populations, traditional market-expansion sales models struggle to succeed. Worse still, aggressive sales tactics risk eroding the very social capital that sustains local communities. This study examines the case of a remote Japanese island that, while pushed to the brink of financial collapse, achieved regional revitalization by generating new relational populations and purchasing behaviors. These findings extend the applicability of effectual selling (Wang et al., 2020)—which focuses on resource integration, stakeholder interaction, and co-creation of value in highly uncertain environments—to solving regional issues.

FIELD STUDY IN HUMAN-AI COLLABORATION IN B2B SALES: ENABLEMENT, ADAPTATION, AND PERFORMANCE

Victor Rubanovitsch (Aalto University)
Jaakko Aspara (Aalto University)

Abstract

B2B firms are adopting AI-enabled CRM tools to support sales meetings, follow-up, and pipeline work, but it remains unclear whether these systems improve sales work or create new burdens for salespeople. This study examines this issue through a randomized field experiment where an AI-supported sales meeting and CRM tool is introduced in a B2B sales organization. Using pre and post measurement with a control group, the study combines objective sales data with survey measures of adaptive selling, autonomy, work engagement, technostress, and perceived usefulness. The study provides a field-based assessment of whether AI-enabled CRM delivers on its promise of improving B2B sales work without increasing salesperson strain.

FROM "TOOL CHOICE" TO PROCESS DESIGN: DECISION LOGICS FOR VIDEO CALLS ACROSS THE B2B SELLING PROCESS

Johannes Reiterer (University of Applied Sciences Wiener Neustadt)
Timo Holopainen (Turku University of Applied Sciences, Finland)
Eva Török-Beisteiner (University of Applied Sciences Wiener Neustadt)
Arto Kuuluvainen (Turku University of Applied Sciences, Finland)
Alexander Eigner (University of Applied Sciences Wiener Neustadt)
Harri Lappalainen (Turku University of Applied Sciences, Finland)

Abstract

The institutionalization of hybrid selling after COVID-19 has made synchronous virtual communication a persistent feature of B2B sales. Limited evidence exists on how sales practitioners determine when video-based communication is appropriate across different stages of the sales process. This study examines the decision logics guiding the use of synchronous virtual communication tools, particularly video calls, in B2B sales. The study draws on 39 semi-structured expert interviews with experienced B2B sales practitioners from Austria and Finland. The findings reveal three interaction logics: virtual-dominant, hybrid and face-to-face-dominant. Virtual-dominant approaches emphasize efficiency and digital communication advantages, hybrid approaches reflect context-dependent flexibility, and face-to-face-dominant approaches prioritize trust, contextual insight, and interpersonal sensitivity.

FROM MYTH TO REALITY: INVESTIGATING THE ACTUAL ADOPTION OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE IN SALES ORGANIZATIONS

Paolo Guenzi (Università Bocconi)

Paola Caiozzo (Università Bocconi)

Laura Ingrid Maria Colm (Università Bocconi)

Abstract

In this study, based on a survey on 223 respondents from firms in a major European country, we analyze the rate of adoption, the level of satisfaction with such an adoption, and the relative importance of 10 Personal Selling processes and 12 Sales Force Management processes. We also explore the key barriers to the adoption of AI solutions, and find that their use does not have a significant correlation with market performance. Our results help managers and academics in prioritizing their areas of attention and resources allocation in AI adoption decisions.

FROM REACTIVE TO PROACTIVE ADAPTATION: CONCEPTUALIZING ADAPTIBILITY IN THE ERA OF HOLISTIC SELLING

Bimesh Shrestha (LUT University)
Titta Matikainen (LUT University)
Jarkko Niemi (LUT University)
Anssi Tarkiainen (LUT University)

Abstract

The contemporary Business-to-Business (B2B) buying has fundamentally altered the nature of buyer-seller interactions, shifting control from the salesperson to the buyer. While the extant literature on Adaptive Selling has traditionally defined adaptation as a reactive behavior of salespeople during interaction, this perspective is increasingly insufficient for modern, non-linear buying journeys where direct access to buyers is limited. Drawing on 24 in-depth interviews with B2B sales professionals, this paper introduces a conceptual framework: Proactive Adaptability. Integrating the recent Holistic Selling paradigm with the historical trajectory of Adaptive Selling, we argue that effective adaptation must evolve from a reactive mechanism to an anticipatory architectural capability. This framework outlines three key dimensions: Anticipatory Capabilities, Ecosystem Orchestration, and Strategic Architecture. These dimensions explain how modern salespeople not only adapt to the decision-making environment but must actively construct it before the interaction occurs.

