CHAPTER - I

SALES FORCE MANAGEMENT – A REVIEW

In the wake of globalisation, intensifying competition and the changing economic scenario, business organisations are finding it hard to make and sell products. While opportunities are growing, threats and problems are multiplying. In this turbulent and uncertain state, the key factor for success is marketing, the heart of which is sales force management. A brief examination of the sales job, and sales management is made in the following pages.

THE SALES JOB

To understand sales job, some pertinent questions are:

Is sales job important? Are there different sales jobs?

Who can be a successful sales person? Can women be successful in this profession?

What kind of skills and orientation are necessary for a successful sales career?

With the support of literature available in the field, an attempt is made to briefly answer the questions.

Importance of Sales Job

In a study conducted in 1964, Udell sought to measure the importance of the marketing mix variables by collecting data from a sample of 135 successful firms listed in Martindell’s Manuel of Excellent Management. He asked the
respondents to choose 5 vital marketing areas from a list of 12 areas. Product Research and Development was considered as the top priority area by 79 percent of firms followed by Sales research and sales planning (73 percent of firms) and Management of sales personnel (54 percent of firms).

In 1973 Banting and Ross conducted a study and in that promotion (includes personal selling) occupied third place in the policy areas. They selected a sample of 89 Canadian firms which had assets of more than 5 million from the "The Business Quarterly", Canada's Management Journal.

Robicheaux repeated Udell's study in 1976 with some changes in its methodology. He listed 13 marketing areas and collected data from a sample of 44 firms. Respondents were asked to rate each area on a 7 point scale where 7 represents "extremely important". According to his study, price (6.07), customer service (5.82) and sales personnel management (5.59) were the first three priority areas.

Saeed Samie employed a mail questionnaire with 12 items (the twelfth category, others-please specify) to survey the view of 800 vice presidents of marketing/sales, who were randomly selected from Dunn and Bradstreet's Million Dollar and Middle Market directories. Promotion (advertising, personal selling and sales promotion) was accorded fourth rank, the first three being product, pricing and customer service support. The sample studies highlight the importance of sales force management. It is considered today all the more important.
Sales Job Descriptions

The nature and scope of sales peoples’ work assignment varies widely across the industries and among firms. The following studies substantiate the view. In a 1961 Harvard Business Review Article, McMurray argued that sales people do not all have the same problems and/or needs, and therefore the performance of a sales person’s job may vary considerably depending on the primary activities involved in completing the daily tasks. He offered a classification of sales person job as follows: (a) Delivery sellers, (b) Missionary sellers (c) Create demand (d) Technical sellers, and (e) Order taker.

Newton (1973) borrowed the classification system of McMurray to the following four types: (a) Trade selling (b) Missionary sellers (c) New Business sellers and (d) Technical selling. The need for an exhaustive list of sales activities for use in the development of a sales taxonomy was articulated by Lamont and Lundstrom and Churchill, Ford and Walker.

Lamont and Lundstrom (1974) attempted to identify basic dimensions of sales person behaviors. They conducted extensive personal interviews to examine the duties, descriptions and responsibilities of various sales people’s jobs. From these interviews, 60 items describing sales jobs were selected and scaled in a Likert type format.

Churchill, Ford and Walker (1978) identified a list of sales activities but concluded that the activities were too broadly defined. For example, “Providing services to customers”, might incorporate a large number of more specific
actions and behaviour, and these might vary substantially across different companies.

William C. Moncreif III (1986) developed a comprehensive inventory of selling activities to develop taxonomy of sales activity. Based on a stratified sampling design from 2702 companies classified by the Standard Industrial Code (SIC), he selected 800 firms and mailed letters for participation. As many as 1393 sales persons of 51 firms returned an usable questionnaire. Based on the frequency of occurrence of 121 sales activities, he developed a classification system, which was similar to that of Newton with an additional residential factor.

