



2021 National Conference in Sales Management  
Virtual Conference  
April 7-9, 2021

***SALES: THE NEXT GENERATION***

***VOTING TO AN ERA OF DIGITAL ENGAGEMENT***

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## **National Conference on Sales Management Mission Statement**

The mission of the National Conference on Sales Management (NCSM) is to create and disseminate knowledge on professional selling and sales management. This mission has three legs: Research, PSE, and Business Involvement.

**Research** – The conference should be a focal point for the development and transfer of knowledge on sales and sales management. We should provide a forum for the development of quality research in the sales and sales management area.

**PSE** – A related leg is to encourage growth that strengthens PSE and its educational component. The NCSM should be designed whenever reasonable to support the PSE faculty advisors. Our activities should be structured in a fashion that recognizes their important role in the dissemination of sales and sales management knowledge as advisors to students.

**Business Community Involvement** – The final leg consists of our role in recognizing the opinions and contributions of the people who are working in the field of sales and sales management. Business people can make an important contribution in evaluating the research we are doing and in sharing ideas on trends in sales management and selling. NCSM seeks to enhance the practice of professional selling and sales management by fostering the dialogue between academicians and practitioners.

Through adherence to the mission, the National Conference on Sales Management (NCSM) exists to create the premier national conference for disseminating knowledge in the areas of sales management and professional selling.

## FOREWORD

This thirty-sixth volume of the Proceedings from the National Conference in Sales Management contains articles and abstracts of presentations scheduled at the 2021 Virtual Conference held April 7-9. Even though the format has changed for this year, the spirit of NCSM remains the same.

Each article was selected after a blind competitive review process and will be presented at the conference by at least one author. The Best Paper award sponsored by Wessex Press will be presented to the top research submission.

In addition, the conference devotes one session to the Vendition sponsored Best Sales Teaching moment and three sessions to the best teaching application.

This year introduces the doctoral working paper session along with an award for the best early stage doctoral work submitted in addition to the longstanding Best Doctoral Paper award which is presented by Shane Hunt on behalf of the authors of the McGraw-Hill text *Professional Selling*.

In keeping with tradition, four very interesting special session presentations/panel discussions are on the agenda that reflect our first ever conference theme: Sales the Next Generation: Pivoting to an Era of Digital Engagement.

The 2021 Conference continues to provide the outstanding socializing and networking opportunities that are hallmarks of the NCSM even if we are in a virtual setting.

As interest in sales research and education has significantly expanded over the years, Conference attendance by both academics and practitioners continues to be strong with over 75 attendees registered including over 20 doctoral students who are the future of this profession and conference.

Special recognition for this 2021 Conference goes to:

- Joan Rogala, Executive Director of Pi Sigma Epsilon for her expert support and guidance throughout the conference planning process, and all the staff of Pi Sigma Epsilon for all they do behind the scenes.
- The NCSM Executive Board – Lisa Simon of Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo for her leadership and guidance as the Executive Director of the NCSM; Christine Lai of Emlyon Business School for serving as Competitive Sessions Chair; Bryan Hochstein of the University of Alabama and Catherine Johnson of the University of Toledo serving as Co-chairs of the Doctoral Student Sales Research Program; Rebecca Dingus of Central Michigan University for serving as Sales Education Track Coordinator; Stefanie Boyer of Bryant University for serving as Special Sessions Coordinator; and Aaron Arndt of Old Dominion University and David Locander of University of Tennessee-Chattanooga for serving as members at large and assisting with program development.
- All the paper reviewers (see the list on page 7) for their constructive feedback to help authors advance their research.
- And all of the sponsors, contributors and supporters of NCSM who put their valuable time into making this conference a success.

The goal of the National Conference in Sales Management is to serve as a forum for professionalizing selling and sales management by bringing together a broad spectrum of academics and practitioners. Thanks to the support and effort of everyone associated with this thirty-sixth event, this goal continues to be met.