**GO FAST, GO ALONE; GO FAR, GO TOGETHER: HOW PRACTICE, EDUCATION,
AND RESEARCH JOINTLY CONTRIBUTE TO THE FUTURE OF SALES**

**Arend-jan Diephuis (Utrecht University of Applied Sciences)
Mogens Bjerre (Copenhagen Business School)
Timo Holopainen (Turku University of Applied Sciences)
Jaap Feijen (HAN University of Applied Sciences)
Peter A. Jensen (Customer Agency A/S)
Jens K. Rasmussen (Customer Agency A/S)
Thomas Berger (DHBW Lörrach)
Rikke Carlé (University College of Northern Denmark)
Peter Fröhlich (University of Applied Sciences Wiener Neustadt)**

Abstract

To 'advance theory and practice across borders', our international consortium of practitioners, researchers and educators engaged in a longitudinal research project called 'Future of Sales'. We build on a model developed earlier, that indicates alignment between a firm and its sales function. This online diagnosis tool aims to help firms to determine opportunities to engage in an intra-organizational dialogue, to benchmark and to improve firm performance. We conducted a survey to collect new data and tested the revised model. By transferring our scientific insights into both education and practice, we shape the future of the sales function.

HIDDEN DECISION MAKERS IN COMPLEX B2B MARKETS: A DUAL-LEVEL FRAMEWORK FOR SALES ENABLEMENT

Leonardo Forzoni (University of Florence)
Alex Dell'Era (CUIRIF Research Center, eCampus University)

Abstract

This study examines hidden decision makers in complex B2B purchasing processes and their implications for Sales Enablement. While existing research focuses on actors directly engaged in sales interactions, many outcomes are shaped by organizational members who remain outside direct vendor engagement. Using a qualitative approach based on case observation and semi-structured interviews, the paper develops a dual-level framework: a functional level, driven by technical evaluation, and a governance level, driven by perceived risk, trust, and institutional credibility. The findings show that technically superior solutions frequently stall when governance-level concerns are unaddressed, arguing that effective Sales Enablement must expand to encompass organizational credibility strategies.

HOW COMPLIANCE AND INFLUENCERS RESHAPE SALES PROCESSES IN COMPLEX B2B MARKETS

Leonardo Forzoni (University of Florence)

Alex Dell'Era (CUIRIF Research Center, eCampus University)

Abstract

This study examines how compliance systems and external influencers jointly reshape sales processes in complex B2B markets. While prior research addresses multi-actor buying dynamics, limited attention has been paid to how regulatory constraints and reference actors reconfigure purchasing trajectories. Using a qualitative approach based on case observation and semi-structured interviews, the paper identifies three interdependent drivers of purchasing outcomes: sales process structure, influencer involvement, and compliance mechanisms. The findings show that KOLs, ambassadors, and compliance functions actively shape decision progression before and beyond formal evaluations, arguing that sales organizations must integrate relational, reputational, and regulatory strategies to remain effective.

INFORMATION PHISHING IN B2B MARKETS: HOW CUSTOMERS EXPLOIT SUPPLIER KNOWLEDGE WITHOUT BUYING INTENT

Jarkko Niemi (LUT University)
Joona Keränen (RMIT University)
Mark Micallef (RMIT University)

Abstract

B2B offerings are increasingly complex and knowledge-intensive, creating information asymmetries in purchase decisions. While information exchange underpins buyer–supplier relationships, it can also be exploited. This study examines how customers extract supplier knowledge without genuine purchase intent, conceptualized as information phishing. Drawing on interviews with 29 managers across 24 firms, we identify five dimensions of information phishing: behaviors, motivations, consequences, signals, and supplier counterstrategies. We develop a conceptual framework that explains how information phishing unfolds in buyer–supplier interactions, shows how relational norms that enable cooperation can also be strategically exploited, and offers guidance for identifying and managing opportunistic customers.

INTELLECTUAL AUTHENTICITY IN AI-ENABLED GLOBAL SELLING: WHAT OUR 2025 BUYER EVIDENCE REVEALS ABOUT TRUST ACROSS BORDERS

Philip Squire (Consalia Ltd – Middlesex University)
Eddie Guevarra (Consalia Ltd – Middlesex University)

Abstract

Hybrid engagement and AI-assisted sales workflows have raised buyer scepticism about credibility, motive, and follow-through. This paper reports findings from The State of Sales Mindsets 2.0 (2025), global research project. The central finding suggests buyers have not changed the values they want from sellers. They still want Authenticity, Client-Centricity, Proactive Creativity, and Tactful Audacity™. What has changed is the 'burden of proof', especially for Authenticity, which now have developed into Intellectual Authenticity. Buyers increasingly judge sellers by transparency of intent, integrity of reasoning, and continuity of follow-through. We present cross-regional insights, buyer-function nuance, and 180-degree evidence on perception gaps, translating them into a globally portable trust framework with locally adaptable behavioural guidance.