Dubinsky (1981) evaluated the industrial salespersons and students perceptions of the sales job. He administered a questionnaire on 121 industrial sales people and 219-day school students. The questionnaire comprised 24 job attitudes of sales people taken from a review of the sales management and industrial psychology literature as well as from informal discussions with industrial sales people and business students. The industrial sales people rated them on a 5-point Likert type scale. They saw the job in association with the following attributes in order of intensity - interaction with different people (4.6), opportunity to travel (4.3), challenging (4.2), feeling of accomplishment (4.2), use of creativity (4.2) and dynamic / exciting (3.9). These perceptions, the researcher opined, would form a basis for recruitment and motivational policies.
From the above exposition, one can say that sales jobs vary from industry to industry. Sales people need interaction, travel aptitude, accomplishment and creative talents.

**Personality**

What kind of personality is necessary for a sales job?

In their elaborate study Lamont and Lundstrom(1977) examined the relationship between personality variables (age, height, weight formal education, activities and professional organization) and personality characteristics (Dominance, endurance, and social recognition empathy and ego strength) and various measures of sales performance such as management ratings, sales compensation, incentive earnings, sales activity etc., for industrial salesmen. Data were collected from 71 salesmen by administering two separate questionnaires over a six month interval to measure the prediction variables and to obtain the various measures of selling activity. Performance appraisal scores covering a two year period were given by sales management. The successful salesman’s profile derived by the study was: tall, energetic good work habits, recognition seeking, wide interest, adaptable and flexible and views seeking as a career.

Some of the major findings of this study are that “performance is positively related to ‘endurance’ and negatively related to ‘empathy’ and ‘ego strength’ of the sales personnel. Further height of the salesman was found to be
significantly related to measures of 'sales activity' and 'compensation' as the performance criteria.

The very first study on salesperson performance, which appeared in 1918, was made by Oschin\(^2\)(1918). He examined the relationship between aptitude and performance. More than 50% of the pair wise correlations reported in the literature since then also use an aptitude measure as the predictor of performance. Though the emphasis given to aptitude seems logical, the empirical evidence on the strength of the relationship between aptitude and performance is weak.

The most notable psychological-oriented approach to the sales management problem of fitting the right type of salesmen to the selling situation has been F.B. Evans\(^3\)(1963) exploratory research. Evans found significantly higher correlations between personality attributes of salesmen and customers in successful "dyadic transactions" than were found in unsuccessful "dyads".

Mayer and Greenberg\(^4\)(1971) analyzed the behavior pattern of 'successful' salesmen and observed the basic characteristic contributing to their success to be 'ego-drive' and 'empathy'. They emphasized that an appropriate combination of these characteristics enables a person to 'sell' successfully. Other factors such as experience and educational background, were found to be of lesser importance.

From these studies, it can be stated that personality factor is important in selecting sales persons. Tall, energetic, good work habits, recognition seeking,
wide interests, adaptability, flexibility, aptitude, ego driven and empathy are the characteristics required of a sales person.

**Sex Factor**

The entry of women into the sales position has created a new issue to the sales managers. The question whether there exists a significant difference between men and women in this occupation has become a subject of inquiry. Studies by Athaussiades\(^1\)(1975) and Dipboye\(^2\)(1975) support the notion that women in business suffer from prejudicial stereotyping. Hodges and Bernis\(^3\)(1970) found discrimination of women to be widespread in business firms, but especially so in role supportive tasks much as sales. Epstein\(^4\)(1970) found that women's access to upper echelons of management in often stymied because protégé systems work for males but are inoperative for females. Bass and others\(^5\)(1971) found male respondent's attitudes toward women in management included negative perceptions relating to dependability and career orientation.