David Fleming  
Program Chair  
Indiana State University

Stacey Schetzle  
Proceedings Editor  
University of Tampa

## HERITAGE OF LEADERSHIP FOR NCSM

<b>Year</b>	<b>Program Chair</b>	<b>Proceedings Editor</b>
1986	E. James Randall <i>Georgia Southern University</i>	E. James Randall <i>Georgia Southern University</i>
1987	E. James Randall <i>Georgia Southern University</i>	E. James Randall <i>Georgia Southern University</i>
1988	E. James Randall <i>Georgia Southern University</i>	David J. Good <i>Central Missouri State University</i>
1989	David J. Good <i>Central Missouri State University</i>	David J. Good <i>Central Missouri State University</i>
1990	David J. Good <i>Central Missouri State University</i>	James B. Deconinck <i>Central Missouri State University</i>
1991	E. James Randall <i>Georgia Southern University</i>	Roberta J. Good <i>Central Missouri State University</i>
1992	Ramon A. Avila <i>Ball State University</i>	Dan C. Weilbaker <i>Northern Illinois State University</i>
1993	Ramon A. Avila <i>Ball State University</i>	Dan C. Weilbaker <i>Northern Illinois State University</i>
1994	Dan C. Weilbaker <i>Northern Illinois State University</i>	Rick E. Ridnour <i>Northern Illinois University</i>
1995	Dan C. Weilbaker <i>Northern Illinois State University</i>	Timothy A. Longfellow <i>Illinois State University</i>
1996	Timothy A. Longfellow <i>Illinois State University</i>	Michael R. Williams <i>Illinois State University</i>
1997	Timothy A. Longfellow <i>Illinois State University</i>	Michael R. Williams <i>Illinois State University</i>
1998	Michael R. Williams <i>Illinois State University</i>	Michael A. Humphreys <i>Illinois State University</i>
1999	Michael R. Williams <i>Illinois State University</i>	Michael A. Humphreys <i>Illinois State University</i>
2000	Michael A. Humphreys <i>Illinois State University</i>	Jon M. Hawes <i>The University of Akron</i>
2001	Michael A. Humphreys <i>Illinois State University</i>	Jon M. Hawes <i>The University of Akron</i>

2002	David A. Reid <i>The University of Toledo</i>	Jon M. Hawes <i>The University of Akron</i>
		Scott A. Inks <i>Middle Tennessee State University</i>
2003	David A. Reid <i>The University of Toledo</i>	Scott A. Inks <i>Middle Tennessee State University</i>
2004	Scott A. Inks <i>Ball State University</i>	C. David Shepherd <i>Kennesaw State University</i>
2005	Scott A. Inks <i>Ball State University</i>	C. David Shepherd <i>Kennesaw State University</i>
2006	C. David Shepherd <i>Kennesaw State University</i>	Mark C. Johlke <i>Bradley University</i>
2007	Mark C. Johlke <i>Bradley University</i>	C. David Shepherd <i>Georgia Southern University</i>
2008	Mark C. Johlke <i>Bradley University</i>	Ellen Bolman Pullins <i>The University of Toledo</i>
2009	Mark C. Johlke <i>Bradley University</i>	Ellen Bolman Pullins <i>The University of Toledo</i>
2010	Ellen Bolman Pullins <i>The University of Toledo</i>	Concha R. Neeley <i>Central Michigan University</i>
2011	Ellen Bolman Pullins <i>The University of Toledo</i>	Concha R. Neeley <i>Central Michigan University</i>
2012	Concha Allen <i>Central Michigan University</i>	Michael L. Mallin <i>The University of Toledo</i>
2013	Concha Allen <i>Central Michigan University</i>	Michael L. Mallin <i>The University of Toledo</i>
2014	Michael L. Mallin <i>The University of Toledo</i>	Scott M. Widmier <i>Kennesaw State University</i>
2015	Michael L. Mallin <i>The University of Toledo</i>	Scott M. Widmier <i>Kennesaw State University</i>
2016	Scott M. Widmier <i>Kennesaw State University</i>	Lisa R. Simon <i>California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo</i>
2017	Scott M. Widmier <i>Kennesaw State University</i>	Lisa R. Simon <i>California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo</i>
2018	Lisa R. Simon <i>California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo</i>	David E. Fleming <i>Indiana State University</i>

2019	Lisa R. Simon <i>California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo</i>	David E. Fleming <i>Indiana State University</i>
2020	David E. Fleming <i>Indiana State University</i>	Stacey Schetzle <i>University of Tampa</i>
2021	David E. Fleming <i>Indiana State University</i>	Stacey Schetzle <i>University of Tampa</i>