MANAGING THE EMOTIONAL TOLL OF SELLING: INTEGRATING EMOTIONAL LABOR INTO JD-R AND CHALLENGE-HINDRANCE STRESSOR FRAMEWORKS IN B2B SALES

Scott C. Ambrose (Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University)

Brian N. Rutherford (Kennesaw State University)

Armen Tashchian (Kennesaw State University)

Dave Shepherd (Retired)

Abstract

Emotional labor is central to business-to-business (B2B) sales but remains underexplored relative to retail and service contexts. This study addresses this gap by positioning surface and deep acting within job demands–resources (JD-R) and challenge–hindrance stressor (CHSF) frameworks. Using a B2B sales sample, we examine organizational outcomes (performance, commitment) and salesperson well-being (emotional exhaustion, turnover intentions, occupational commitment, life satisfaction). Mentorship and sales technology usage are modeled as job resources that may buffer hindrance demands. Findings contribute to theoretical refinement of emotional labor within JD-R/CHSF and offer practical insights for sustaining sales force effectiveness and well-being.

NEUTRALIZATION TECHNIQUES AND PUNISHMENT SEVERITY IN SALES FRAUD

Selma Hadzihalilovic (Copenhagen Business School)
Selma Kadic-Maglajlic (Copenhagen Business School)

Abstract

Fraud among salespeople is a persistent regulatory problem, yet how misconduct is sanctioned remains poorly understood. We ask whether the neutralization language salespeople use to account for their behavior predicts regulatory punishment severity. Analyzing approximately 29,000 misconduct cases spanning two decades, we apply a validated Large Language Model to classify neutralization techniques in formal complaint responses and estimate their association with sanctions. We further test whether identical rhetorical strategies yield disparate regulatory treatment across salesperson gender, ethnicity, and industry status. Findings advance sales ethics theory by establishing sanctioning as a neglected outcome domain and reveal systematic inequities in regulatory adjudication.

PARADOXES IN INTERNATIONAL SALES: PRACTITIONER VERIFICATION AND EMPIRICAL CONSOLIDATION OF A 13-DIMENSION STRUCTURAL FRAMEWORK

Margarethe Überwimmer (University of Applied Sciences Upper Austria)
Jorge F.S. Gomes (ISEG Lisbon School of Economics & Management)
Stefan Wengler (Hof University of Applied Sciences)

Abstract

This paper develops a practitioner-verified structural map of paradoxes in international B2B sales. Drawing on a conceptual framework of 13 dimensions spanning exchange logic, interaction architecture, and governance, the study examines whether sales practitioners recognize these as persistent tensions rather than simple trade-offs. Using qualitative in-depth interviews with 30 Chief Sales Officers and senior managers across Austria, Germany, and Portugal, an abductive two-stage design separates spontaneous salience from structured recognition. The study aims to confirm, refine, or refute each dimension, classify tensions as paradoxes or dilemmas, and inductively derive higher-order organizing continua providing an empirically grounded scaffold for future measurement and hypothesis testing.

RETHINKING SALES PERFORMANCE INDICATORS IN B2B SERVICES: A NOMOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK PERSPECTIVE

Nils M. Høgevold (Kristiania University of Applied Sciences)

Göran Svensson (Kristiania University of Applied Sciences)

Rocio Rodriguez (Kristiania University of Applied Sciences)

Carmen Otero-Neira (Vigo University)

Jyh-Liang Guan (National Ilan University, Yilan)

Ke-Lin Chen (National Ilan University, Yilan)

Abstract

This study develops and empirically tests a hierarchical nomological framework explaining how interrelated performance indicators shape B2B service sales performance. Using a sequential mixed-methods design—PLS-SEM on survey data from 389 B2B service salespersons and follow-up practitioner interviews—the study shows that skills and motivation are proximal drivers of performance, while aptitude influences performance indirectly by shaping skills and motivation. Role perception, organizational leadership, and context exert limited direct effects. The framework emphasizes systemic interdependencies, challenges assumptions of isolated predictors, and broadly guides future research and managerial practice.

SELLING ORIENTATION ACROSS THE CUSTOMER LIFECYCLE: WHEN DOES CONSULTATIVE VS. RELATIONAL SELLING DRIVE SATISFACTION IN HIGH-TURNOVER D2D CONTEXTS?