Robertson and Hackel\(^6\)(1977) conducted a study to compare the perceptions of salesmen and saleswomen. Data were collected from 249 sales managers and 111 sales personnel (59 male and 52 female). Sales managers viewed salesmen as more intelligent assertive, imaginative and more likely to utilise good sales techniques. Also they viewed male sales personnel as less emotional, open minded and intelligent than sales women.
The perceptions of salesmen and saleswomen did not vary on male-sales personnel. However, their perceptions on female sales personnel differed. The male salesperson pictures the saleswomen as processing poorer sales technique, have less career orientation, being less open minded, more emotional and less confident.

Busch and Busch\(^2\)(1978) investigated the differences between male and females by comparing them on six job satisfaction components, value importance of the job components, performance, role clarity and propensity to leave the organizations. In a sample of 39 women in three pharmaceutical companies, comparing, they matched 39 men on critical variables and analyzed the data. Job satisfaction was measured by use of Job Description Index (JDI) on six areas: Pay, work, promotion, supervision, coworkers on job and customers. The role clarity index used in the study was the one developed by Donnelly and Ivancevich\(^2\)(1975). Performance was measured by means of a self rating scale previously used by Pruden and Reese\(^3\)(1972) for measuring performance of industrial sales personnel. The findings reported 'no difference' between male and females. However, women did have lower role clarity scores and higher propensity to leave scores. The women in the sample were on the job an average of 2.1 years. The male domination, reserved attitudes, etc. might be the reasons for that.

Kanuk\(^4\)(1978), studied the career opportunity for women in industrial selling. He sent a four page mail questionnaire to sales women in Paper and
Allied products and Chemicals and Allied products and obtained responses from 100 sales women. About 58 per cent of the respondents were of 26 to 35 years of age and were single. About 73 per cent of the respondents had college degree. The form of compensation was predominantly straight salary (51%), good majority of sales women felt that there were no differences between men and women, in getting results. About 35% of the respondents cited the following potential problems: overnight travel (32%), leaving to get married (31%), marriage/family interfering their job (16%), sexual tension in the relationships (10%) and the bias (5%). According to 43 companies responding to the questionnaire of Kanuk, the factors influencing the selection of women for selling positions were: technical knowledge (32%), personality (22%), motivation (13%), verbal ability (11%), appearance (8%), age (5%), prior selling experience (5%) and basic intelligence (5%). The preferred age range was 20-25 years.

Robertson and Hackett25(1977) conducted a study on perceptions, problems and prospects of sales women. The research questions are: How do sales managers perceive sales women? What are the perceptions of salesmen regarding sales women? How do sales women view themselves vis-à-vis their male counter parts? Data were collected from 249 sales managers and 250 sales personnel (125 male 125 female). It was found that sales managers perceived sales women as more reserved, humble, apprehensive, imaginative and home
oriented and less competent Salesmen viewed the sales women as less open-minded, more highly emotional and less self-confident.

It can be concluded from the above studies that women are looked down by men in selling. Women are viewed more emotional, less intelligent, apprehensive, home oriented and less confident. Also women face several problems like prejudiced stereotyping, discrimination and absence of mentors. Though women appear to have low role clarity and high propensity to leave, there are less differences between men and women in role clarity and job satisfaction.

Race

Jolson (1974) attempted to examine the differing levels of employer receptivity to the applications of different races. The study based on a random sample of 300 firms to which applications were mailed by candidates belonging to different races, found that race remaining a barrier to employment in selling.

Communication

How do sales persons communicate to prospective buyers? What is an effective message?

Several studies have compared the persuasiveness of one type of sales message (or strategy) with that of another a product versus a personal presentation (Farley and Swinth) (1967) a “product experience”, similarity versus non similarity presentation (Brock) (1965) and an expertise versus non-expertise presentation (Woodside and Davenport) (1974).
Content analysis also has been used to study customer - salesperson interactions. Willet and Pennington\(^{10}\) (1966) used Hales\(^{17}\) (1950) interaction category to analyse interactions between customers and sales people in an appliance store. Three fourths of their communications were devoted to defining issues and / problems. Pennington\(^{32}\) (1968) further analysed the content and isolated types of 'bargaining behaviour' that appeared to affect the likelihood of purchase; frequency of direct offers, frequency of attempts* to change concession limits, using these same categories, Taylor and Woodside\(^{32}\) (1978) analysed the interactions between insurance sales people and their customers and also found that the use of these bargaining techniques increased the probability of a sale.