## National Conference in Sales Management 2021 Reviewers

**Conference Chair:** David E. Fleming, *Indiana State University*

**Competitive Papers Chair:** Christine Lai, *Emlyon Business School*

### Reviewers:

Aaron Arndt	Old Dominion University
Lisa Beeler	Ohio University
J. Ricky Fergurson	Indiana State University
Nathaniel Hartmann	University of South Florida
Earl Honeycutt	Elon University
Mark Johlke	Bradley University
David Locander	University of Tennessee, Chattanooga
Michael L. Mallin	The University of Toledo
Blake Nielson	Weber State University
Deva Rangarajan	Ball State University
Maria Rouziou	HEC Montreal
Charles Schwepker	University of Central Missouri
Elina Tang	Northern Illinois University
Andy Wood	James Madison University

**Agenda:**  
**Time (Eastern/New York)                      Session**

Wednesday, April 7

11:30 - 12:30	Doctoral Pre-session	Bryan Hochstein, University of Alabama and Katy Johnson, University of Toledo
1:00-1:20	Welcome	David Fleming, Conference Chair and Lisa R. Simon, NCSM Executive Director
1:25-2:25	Research Session #1	
	<b>Session Chair:</b>	David Locander, University of Tennessee - Chattanooga
	Presentation #1:	Achim Kiessig, Chemnitz University of Technology A self-determination theory informed model on salesperson political skills, co-worker motivation and salesperson internal support
	Presentation #2:	Rhett Epler, University of Wyoming An examination of effectuation in dynamic sales environments
	Presentation #3:	Aaron Arndt and Kristina Harrison, Old Dominion University What variable pay structures exist and why should researchers care?
2:35 - 3:10	Teaching Moment Session #1	
	<b>Session Chair:</b>	Christine Lai, Emlyon Business School
	Presentation #1:	Mary E. Shoemaker, Widener University Can a secret message improve student sales questioning skills?
	Presentation #2:	David E. Fleming, J. Ricky Ferguson and Allison Crick, Indiana State University Coffee & careers
	Presentation #3:	Michel Klein, Montpellier Research in Management The critical incident technique as a teaching tool to enhance sales negotiation skills
3:10-3:30	<i>Teaching Moment Award</i>	Presented by Vendition
3:40-4:30	Doctoral Working Paper Session #1	
	<b>Session Chair:</b>	Bryan Hochstein, University of Alabama
	Presentation #1:	Bryan Gilliland, University of Alabama Selling to experts: An exploration of absorptive capacity as a mechanism of knowledge transfer
	Presentation #2:	Allen Scogin, University of Alabama Old school meets new school: Predicting sales performance by merging personality assessment with job design
4:45-5:30	Special Session #1:	Robert Peterson, Northern Illinois University Applied improv in the sales classroom

**Agenda:**  
**Time (Eastern/New York)**

Thursday, April 8

9:30 -9:40 Welcome

9:40-10:30 Doctoral Working Paper Session #2

**Session Chair:**

Presentation #1:

Presentation #2:

**Session**

Catherine Johnson, University of Toledo

Maximilian Hofmann, University of Montpellier

AI application in B2B sales

Tim Schöllkopf, Aalen University

Social network profiling as part of preparation and the effects on face to face B2B negotiations

10:45-12:00 Teaching Application Session #1

**Session Chair:**

Presentation #1:

Presentation #2:

Presentation #3:

Presentation #4

Barb Barney-McNamara, Ferris State University

Deirdre Jones and Michael Mallin, University of Toledo

Corporate coaching sessions

Katerina E. Hill and Hannah Dunton, Arkansas State University

Advanced sales competition and mentoring,

Christine Lai and Maud Poil Burtin, Emlyon Business School

Tell stories that make sense: An example of training business logic in selling

Laura Munoz and Richard J. Miller, University of Dallas

Getting from why to yes: Using root cause questioning in the discovery step in the sales process

12:00-1:00 Lunch

1:00-2:00 Research Session #2

**Session Chair:**

Presentation #1:

Presentation #2:

Presentation #3:

Christine Lai, Emlyon Business School

Allison Crick, Ricky Ferguson and David Fleming, Indiana State University

A conceptual view of the dynamics of global sales leadership: An examination through Hofstede's cultural dimensions

