

Perception about Technological Aspects of Sales Force Automation

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Abstract - The core function of the sales department is the market research which includes forecasting and observation of the activities in the market. Secondary functions include the service in addition to promotional activities. Packaging and warehousing are the tertiary function of the sales department. A sales department consist of person working together to advertise the products shaped by the organisation or products purchased for resale. Strategies like push, pull and combined strategies are been formed by the sales department to enhance sales. Providing coupons, offers, gifts, loyalty programs and exhibition display a part of activities related to sales promotion. Now a day, technologies play an important role in sales promotion activities. This present study measures the perception of salesmen on technological aspects of Sales Force Automation (SFA). The data have been obtained from 70 salesmen. Results argue that SFA technology alone will not assist in sales performance.

Keywords – Sales Force Automation, Perception, technology, salesmen.

I. INTRODUCTION

Sales strategies are categorized into push strategy, pull strategy and combined strategy. In push strategy, the business attempts to push the goods or products en route for the consumer. The Pull strategy is adopted by the business to pull the goods or products from the manufacturer. Combined strategies are an incorporation of both push and pull strategy. It is used simultaneously to boost market demand and sales. A sales manager plays a crucial role in the accomplishment and collapse of an organisation. Their most important key role is achieving sales targets and generates revenue for the organisation. The other key roles include determining opportunities, generating leads and providing training facilities. A sales manager must proceed as a team player as well as a team leader. A sales manager must acquire the qualities of managing, communicating, budgeting and forecasting. Sales Force Automation (SFA) is the idea of using the technology to amplify the sales productivity, diminish cost and heighten customer service. It is widely used to increase the customer relationship maintenance activities.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Kuester et al. (2017) suggested that the sales force incorporation will facilitate to augment the success of the product. The sales force also helps in conveying the new products to the market. This study is the pioneer in finding the relationship between the efficiency of the sales force and the growth of new products. Data has been obtained from 609 firms. The study also focuses on how to

effectively use the sales force for the purpose of new product development.

Panagopoulos et al. (2018) validated the morale of the sales force. It is found that the influence of the market has a negative impact on the morale of the sales force. The study also depicts that the firms with increased sales force morale will experience reduced turn over as well as enhanced sales force productivity.

Krakel and Schottner (2016) analysed the compensation plans for the sales force that are actually optimal. The compensation plans include commissions, sales quotas in addition to fixed salaries. This study discusses about the uncertainty prevailing between the preferences and the demand. It is extended to check the robustness.

Skiba et al. (2016) studied the influence due to managerial cost prioritization towards sales force turnover. The cost prioritization deeply believes that monitoring, analysing and finally controlling the costs are most important more than the revenues. The sales force turn over improved due to the cost prioritization done by the sales force.

Echchakoui (2015) tested the relationship between attributes of the sales force and the equity drivers of sales force. It reveals the two different dimensions for the sales personnel. This will have a positive influence towards trustworthiness and equity of the sales force.

Park et al. (2018) studied the synchronization of the heart rhythm pattern that prevails between the leader and follower. Usually the followers change the heart rhythm pattern to match the leader. But, the leader never changes

the heart rhythm pattern to go with the follower. There occurs emotional transference. This study measures the emotional contagion.

Echchakoui (2016) developed the reputation of the sales force and the experiential value that is added to the sales personnel. It is showed that this increases the level of customer behaviour. According to this study, the reputation is considered as an intangible source of the experiential value. This value has a link between the reputation and customer behaviour.

Hunter et al. (2015) investigated the relationship between the commitment and infusion. Normative commitment has a positive impact on the infusion while the affirmative commitment exercises a negative impact on the infusion. Continuance commitment is a U shaped infusion. The infusion of the sales technology affects both the customer and sales.

Balboni and Terho (2016) focus on forward looking and outward metrics based on the segmentation of the potential customers. A constructive research approach is applied in this study. This study tells how to manage the customer value by using the sales force effectively. Furthermore, it focuses on the customer value dynamics.

Barket et al. (2009) studied about SFA. It is software that helps in making the sales activities automatic. It aids the companies to manage their sales force in the most effective manner. But the SFA predominantly fails often. This is mainly due to the difficulties face by the users during the adoption.

Gohmann et al. (2005) stated the differences in the perception between the company and sales force. This is mainly seen in the acceptance of the new technology that is implemented. This study mainly highlights the deployment occurring due to the difficulties faced by using the sales force automation.