David D'Acunto (University of Verona)
Valentina Mazzoli (University of Verona)
Ivan Russo (University of Verona)

Abstract

In B2C door-to-door (D2D) selling, personal interactions shape customer satisfaction. Drawing on Construal-Level Theory, this research examines how consultative versus relational selling orientations influence satisfaction through customer commitment to the salesperson. A multi-method approach combines a field survey (Study 1) with an online experiment manipulating selling orientation and customer status (Study 2, in progress). Study 1 shows that consultative selling directly enhances satisfaction, whereas relational selling operates indirectly via commitment. Preliminary results from Study 2 indicate that this indirect effect is stronger for new customers and attenuates among existing customers, highlighting the role of relationship stage.

SWEATING THE STRESS AWAY: HOW EXERCISE BUFFERS EFFECTS OF ANXIETY FOR SALESPeOPLE

Matthew Philp (Toronto Metropolitan University)
Josh Learn (Toronto Metropolitan University)
Bruno Lussier (HEC Montréal)

Abstract

Sales roles are anxiety-provoking. Yet little is known about how selling anxiety impacts manager rated salespeople performance. Drawing on 176 salesperson–manager dyads, the findings show that selling anxiety reduces perceived charisma, leading to lower manager-rated performance. We identify exercise as a buffering mechanism that diminishes the negative anxiety–charisma relationship and indirectly dampens the negative anxiety–performance relationship. These findings position exercise as a job performance-relevant resource and health behavior, advancing understanding of salesperson well-being and offering actionable insight in anxiety-based selling environments. Of importance, the body may be as important as the mind in driving sales success.

THE AI ENABLER: LEVELING THE PLAYING FIELD FOR NON-NATIVE ENGLISH SPEAKERS

Michael Kaplan (University of Central Florida)
Carolyn A. Massiah (University of Central Florida)
William Steiger (University of Central Florida)

Abstract

Grammatical errors in written communications have been shown to negatively shape perceptions of competence and trust in non-native English speakers (NNES). Drawing on attribution theory and algorithm aversion, this research aims to answer the question "can the use of AI mitigate these perceptions in international sales communications?" In the context of international sales prospecting emails, we compared error-laden NNES emails, error-free human emails, and AI-assisted emails with disclosure, and found that AI-assisted emails achieve perceptions equivalent to error-free human emails without harming credibility. These findings suggest that AI functions as a correction mechanism while avoiding algorithm aversion in a sales context.

THE EVOLVING ROLE OF THE SALESPERSON IN AI-SUPPORTED TECHNOLOGICAL INDUSTRIAL SALES

Tetyana Joergensen (University College of Northern Denmark)
Michael Fast (University College of Northern Denmark)

Abstract

This study explores how AI-supported information environments reshape the role of the industrial salesperson in technologically complex B2B markets. As AI increasingly assumes responsibility for information search, product comparison, and validation, informational credibility shifts from human salespeople to digital systems. Drawing on a qualitative multi-case study of global HVAC firms, integrators, and end users, the study identifies how this credibility transfer delays salesperson involvement and redistributes tasks across the buyer journey. Findings show that salespeople regain influence through interpretive credibility, acting as advisors who validate, contextualize, and manage complexity. The study contributes to understanding how AI transforms sales roles, required competencies, and value creation mechanisms.

THE INTERPLAY OF ETHICAL CLIMATE AND PERSONAL REGULATORY FOCUS IN SALES MANAGER–SALESPERSON ETHICAL BEHAVIOR

Marta Giovannetti (University of Macerata)

Karina Burgdorff Jensen (University College of Northern Denmark)

Elena Cedrola (University of Macerata)

Abstract

Ethical challenges in B2B sales arise from complex deals, multicultural contexts, and the interplay between formal rules and daily practical judgment. Sales managers and salespeople frequently operate in gray areas where ethical norms are interpreted rather than simply applied, and leadership plays a decisive role in shaping behavior. Drawing on ethical climate theory, this study examines how rules-based, instrumental, and caring climates influence sales conduct alongside individual factors such as moral disengagement. Through qualitative interviews with salesperson–manager dyads in Denmark and Italy, the research explores how formal and informal norms, regulatory focus, and perceived ethical climate jointly shape ethical decision-making.