Gabriel Moreno, University of Texas - El Paso

Leveraging salespeople's intuition to improve prospecting and sales performance: Exploring the adverse effect of role conflict

Nadine Fischer, University of Montpellier, Christophe Fournier, University of Montpellier, and Hanene Oueslati, University of Upper Alsace

Cross-cultural selling: The impact of cultural intelligence on sales skills and sales performance - proposition of a conceptual framework

2:10 -3:25	Teaching Application Session #2	<p><b>Session Chair:</b> Hayam Alnakhli, Central Michigan University</p> <p>Presentation #1: Shannon Cummins, University of Nebraska Omaha Objection practice using a live appointment-setting phone call with sales professionals</p> <p>Presentation #2: Frederik Beuk, University of Akron and David Moulton, Douglas College Adding interactivity to sales management classes during the COVID-19 pandemic with a new sales management simulation</p> <p>Presentation #3: Mark W. McConnell, University of Mount Union A real product to real people for real money: Social responsibility, sustainability and experiential learning</p> <p>Presentation #4: Robert M. Peterson, Northern Illinois University LinkedIn exercises and evaluation rubric</p>
3:30-4:00	The New Chally Assessment	Marty Holmes, Sales Education Foundation
4:10 - 5:25	Teaching Application Session #3	<p><b>Session Chair:</b> David Locander, University of Tennessee Chattanooga</p> <p>Presentation #1: Laura Munoz and Richard J. Miller, University of Dallas Building our questioning muscle: Four techniques to grow our EQ and sales strength</p> <p>Presentation #2: Chuck Howlett, Northern Illinois University Contingency planning: Creating video podcasts that complement virtual classroom</p> <p>Presentation #3: Stefanie Boyer, Bryant University AI for sales and interpersonal communication development</p> <p>Presentation #4: Bryan Hochstein, University of Alabama Leveraging the concept of proximal development to challenge students in a way that engages, expands, and grows their confidence – gaining you better teaching assessments</p>
5:25-5:45	<i>Teaching Application Award</i>	

<b>Time (Eastern/New York)</b>	<b>Session</b>	
Friday, April 9		
9:30-9:40	Welcome	
9:40-10:30	Doctoral Working Paper Session #3	
	<b>Session Chair:</b>	Rhett Epler, University of Wyoming
	Presentation #1:	Alec Pappas, Florida State University Competition or cohesion? A multi-method perspective on the effects of competitiveness
	Presentation #2:	Rhett Epler, University of Wyoming Salesforce control systems and the implementation of effectual selling behaviors
10:30-10:50	<i>Doctoral Working Paper Award</i>	Presented by PSE Foundation
11:00-11:45	Special Session #2:	Bryan Hochstein, University of Alabama, Deva Rangarajan, Ball State University, Nawar Chaker, Louisiana State University, Vijay Mehrotra, University of San Francisco and Ruben Rabago, Intellum Subscription sales and the customer success manager: A modularized and specialized sales strategy
11:45-12:45	Lunch	NCSM Board Meeting
12:45 - 1:30	Special Session #3:	Scott Ingram, Sales Success Media Exploring sales: Telling the stories of successful students and alumni
1:30-1:50	<i>Best Doctoral Paper Award</i>	Presented by Shane Hunt
2:00 - 2:40	Research Session #3	
	<b>Session Chair:</b>	Aaron Arndt, Old Dominion University
	Presentation #1:	Michael L. Mallin, Bashar S. Gammoh and Ellen B. Pullins, The University of Toledo The role of incentive-based compensation in shaping the relationships between intrinsic motivation, salesperson-supervisor identification and organizational outcomes
	Presentation #2:	Hao Wang, University of South Florida How successful firms manage the power between sales and marketing functions
2:40-3:00	<i>Best Paper Award</i>	Presented by Wessex Press
3:00-4:00	NCSM Board Report	Conference Wrap-up

# 2021 NCSM Competitive Papers & Abstracts

## A SELF-DETERMINATION THEORY INFORMED MODEL ON SALESPERSON POLITICAL SKILL, CO-WORKER MOTIVATION AND SALESPERSON INTERNAL SUPPORT

Achim Kiessig (Chemnitz University of Technology, Germany)<sup>1</sup>

### ABSTRACT

In today's complex selling environments, salespersons need to obtain internal support from co-workers to satisfy demanding customer needs and build strong relationships with customers. However, despite the relevance of internal support for salespersons' success, research has yet to explore the precursors and mechanisms that give rise to co-workers' provision of salesperson internal support at the interpersonal level. Against this background, this paper develops a conceptual model that links salesperson political skill and its individual dimensions to co-workers' motivation to provide support. Drawing on Self-Determination Theory, the current research contributes to sales theory building and provides actionable managerial implications.