Some of the results from the Willett and Pennington study of customer - salesperson interactions are also indicative of structural rules and relationships. Customers asked four times as many questions as sales people and were more likely to give positive reactions, whereas salespeople were usually responsible for any disagreement and tension. Olsharsky\(^{34}\) (1973) reanalysis of the same data determined that it is the salesperson who controls the extent of the search and the evaluation of the alternatives. Apparently there are communication "rules" that characterize the sales interaction.

In marketing, a limited number of studies have indirectly considered communication style. Pace\(^{35}\) (1962) in a study of door-to-door salespeople rated them on their use of voice, language, eye contact, body movement, and quality of listening, as well as on their overall communication skills. Only the use of
language and the overall index were related significantly to the performance. The
overall index reflects communication style. Stafford and Greer (1965) investigated preferences for salespeople and found that the person characterized
as an “independent shopper” prefers a salesperson with an aggressive style, whereas the “dependent shopper” prefers a salesperson with a less aggressive
style. “Style” frequently has been studied in the context of leadership. Studies have demonstrated that differences in leadership style are related leadership
effectiveness (Hare, 1976; Lippet and White, 1952).

Though no empirical sales studies have focused directly on “style”, Sheth (1976) depicted “Communication style” as one of the elements in his
conceptual framework of the buyer-seller interaction. His depiction of “style”
does not give explicit recognition to communication codes on rules, but his
conceptualization does provide a framework for an empirical investigation of
communication style.

Williams and Spiro (1985) designed a study to evaluate the use of
communication style by sales people and their customers. Drawing on Sheth’s
model of the buyer-seller interaction, the data for the study were collected from
the sales transactions of all their team of the sporting goods stores in a major city
in the South East. In consistent with expectations, a task-oriented salesperson
does not do well with any of the customer types. The combination of a task
oriented customer and an interaction-oriented salesperson also does not lead to
a sale, but this finding is expected. In contrast, contrary to predictions, sales are
increased if the customer is task or self-oriented and the salesperson is self-oriented.

Sales people use different message types. They use bargaining to increase probability of sale. The communication between sales person and customers can be theorised with principles. Communication style is important, the voice, language eye contact etc., become crucial. Dependent shoppers look for less aggressive sales persons. Self-oriented sales person can clinch sales with self-oriented customers.

Career Stages

There is a paucity of research on how salespeople at different career stages behave. Slocum et al.\(^4\) (1985) examined the phenomenon of career plateauing (i.e., likelihood of future promotion) by comparing effective and ineffective plateaued sales people in companies having different business strategies. The authors found significant differences between plateaued and non-plateaued sales people’s job histories, job satisfactions levels, job attitudes, and career attitudes. Business strategy had a significant effect on the incidence of plateau and on the performance of plateaued people. It was impossible to distinguish between company and strategy effects, however, because only two companies were sampled. Ingram and Bellenger\(^4\) (1983) investigated the relationship between several career variables and the importance of specific rewards to salespeople. Opportunity for promotion was related to the importance of several rewards including pay, promotion, worthwhile accomplishment,
personal growth and job security. Career stages were not related to the importance of specific rewards. This finding may have been caused by a sampling bias. More than 75% of the sales people included in the sample were in a single career stage.

Slocum and Cron\textsuperscript{35} (1985) studied the effects of age on job-related attitudes and behaviour. Support for Super's\textsuperscript{44} career stages theory was found. People in the exploration stage (less than 30 years old) were more concerned about whether they had chosen the right occupation and job than people in the establishment stage and/or maintenance stage. Exploration stage people changed companies more frequently and had shorter job tenure than did salespersons in the establishment (30 to 45 years old) and/or maintenance (over 45 years old) stage. Only a three stage model was examined.