THE LIMITATIONS OF ADOPTING AI IN SALES: INSIGHTS FROM THE LITERATURE

Roberto Bruni (University of Cassino and Southern Lazio)

Hanna Soroka-Potrzebna (University of Szczecin)

Michela Piccarozzi (University of Cassino and Southern Lazio)

Abstract

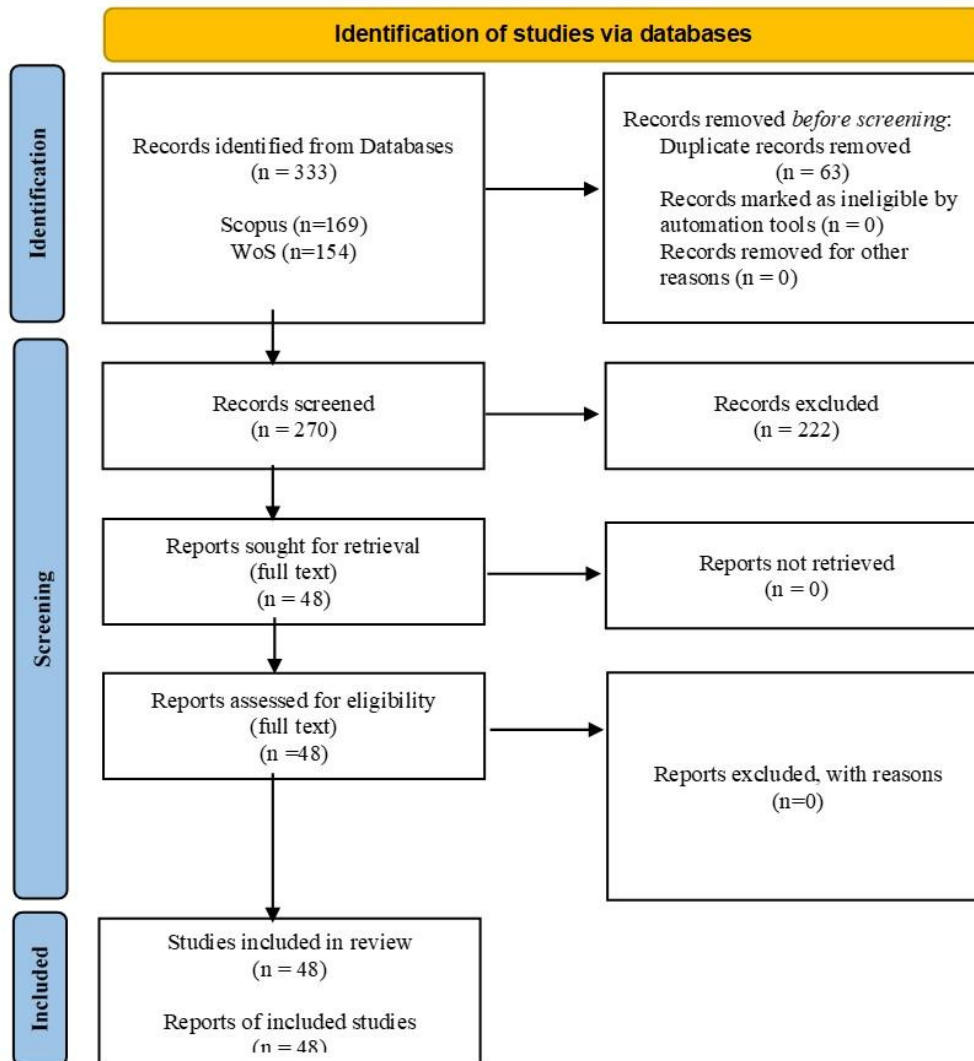
The application of AI to sales is not new (Jarotschkin et al. 2025). However, there is still a significant need for research in this area (Puri & Pandey, 2025; Gonzalez et al., 2026), partly because the sales field is vast, and partly because many limitations have emerged in applying AI to sales. Among AI users in enterprises, the advent of agentic AI has created a distinction between those using traditional generative models and those beginning to use agentic AI, which supports multi-step reasoning and autonomous action (Agentforce, 2025; Boston Consulting Group, 2025b). Agents are expected to contribute 17% of the total value generated by AI in 2025, reaching 29% by 2028 (Boston Consulting Group, 2025c). The use of effective generative AI and the implementation of agentic AI require rethinking the customer experience generation process, building consumer trust, and balancing personalized AI choices with more original ones. However, the concept of agentic AI in sales only began to be widely discussed in 2026. Therefore, an analysis of the literature published up to 2025 does not identify any scientific publications addressing the use of agentic AI in sales. This means that the current state of research does not yet provide a solid theoretical or empirical foundation in this area. The existing literature focuses almost exclusively on traditional approaches to AI, particularly generative models. Therefore, it is important to identify and understand the limitations of applying AI to sales, as even if deployed, AI could generate benefits such as increasing customer acquisition by 50%, reducing churn by 25%, and increasing salesperson productivity by 50–80% (Boston Consulting Group, 2025e). Success depends 10% on algorithms, 20% on technology and data, and 70% on changes to processes and people (Boston Consulting Group, 2025g). This research paper analyzes the limitations of AI adoption in sales with reference to what the literature has proposed before 2026 and, therefore, before the era of agentic AI.