### INTRODUCTION

In the light of steadily increasing customer demands and growing product complexity, salespersons must be effective at garnering internal resources and support from their co-workers (Bolander et al., 2015; Steward et al., 2010). To close pending sales transactions and satisfy customer needs salespersons success nowadays often depends on the contributions of fellow employees from other functions (Steward et al., 2010), for example, marketing, operations, finance or engineering. This development reflects the general change of the sales function from an isolated function to an internally connected function. In fact, empirical research provides evidence that salesperson overall sales performance is considerably affected by internal networks and access to resources (Bolander et al., 2015; Li, Sun, and Cheng, 2017). In short, to fulfil their work duties salespersons depend on their abilities to connect internally and their capability to mobilize resources which are embedded within their internal networks (Bradford et al., 2010). Against this background, interpersonal interactions within the 'internal dimension' of sales have gained increasing attraction in sales research (Plouffe, 2018) which is also expressed by a growing body of research related to salesperson intraorganizational networks and intraorganizational sales resources coordination behavior (see Liu et al., 2020 for an overview). Especially the issue of obtaining internal support is of growing importance for salespeople and has therefore attracted the interest of practitioners and sales researchers alike. Salespersons effectiveness in garnering internal support has been shown to positively affect overall sales performance (Bradford et al., 2019; Plouffe and Grégoire, 2011; Steward et al., 2010), customer satisfaction (Susskind, Kacmar, and Borchgrevink, 2003), and customer relationship quality (Bradford et al., 2019). Thus, gaining internal support helps salespeople to enhance their work effectiveness and is therefore a key requirement of many sales roles, especially in complex business-to-business settings. As resources are usually under co-workers' control, interpersonal influence behaviors are essential for garnering internal support (Plouffe et al. 2016), whereas the success of interpersonal influence attempts depends on the salespersons' interpersonal skills that help to deliver these behaviors in effective ways (Liu et al., 2020; Ferris and Hochwarter, 2011). In this context, sales research identified political skill (**PS**) (Ferris et al., 2007) as an important social competence for

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salespersons to connect to co-workers (Bolander et al., 2015) and to gain access to internal resources (Li, Sun, and Cheng, 2017).

This research endeavours are an important contribution to the current sales research and practice alike, as they move the research tradition on the cooperation between sales and other functions (Moon and Armstrong, 1994) forward, to firstly, focus the individual salesperson, and secondly, to explore salespersons' interpersonal networks, relationships and interactions that result in enhanced levels of interpersonal support. Taking on such a perspective helps scholars and practitioners alike to better understand how sales support actually comes about at the individual salesperson level. However, to date, knowledge regarding the underlying mechanisms that link salesperson interpersonal influence skills (i.e. political skill) to important interpersonal outcomes (i.e. internal support) is still limited. By showing how PS affects evaluations by others, thereby bolstering the development of social capital, past research has started to explore the mechanisms that build the linkage between PS and internal support for salespeople (Munyon et al., 2015; Kimura, 2015; Bolander et al., 2015). However, the existing research misses to investigate the effects that link salesperson PS to salesperson effectiveness at garnering internal support at an interpersonal level. More precisely, no prior work focuses on how salesperson PS may affect co-workers' to facilitate co-workers' intrapsychic processes that give rise to desired behaviors (i.e. co-workers' willingness to provide salespersons with active support). This is surprising, as co-worker reactions to salespersons' interpersonal influence attempts are a central element of the social influence process that links salesperson PS to co-workers' provision of support.