In an exploratory study of Super's four career stages, Corn and Slocum (1984)\textsuperscript{45} found that a variety of job attitudes and behaviour were influenced by a sales person's career stage. As noted by the authors one must be cautious in generalizing these results because sales people in only one company were studied. The literature on career stages indicates that a career stage affects job satisfaction, job attitudes, and how individuals describe their work environment.

Corn and Slocum, Jr.\textsuperscript{36} (1986) examined job performance and attitudes of salesmen in various career stages. Data were collected from six companies with national sales forces. All the firms were manufacturers of industrial equipment and supplies ranging from building materials to industrial chemicals. Data were
collected from sales people via one of two procedures. In three of the six companies, sales people completed a questionnaire during their national sales meetings. Sales people in the remaining three firms were mailed-administered questionnaires. The study indicated changes in attitudes with stages in career.

Corn, Dubinsky and Michaels (1988) examined the relationship between career stages and motivation. Specifically to assess how the three elements of expectancy model differ across four career stages. Self-administered questionnaires from 176 sales people employed by manufacturers of commercial and residential building materials and supplies, were analysed. The respondents had an average age of 44 years and mean job tenure was 13 years. About 66% had college education and 80% were married. Sales people in the exploration stage had lower instrumentality and lower performance levels. For sales personnel in the establishment stage, promotion was an important aspect. In the maintenance stage sales people were found having an aggressive career orientation. In the disengagement stage, lowest estimates of the relationship between performance and rewards was found.

Career stages present different expectations and behaviour. It suggests the need for career management.
SALES MANAGEMENT

From the above description, it is obvious that sales jobs are complex and challenging. Managing sales force as such, is still more complex and intriguing. The concerns for sales managers can be summed up as follows:

* Sales jobs are complex. For example, they can be missionary and order taker.
* Sales jobs need a unique personality and monitoring such a personality is a challenge.
* Women are competing with men. Some problems are related to their marriage and pregnancy. But they are as career oriented as men are.
* Communication skills and styles are important.
* Managing sales careers to motivate people is another important aspect.

A brief description of the sales force management practices is detailed here under.

New dimensions

The concepts of sales management and selling have assumed significantly broader dimensions, as marketing management has evolved. Today's top salesforce managers are involved more in setting sales goals, planning a program to reach these goals and evaluating the results. Their job is to coordinate the field selling with the other elements in their company's total marketing program. Their role is more of a planning executive rather than an operations manager. Although they are still responsible for the general administration of sales-force activities.
Today less of their time is spent in daily routine contacts with sales people. Another major development has been the significant increase in the number of women who are going into industrial selling and sales management.

The emergent fourth stage of marketing management i.e. the societal dimension has considerable influence on the nature and scope of jobs in selling and sales management. Table 1.1 shows how the evolution of sales management over the years has paralleled the four-stage evolution of marketing management.

**Table 1.1**

**Changing Emphasis in Sales Management**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Production orientation</td>
<td>Sales orientation</td>
<td>Marketing orientation</td>
<td>Human orientation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emphasis in management's conception of sales job</td>
<td>Personality, art</td>
<td>Scientific salesmanship</td>
<td>Professionalism</td>
<td>Personal fulfillment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emphasis in sales management</td>
<td>Tight supervision and control</td>
<td>Broadened responsibilities</td>
<td>Strategies and profits</td>
<td>Total human resource development</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Time Allocation

An excellent way to learn what sales management entails is to ask a representative group of sales managers how they spend their time. A summary of one such study is presented in Table 1-2. Most people are surprised to find that the largest portion of a sales manager's time (37 percent) is spent in selling. This finding dispels the common misconception that sales managers spend their time behind a desk issuing orders! In reality, sales managers devote considerable time to field travel and to solving customers' problems. In addition, their calls are often designed to help train salespeople and to keep management informed about competitive conditions. In fact, research has shown that larger and more successful firms do not allow their managers to use their valuable time in this activity.