Methods and Results

The methodology adopted is a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) (Tranfield et al., 2003; Macpherson & Holt, 2007; Mayring, 2004; Deng, 2012). The systematic review of the literature was conducted between 16 December 2025 and 9 January 2026. The papers were retrieved on 16 December 2025. The methodology is implemented following four steps of analysis and selection (Tranfield et al., 2003; Mayring, 2004): 1) the collection of materials, 2) the descriptive analysis, 3) the selection of categories and 4) the evaluation of the collected materials. The first step of the research was to define the analysis sample. Scopus and Web of Science (WOS) were chosen as reference databases. Starting from the databases, we searched for the following keywords: “Artificial Intelligence”, “sale*”, “sale* management”. We then limited the selection of papers to topics of interest only, using the thematic filters available in Scopus and WoS (Business, Management and Accounting; Social Sciences; Psychology in Scopus; Business, Management in WoS). Furthermore, we limited the analysis to peer-reviewed journal articles and reviews in

English to increase the reliability of the research and the sample analysed. Subsequently, duplicate papers in the two databases were eliminated. Finally, the resulting papers were subjected to an abstract reading based on inclusion/exclusion criteria (Denyer et al. 2009). Studies were selected based on predefined inclusion and exclusion criteria to ensure relevance and focus. Articles were included where artificial intelligence was the central topic of the study and was directly applied to sales or sales management (e.g., sales forecasting, AI-based CRM, sales force automation, decision support systems, or performance management) and provided a clear theoretical, empirical, or methodological contribution to the impact of AI on sales processes or the role of sales managers. Articles were excluded when AI was only mentioned marginally, when the main focus was on other functional areas (e.g., marketing, operations, or IT) without a clear link to sales, when digitalisation or analytics were discussed in general terms without explicit reference to AI, or when the study focused exclusively on technical aspects without managerial implications for sales. The final sample (n. 48 papers) was then analysed using a qualitative, systematic content analysis approach to examine the selected papers on AI and sales management. Each article was examined using a coding grid focused on two main aspects: area of application and study limitations; subsequently, similar codes were grouped into thematic clusters. This method allowed for a clear and replicable comparison of the contributions in the literature, highlighting the main areas of AI application and the most common gaps (Krippendorff, 2018; Mayring, 2004; Polit and Beck, 2004; Seuring and Müller, 2008; Lueddeckens et al., 2020; Merli et al., 2020; Silvestri et al., 2021). Figure 1 shows the PRISMA Flow Chart of the SLR.

Figure 1 - PRISMA Flow Chart



Source: Author's elaboration

THE RECONFIGURATION OF THE SALES FUNNEL: A HOLISTIC PERSPECTIVE

Chiara Cantù (Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore)
Patrizia Musso (Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore)

Abstract

Over the years a growing attention has been recognized to the impact of new technologies on sales management. In this context, the aim is to investigate the impact of new technologies (NTs) on sales funnel (SF). NTs support the reconfiguration of SF, considering the integration of touchpoints from a phygital perspective, as well as the combination of technology and human side of business relationships. Sales managers are thus required to develop new skills for orchestrating the various touchpoints. NTs has led to the raising of a data-driven orientation that requires to be integrated with customer centricity approach to optimize the SF. The same technological solutions enable the development of effective and efficient strategies, both in marketing and sales, sustaining the MarTech and SalesTech convergence. MarTech and SalesTech players are rethinking their business model, considering the introduction of innovative services.

THE ROLE OF VALUE-BASED SELLING IN MAKING SUSTAINABILITY-ORIENTED SERVICE INNOVATION SUSTAINABLE

Paolo Guenzi (Università Bocconi)

Laura Ingrid Maria Colm (Università Bocconi)

Edwin J. Nijssen (Eindhoven University of Technology)

Abstract

Sustainability is increasingly relevant in business, yet only a minority of firms fully exploit its strategic potential by offering Sustainability-Oriented Service Innovations (SOSI) that can create value for customers. This approach requires the adoption of Value-Based Selling (VBS) by companies' sales forces. In Study 1, using a multiple-case study approach we develop a model of SOSI strategy implementation via VBS. Then, in Study 2, using the Motivation-Opportunity-Ability (MOA) framework as theoretical lens, we define and test, on a sample of 212 companies in the USA, a model to empirically analyze the role played by VBS in making SOSI initiatives successful.