In light of this research gap, the current research aims to obtain a more complete picture of how salesperson PS operates on co-workers to subsequently elicit internal support, by focusing on the influence receiver's (co-worker's) intrapsychic processes. Drawing on Self-Determination Theory (Ryan and Deci, 2000), I develop a conceptual model that contributes to a deeper theoretical understanding for the operation of salesperson PS on co-worker's motivation to provide salesperson internal support (**SIS**). Building on Self-Determination Theory (**SDT**), this paper makes several central contributions to the existing literature. First, by synthesizing the literatures related to SIS and PS through the lens of SDT this paper contributes to the refinement of the theoretical understanding of salespersons' success at gaining internal support. This is also a contribution to the broader PS research as no prior work investigated how PS may affect the motivational state of others to elicit desired behaviors of the receiver of influence attempts. Second, based on the key assumptions of SDT, the current paper suggests research to move beyond the quantity of SIS, to pay particular attention to the importance of the *quality* of co-workers' motivation to support salespeople for effective interpersonal sales cooperation. Finally, this work provides valuable implications for sales managers because PS is a trainable competence which carries the potential to bolster interpersonal support in sales organizations.

## **SALESPERSON INTERNAL SUPPORT AND SALESPERSON POLITICAL SKILL: A BRIEF LITERATURE REVIEW**

Past sales research investigated issues related to sales cooperation with other functions mostly at the inter-departmental level. Just recently, sales research has begun to look at this issue from the individual salespersons point of view to take the relevance of the interpersonal level of interaction between salespeople and co-workers into consideration (Steward et al., 2010; Plouffe & Grégoire, 2011; Murphy and Coughlan, 2018; Bradford et al., 2019). Although, these works represent fundamental contributions that point to the importance of internal support, research does not yet provide a uniform concept of SIS. In this regard, existing research put forth different yet related concepts, such as 'coordination of expertise' (Steward et al., 2010), 'customer coordination' (Plouffe and Grégoire, 2011), or 'effectiveness in getting internal support' (Bradford et al., 2019). Coordination of expertise and customer coordination underscore salespersons' effectiveness in synchronizing the organizational inputs necessary to close pending sales transactions. Effectiveness in getting internal support, on the other hand, puts salespersons' success at leveraging internal resources at the core of the concept. However, all concepts have one clear overlap: They all pay attention to salespersons' effectiveness at mobilizing internal resources that are under co-workers' control. To provide a unifying concept of SIS the current work draws on a conceptualization that has

been introduced in the field of organizational research. Even though, organizational research has also suggested a variety of concepts related to interpersonal support at work, research in this area distinguishes two basic types of interpersonal support: socio-emotional support and instrumental support (Mathieu, Eschleman, and Cheng, 2019). The definition of SIS in the current research corresponds to the latter one, whereby this paper understands SIS as the co-worker's willingness and actual efforts to provide a salesperson with assistance and supportive resources (i.e. skills, knowledge, time and information) to close pending sales transactions (Mathieu, Eschleman, and Cheng, 2019; Susskind, Kacmar, and Borchgrevink, 2003), which is particularly important to satisfy customer needs. This view on SIS is also implicitly reflected by the conceptualizations of the past work on sales coordination and interpersonal support that is mentioned above.

Even though, obtaining SIS is of great benefit to salespeople, its occurrence in day-to-day work is however not self-evident. Assisting salespeople requires co-workers to devote their time and resources to the salesperson and the specific sales opportunity. This may distract co-workers from other tasks they need to fulfil to reach their own objectives at work. Co-workers therefore may decide not to help a salesperson to cope with the trade-off between getting their own work done and the provision of support for a salesperson (Koopman, Lanaj, and Scott, 2016). Moreover, as salespeople and co-workers in many cases actually work on the same hierarchy levels, although in different functions and departments, salespeople typically do not have any formal authority to force co-workers to provide the resources needed in a given situation (Weitz and Bradford, 1999). Hence, salespeople have to find other and often more subtle ways to influence their co-workers in order to enhance their responsiveness to the salesperson's support needs, and subsequently stimulate their willingness to provide SIS. Plouffe and colleagues (2016) demonstrate that salespeople, in fact, exert influence on their co-workers to elicit desired behavioral reactions. However, the effectiveness of any interpersonal influence is certainly contingent on the salesperson's ability to deliver influence attempts in an appropriate manner, which requires social influence skills, in particular PS (Ferris and Hochwarter, 2011).