How Are Sales Managers Performing?

Sales managers have a difficult job, and they are bound to be criticized by some organisation member no matter how well they handle their duties. A study in Sales & Marketing management identified a number of complaints that salespeople have about their own sales managers; Exhibit 1-1 summarises the results.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Job Responsibility</th>
<th>Time Allocation (in percent)</th>
<th>Ranking of Activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Selling</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>1. Making calls with salespeople</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2. Personal selling to own accounts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3. Handling problem accounts</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4. Expediting customer orders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5. Deciding on requests for special terms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personnel</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>1. Training salespeople</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2. Establishing performance standards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3. Planning and holding sales meetings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4. Handling problem salespeople</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5. Recruiting and selecting new sales people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6. Advising salespeople on personal problems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>7. Forecasting future district-personnel needs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>8. Reviewing compensation programs for salespeople</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marketing</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>1. Analyzing sales data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2. Communicating information to salespersons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3. Digesting information from management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4. Advising management on price, delivery, products, or new product development</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5. Summarizing sales and customer information for management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6. Reviewing sales coverage, territory alignments, and competitive activity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>7. Forecasting future sales in your district</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>1. Managing the field sales office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2. Writing reports</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3. Keeping records</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4. Working with dissatisfied customers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1. Analyzing selling expense data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2. Controlling inventory as well as warehouse and branch office costs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3. Preparing budgets</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Exhibit 1.1

Complaints of Salespeople about Their Sales Managers

1. They believe that they have to solve problems if those problems are going to be solved.
2. They don't teach us problem-solving skills.
3. They have too many salespeople to manage.
4. The paperwork is killing me!
5. Their territories are too large to administer.
6. They never discuss long-term goals.
7. When we're doing well, please communicate with us! Don't wait until performance slips.
8. It's up to them to initiate and sustain direct communication.
9. Please ask us, once in a while, how you are performing!
10. Their management style often becomes a hodgepodge of directives mixed with intimidation and persuasion.

Sales Force Management Problems

Longitudinal as well as cross-sectional studies are available to help consider the problems of sales management. A 1979 survey of several hundred sales executives revealed that "inadequacy in sales training" was the second most important problem plaguing sales managers. Surprisingly, this problem ranked twenty-first in a similar survey done twenty years earlier, but the top problem in both surveys was "poor utilisation of time and the planned sales effort," as Table 1.3 shows.

Table 1.3

Comparative Analysis of Top Problems in Sales Force Management

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sales Force Management Problems</th>
<th>Ranked per Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1979</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor utilization of time and planned sales effort</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inadequacy in sales training</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wasted time in office by sales persons</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Too few sales calls during working hours</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inability of salespersons to overcome objections</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indifferent follow-up of prospects by salespersons</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of creative, resourceful sales techniques</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inability to meet competitive pricing</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of sales drive and motivation</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recruitment and selection of sales personnel</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Adapted from Jack Daum and Eugene M. Johnson, "Poor Utilisation of Time and Planned Sales Efforts," Training and Development Journal, January 1980, p.9

Reasons for failures

The major reasons for the failure of sales managers to perform at higher levels are:
1. Illogical Selection of Sales Managers: Through no fault of their own, newly selected sales managers are probably marketing's best example of the Peter Principle. "In a hierarchy, every employee tends to rise to his level of incompetence." Despite many articles by marketing scholars and practitioners who stress that a super salesperson does not necessarily make a good sales manager, the reward for a sales rep who does an outstanding selling job for a couple of years is still usually promotion to sales management - a position for which he or she may be ill-prepared. New sales managers often unconsciously become involved in doing because they feel comfortable in continuing to apply the same skills that earned them promotion to sales management. The difference between a skillful sales manager and mere "doer" can make a significant impact on the success of the sales force efforts.