Jelinek (2013) established the reason for using SFA. The study suggests that this would actually enhance the customer relationship management. It also gives an overview of the gap that prevails between the management and the sales force while adopting the SFA. It also helps in improvement of the sales and enhances the efficiency.

III. PERCEPTION ABOUT SFA TECHNOLOGY

In order to ascertain the perception of salesmen on SFA technology, primary data through questionnaire have been obtained from 70 sales men at random basis. The detailed profile of sales men is given in Table 1.

Table 1: Profile of Salesmen

Gender	Frequency	Percent
Male	61	87.1
Female	9	12.9

Total	70	100.0
Qualification	Frequency	Percent
UG	43	61.4
PG	22	31.4
Others	5	7.1
Total	70	100.0
Service	Frequency	Percent
<2 Years	7	10.0
2-5 Years	55	78.6
>5 Years	8	11.4
Total	70	100.0

Majority of the salesmen holds under graduation degree and secured maximum of 5 years experience in their field. Male community predominantly works as a salesman. The perception about these salesmen about the SFA technology is displayed in Table 2.

Table 2: Perception on SFA Technology

S. No.	Perception on SFA Technology	Mean	Rank
1.	SFA technology is more comfortable for better sales performance (At Ease)	2.86	11
2.	SFA increases the knowledge about the products (Product)	3.10	7
3.	Managing and serving the customers made easy through SFA technology (Management)	3.31	4
4.	Sales through SFA is more convenient than traditional sales (Convenience)	3.39	1
5.	SFA technology provides you with maximum sales (Sales)	3.07	8
6.	As a salesperson, I prefer this as a basic tool in sales (Preference)	3.14	6
7.	I am encountering more problems and obstacles while using SFA technology (Problems)	3.34	2
8.	SFA technology makes me more competent salesperson (Competent)	2.94	9
9.	SFA reduces time consumption during sales process (Time)	2.91	10
10.	I share information to the customers about the application (Information)	3.33	3
11.	I understand the importance of the application (Importance)	3.24	5

Table 2 shows that convenience has the highest mean value of 3.39 followed by problems, information, management, importance and so on. It is also clear that at ease has lowest value of 2.86. On an average, salesmen feel that sales through SFA technology are handier than normal sales mechanism. They also experience that SFA technology alone will not aid in better sales performance. The relationship among eleven variables is measured using factor analysis.

Table 3: KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO)		0.554
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx.	Chi-Square
	Df	55
	Sig.	0.000

Table 3 indicates the adequacy of data for performing factor analysis. The values of KMO and significant level of Bartlett's test are 0.554 and 0.000 respectively. The value of KMO is around 0.6 and Bartlett's test is significant at one percent level. It concludes that data is adequate for conducting factor analysis.

Table 4: Total Variance Explained

Factors	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
Factor 1	3.075	27.953	27.953
Factor 2	2.002	18.202	46.155
Factor 3	1.655	15.043	61.198
Factor 4	1.515	13.769	74.967

Table 4 depicts that eleven variables have been grouped into four factors. It is also clear that four factors collectively explain 75 percent of variance. The details of classification of variables on the basis of factors are shown in Table 5.

Table 5: Rotated Component Matrix

Perception on SFA Technology	Component			
	1	2	3	4
Convenience	0.834			
Product	0.827			
Competent	0.812			
Sales	0.675			
Management	0.612			
At Ease		0.833		
Problems		0.808		
Information			0.879	
Importance			0.839	
Time				0.895
Preference				0.567

Factor 1 includes five variables such as convenience, product, competent, sales and management. Mostly, all the five variables are related to sales activities. Hence, factor 1 is named as "Sales". Factor 2, 3 and 4 include two variables each. Variables at ease and problems are part of factor 2. Factor 3 includes information and importance. Final factor comprises of time and preference. Based on the nature of variable, factor 2, 3 and 4 are named as "Problem", "Essentials" and "Time" respectively.

IV. CONCLUSION

The prospect of sales promotion may embrace multi dwelling unit activity which means convincing the top authority to sell the product to the lower parties. The outlook of sales promotion depends on the creativity as well

as facing of the new barriers and approach of the respondents. The major confront would be the competitors. People involved in the organisation must be ready with the ability to face threats from the competitors. SFA is an outline of huge global set of customers in our handset. It only depends on how we make use of the technology. Some of the recent trends in SFA are augmented reality, artificial intelligence, mobile surveys and fact based selling.

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