THE SALESPERSON AS ALGORITHM INTERPRETER: A TRIADIC MODEL OF HUMAN-AI VALUE CO-CREATION IN EMERGING MARKETS

Sara Hathout (Esca École de Management)
Chaimae Hathout (Esca École de Management)
El badia kenza (Esca École de Management)

Abstract

The rapid integration of artificial intelligence (AI) into sales processes is profoundly transforming the role of salespeople, particularly in emerging markets where digital infrastructures and human capabilities evolve unevenly. While prior research has extensively explored AI adoption and automation in sales, it has predominantly focused on technological efficiency and organizational performance, often overlooking the evolving mediating role of human actors in AI-enabled environments.

This study addresses this gap by conceptualizing the salesperson not as a passive user of AI tools, but as an active algorithm interpreter, capable of translating, contextualizing, and operationalizing AI-generated insights within complex market environments. This perspective is especially relevant in emerging markets, where data quality, institutional constraints, and customer heterogeneity require continuous human adaptation.

The objective of this research is to develop a triadic model of Human-AI value co-creation, integrating three key actors: AI systems, salespeople, and customers. Grounded in a service dominant logic (SDL) perspective, the study conceptualizes value as co-created through dynamic interactions between these actors rather than embedded in technology alone.

Methodologically, the research adopts a conceptual and theory-building approach, supported by an integrative review of the literature on AI in sales, technology adoption (TAM/UTAUT), and service-dominant logic. The analysis synthesizes these streams to propose a novel framework capturing the evolving cognitive and relational roles of salespeople in AI-mediated environments.

The proposed model highlights three key mechanisms of value co-creation: (1) interpretation of algorithmic outputs, (2) contextual adaptation to market realities, and (3) relational translation into customer-relevant value propositions. The findings contribute to the literature by extending current perspectives on AI in sales toward a more human-centered and interaction-based understanding.

From a managerial perspective, the study suggests that firms should move beyond a technology centric approach and invest in developing salespeople's interpretive, analytical, and relational capabilities to fully leverage AI systems. This is particularly critical in emerging markets, where human judgment remains essential to compensate for technological and institutional limitations.

THE SILENT SELLER PARADOX: ASSESSING VALUE BASED SELLING MATURITY IN WRITTEN SALES PROPOSALS

**Karina Burgdorff Jensen (University College of Northern Denmark)
Rasmus Åradsson (Intenz)**

Abstract

Value-based selling (VBS) is central in B2B sales, but research mainly views it as an interpersonal capability. This paper shifts focus to written sales proposals as critical artifacts in hybrid and asynchronous buying processes. Based on a qualitative analysis of 100 proposals across six industries, the study examines how well proposals reflect VBS principles. Findings show significant variation in VBS maturity, indicating that value communication is inconsistently applied and weakly institutionalized. The paper introduces a framework for assessing proposal maturity across five dimensions: customer insight, value quantification, decision security, price framing, and decision facilitation, positioning proposals as a key "silent seller" in modern sales.

**TO BE OR NOT TO BE HUMOROUS IN B2B SALES ACROSS CULTURES?
CULTURAL EFFECTS ON HUMOR STYLE IN INTERNATIONAL B2B BUYER-
SELLER RELATIONSHIPS**

Laurent Bompar (Kedge BS Bordeaux)

Abstract

Our article aims to highlight on the effects of humor on buyer-seller performance by mediating the quality of the relationship according to four samples of buyers from different national cultures. We aimed to understand what type of humor might be successful according to the specific norms prevailing in different cultures by showing that the country in which humor is used can be a co-variable of its effects. Managers can thus get an idea of the most effective strategies according to the country, instead of just applying the learnings from the general (Western) model and joins an approach of adaptation rather than aggregation abroad.

TOWARD IN-PERSON PRESENCE IN REMOTE MEETINGS: THE POTENTIAL OF NON-WEARABLE TELEPRESENCE VIDEO TECHNOLOGIES TO ENHANCE BUSINESS-TO-BUSINESS SALES INTERACTIONS

Jaakko Metsola (LUT University)

Abstract

Non-wearable telepresence video technologies (NWTVTs) have potential to enhance business-to-business (B2B) sales interactions. Unlike virtual reality headsets, NWTVTs offer immersive, in-person-like experiences without wearable devices, with the potential to improve rapport, trust, and communication effectiveness by enabling natural nonverbal cue exchange. Drawing on selected communication theories, the paper discusses how NWTVTs could address current limitations of remote meetings done via prevalent videoconferencing tools. While these technologies are promising, they face adoption barriers and require further empirical research to assess their impact on B2B sales. A future research agenda is proposed to guide further studies on this emerging phenomenon.