2. Inadequate Training: Compounding the problem of poor selection criteria for promotion to sales management is the inadequacy of sales management Training programs. Despite of huge sums being spent on training, some of the companies still fail to train sales managers adequately. Often, top management takes the shortsighted view that the activities of sales managers are too critical to company success to take these people away from their daily work for managerial training. This attitude shouldn't permeate in the organisation if sales managers have to be trained adequately.

3. Orientation towards Sales, not Marketing: Despite the critical necessity for sales managers to understand and practice sound marketing, many sales
managers still give little more than lip service to application of the marketing concept. Sales managers and salespeople who employ a narrow selling orientation focus on products and the "sell"-that is, they emphasize their own needs. In contrast, a marketing orientation focuses on serving by emphasizing the customer's needs. Table 1-4 contrasts basic differences in the orientation of progressive and traditional sales managers.

Table 1.4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Marketing-Oriented Sales Managers Think in Terms of:</th>
<th>Selling-Oriented Sales Managers Think in Terms of:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Profit Planning. Planning marketing mixes, product mixes, and customer segments to achieve profits and market share targets</td>
<td>Sales volume. Increasing current sales to meet quotas and earn commissions or bonuses. Usually not sensitive to profit differences among customer or product categories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long-run outlook. Continuously analyzing opportunities for profitable new products, markets, and strategies to assure long-run growth</td>
<td>Short-run outlook. Committing to today's products, markets, customers, and strategies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Market segments. Developing strategies to deal effectively and efficiently with customer groupings and types</td>
<td>Individual customers. Focusing on specific account satisfaction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information systems. Continuously analyzing markets, plans, and controls to improve efforts towards organizational goals</td>
<td>Field work instead of desk work. Preferring to sell to customers instead of devising plans and strategies for implementation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. Insufficient Blending of Sales and Marketing Functions: Marketing experience is fast becoming a requirement for sales management positions in excellent companies. Companies are looking for more versatile, well rounded sales managers these days. Solid marketing experience is becoming a necessity. Most of the leading companies are insisting on the dual reporting responsibilities. Sales people apart from reporting directly to the Sales Manager are being asked to report to the head of marketing too. This will keep the Marketing persons informed about how a particular product is being sold and marketed. To achieve proper blend both the field sales and headquarters marketing groups need to appreciate that they are key players on the same team. They must cooperate to achieve the organisations objectives.

MEGA TRENDS

Several dramatically accelerating trends make the job of the sales manager very complex indeed. The sections that follow examine each mega trend.

Intense Foreign Competition

The Indian market is flooded with various products of MNC's and countries like U.S., Japan, South Korea have captured huge market shares of the basic industries viz., automobiles, Electronic components, home appliances, industrial chemicals, machine tools etc. The Indian home market has become the world's most attractive market for foreign sellers, and the battle for domestic and world markets is expected to continue. Unless India can develop and market innovative, top-quality, cost-competitive products that match or exceed those of
any competitor, its domestic shares will be lost to foreign imports. The economic health of the country as such depends partially on how well sales people and sales managers do their jobs as industry faces intensifying competition from foreign products and services.

Rising Customer Expectations

Customers are becoming less and less tolerant of product and service limitations. Even though today's customers may accept some shortcomings, they will quickly switch to better products and services when they appear as the success of foreign products in India has demonstrated. Successful sales and marketing managers are becoming less defensive about their own company's offerings and trying to look at products and services from the perspective of their most critical customers. As the eyes and ears of the company in the market, the sales organisation will play a larger role in monitoring customer satisfaction and complaint resolution.

Increasing Buyer Expertise

With budget and profit squeezes, buyers of all kinds (consumers, producers, resellers and governments) are becoming increasingly skillful at obtaining value for their money. Organisations are developing more efficient purchasing process and using buying committees consisting of purchasing, engineering and operations managers. The new purchasing process require a new attitude on the sellers part. The seller must place less emphasis on persuasive selling techniques and more on fostering long term relationships of trust, respect.
and understanding with buying organisations. A talented new type of professional salesperson is needed to convey the new attitude in sales presentations to buying committees and to function as consultative account coordination.