TRANSFORMING ENGAGEMENT INTO SALES: THE ROLE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE IN DRIVING CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT BEHAVIOURS

Nikeeta Jain (Indian Institute of Management, Shillong)
Bidyut Jyoti Gogoi (Indian Institute of Management, Shillong)
Michel Klein (Grenoble Ecole de Management)

Abstract

This paper presents a systematic literature review and bibliometric analysis of 265 articles (2010–2025) examining AI's impact on customer engagement and sales. Utilizing the SPAR-4-SLR protocol and the Theory-Context-Characteristics-Methods (TCCM) framework, we consolidate the dominant theoretical foundations and psychological mechanisms of AI-driven interactions. Our findings reveal that integrating AI directly enhances behavioral engagement, creates buyer-seller value, and yields measurable sales performance improvements for firms with high engagement needs. We conclude by offering a targeted research agenda to advance the strategic implementation of AI in driving customer engagement and tangible sales outcomes.

UNDERSTANDING SENSE OF PURPOSE IN B2B SALES AND SELLING: A MULTI-PERSPECTIVE EXPLORATION

Tim Kalwey (University of Auckland)
Drew Franklin (University of Auckland)
Joona Keränen (RMIT University)
Martin Krämer (University of Houston)
Anna Salonen (University of Jyväskylä)
Herbert Sima (University of Auckland)

Abstract

This study advances theory on salespeople's sense of purpose in B2B selling and its implications for leadership and performance. Using a multi-stage, theories-in-use qualitative research design, we integrate triadic perspectives from salespeople, managers, and customers to provide a comprehensive, data-grounded understanding of the construct. We introduce purpose-oriented leadership as a distinct system of practices and develop a framework that differentiates between the development and enactment of salespeople's purpose to derive research propositions. Our findings identify multilevel mechanisms linking purpose to effectiveness, positioning purpose alignment as a key driver and purpose rigidity as a critical boundary condition for B2B sales excellence.

UNDERSTANDING THE EFFECTS OF MENTORING ON PROTÉGÉ OUTCOMES: THE ROLE OF TRUST & SALES LEARNING GOAL ORIENTATION

Stephanie M.L. Kunst (Baylor University)
Stephanie M. Mangus (Baylor University)
Emma Zhao (University of Virginia)

Abstract

This research examines how mentor coaching influences protégé job satisfaction through the mediating role of trust and the moderating role of sales learning goal orientation (SLGO). Although mentoring is widely recognized as beneficial for employee development, its mechanisms within sales contexts remain underexplored. Using an experimental study ($n = 400$), we find that mentor coaching increases job satisfaction by strengthening protégés' trust in their mentors. Further, SLGO amplifies coaching's effects on trust, enhancing positive outcomes when coaching is high and diminishing trust when coaching is low. Results highlight trust as a key relational mechanism and SLGO as a critical enhancer of mentoring effectiveness in sales settings.

UNIVERSAL APPLICATION OF A B2B SELLING COMPETENCY MODEL: EVIDENCE FROM EUROPE AND NORTH AMERICA

Thomas Berger (DHBW Loerrach)
Timo Holopainen (Turku University of Applied Sciences)
Pentti Korpela (Turku University of Applied Sciences)
Michel Klein (Grenoble Ecole de Management)

Abstract

As many companies conduct business in several countries, they must employ salespeople with suitable competencies for diverse markets. In this paper, we present the validation of a competency model that can be used in different markets and countries. The factor analysis revealed that all competency areas loaded on one factor and the item loadings of the sub-categories on the competency areas assigned indicate a high validity of the model. Additional analysis of answers from open-ended questions also indicates that the model is valid. This study offers new insights on sales competencies with data from Europe and North America.

WHAT DO BUYERS WANT

Jay Mulki (Northeastern University)

Divakar Kamath (SVKM's Narsee Monjee Institute of Management Studies (NMIMS))

Jobst Görne (Hochschule Aalan)

Abstract

Sales success depends on anticipating customer needs and tailoring solutions to meet customer expectations. Customers see strong technical and product knowledge in salespeople as a minimum requirement and often place greater value on soft skills such as interpersonal competence, social awareness, reliability, and empathy. Differences between customer evaluations of critical salesperson skills and salespeople's own perceptions can lead to incongruence in expectations and sales outcomes. We build on the framework of Customer Need Knowledge (CNK), by introducing the concept of the Customer–Salesperson Knowledge Gap (CSKG). This gap reflects divergence between how salespeople believe they are evaluated and how customers actually assess salesperson.