Revolution in Computer Technology and in Communications

An electronic revolution is well under way in communications and computer technology. Sales managers cannot afford to miss out on this revolution because it offers great opportunities to win competitive advantages with customers. Among the important technological innovations for sales management are (1) portable and desktop computers, (2) videotape presentations, (3) videoconferencing, (4) mobile communications equipment, and (5) electronic sales offices.

Influx of Women and Minorities into Sales Careers

The composition of India's sales force is changing rapidly as women and minorities are increasingly recognising the excellent career opportunities in sales. The number of females getting into these areas is soaring to new heights and they are proving to be quite successful too. Not only women, but the number of minorities and backwards in selling also climbing rapidly.

Emphasis on Controlling Costs

Sales managers are emphasizing cost control as an important means of adapting to the new selling environment of the 1990s. With retail and entry of foreign chains, there is more buying power in fewer hands today. Retailers can
use this power to cut their own costs by shifting more of their in-store labor burden to manufacturers. Thus, the relationship between the manufacturer's sales force and the large retailers is very different from what it was a few years ago. The sales rep of the 1990s will deal with a well-informed, powerful buyer. The key for sales managers is to provide the sales force with better training in controlling costs and improving effectiveness in this new selling environment.

Developing Sales Managers for Tomorrow

To successfully adapt to the mega trends that are affecting business today and to enable sales managers to help move their companies toward competitive excellence in the fiercely competitive markets of tomorrow, companies must significantly broaden the concept of the sales manager's job. Ogbuehi and Sharma48 (1999) examined the ongoing developments in the competitive environment of industrial firms that have rendered the traditional sales roles less effective in generating loyalty among buyers. The new sales force should recognise that strategic advantage is achievable through relational interaction and the management of the changing needs of the customers rather than the product life cycle. What is further needed is quality orientation. Wright and Stephan Grant46 (1995) in their study discussed sales management issues in TQM and listed the related directives given by Deming and Crosby to make sales force management quality oriented. They highlighted core values for a service oriented sales force given by Bower and Greener(1986).
Companies must emphasize the selection and training of sales managers. Specifically, top management must ensure that (1) sales managers are selected on the basis of appropriate managerial criteria, (2) newly promoted sales managers are taught basic marketing concepts and strategies, (3) sales activities are fully integrated with overall marketing programs, and (4) broad training is provided to develop talented salespeople into men and women who are capable of handling the most elective job in marketing – sales management. The best sales managers are developing and applying concepts and techniques from the behavioral sciences, marketing management, strategic planning, financial analysis, communication theory, general management, and the decision sciences. In the words of one sales manager: "Unless tomorrow's sales managers can innovate and automate, they'll evaporate."

Research Problem

The above description, raises some pertinent questions relating to sales force management effectiveness.

1. To what extent are sales persons clear about their roles and expectations?

2. What kind of relationship and influences exist between sales supervisors and their subordinates?

3. What factors influence performance and job satisfaction of sales people?

An attempt is made in the next chapter to review the literature to know what earlier research had found in this regard.
Presentation

The thesis is organised into six chapters.

Chapter I discusses the role of sales person and sales force management practices and raises research questions.

Chapter II reviews research works and describes the objectives and the methodology of the present study.

Chapter III makes a brief presentation of the infotech industry in India.

Chapter IV analyses the findings relating to sales force management practices.

Chapter V examines the job satisfaction and related variables.

Chapter VI presents conclusions and suggestions of the study.
NOTES


1. Ingram, Thomas and Danny Bellenger (1984), "Personal And Organisational Variables : Their Relative Effect On Reward Valences Of Industrial Salespeople", *Journal of Marketing Research*, 20 (May), pp. 198-205