Ferris and colleagues define PS as "the ability to effectively understand others at work, and to use such knowledge to influence others to act in ways that enhance one's personal and/or organizational objectives" (Ferris et al., 2007, p. 291). The PS construct is a multi-dimensional social skill that explains the "how" of influence. It is comprised of four dimensions: networking ability, social astuteness, apparent sincerity and interpersonal influence. Networking ability bolsters the development of friendships and strong connections to others. Social astuteness reflects a person's competence to accurately interpret the behavior of others to understand their interests and needs. Apparent sincerity relates to the ability to behave in ways that others perceive to be authentic, honest and genuine. Finally, interpersonal influence helps to display behavioral flexibility when interacting with others to adjust influence behaviors to fit the situation at hand (Ferris et al., 2007). Due to their networking competence, political skilled people are especially talented to build connections to others and personal networks at work (Ferris et al., 2007). Their ability to sense other people's needs, interests and motives supports politically skilled persons when selecting suitable influence behaviors in interpersonal interactions, whereas their behavioral flexibility and sincere appearance allow them to deliver these behaviors effectively to eventually influence other's work behavior as intended (Ferris et al., 2007).

Consequently, the four underlying dimensions of PS jointly result in interpersonal effectiveness and personal/organizational goal attainment through an enhanced ability to successfully deploy influence tactics on others (Ferris et al., 2007). As a result of an enhanced social effectiveness PS is ultimately positively related to important work outcomes, for example, task performance, work productivity and career success (Munyon et al., 2015). These rather distal outcomes are underpinned by more proximal mediators, such as personal reputation, enhanced resource access and heightened levels of relationship quality with others at work (Munyon et al., 2015; Kimura, 2015). These underlying mechanisms of PS are theoretically rooted in social exchange theory and social capital theory, which suggest good work relationships and social networks at work to be a vital source of interpersonal resource provision (Kimura, 2015). In the context of sales research, scholars have so far adopted the social capital perspective and identified PS to be a precursor of individual social capital development (Bolander et al., 2015; Fang et al., 2015) and salespersons' resource access (Li, Sun, and Cheng, 2017).

Social exchange theory (Cropanzano and Mitchell, 2005) in particular, is well suited to build a theoretical basis to explain the link from PS to interpersonal support at the micro-level. According to social exchange theory, co-workers provide interpersonal support within ongoing resource exchanges that result in good work relationships. These relationships are willingly maintained because they are perceived as mutually beneficial to satisfy personal needs at work (Cropanzano and Mitchell, 2005; Chiaburu and Harrison, 2008). Within these cycles of resource exchanges, politically skilled salespeople are able to read the motivations of others, which helps them to appropriately adjust their behaviors to address the needs of others at work. This in turn, results in heightened levels of relationship quality, which stimulates others to reciprocate the positive treatments (Ferris et al., 2007; Kimura, 2015; Cropanzano and Mitchell, 2005). Empirical support for the positive influence of PS on relationship quality with co-workers/leaders and subsequent resource access is provided by recent research outside the sales domain (Brouer et al., 2013; Wei et al., 2010; Epitropaki et al., 2016). Thus, salespeople are not powerless in regard to receive internal support as salesperson PS may enhance interpersonal support via acting on co-workers' relationship assessments. According to the social exchange perspective, co-workers may construe SIS as an "investment" they make to maintain a relationship that provides them with valued resources, whereby political skilled salespeople enhance co-workers' willingness to "invest" as they provide the "right" resources in an appropriate manner. Interpreting this reasoning in light of a motivational perspective, exchange partners behave reciprocally because maintaining the relationship is perceived to be mutually beneficial to the achievement of personal goals at work. However, social exchange theory's focus is on social interactions, which is why this theory does not allow comprehensive conclusions on the intrapsychic processes of motivation formation of individual persons involved in social exchanges.

Moving beyond this point by investigating how salesperson PS acts on co-workers' motivation to support in more detail contributes to a nuanced understanding of the social influence process that link salesperson PS to SIS. As this paper aims to contribute to theory building by opening this "black box", I proceed with introducing SDT (Ryan and Deci, 2000) as a theoretical basis to develop an understanding for the operation of PS on co-workers' motivation to provide SIS.

## **SALESPERSON INTERNAL SUPPORT THROUGH THE LENS OF SELF-DETERMINATION THEORY**

### **Introducing Self-Determination Theory**

There are two fundamental driving forces that motivate people to engage in a specific behaviour: either because they enjoy the experience of performing the activity itself, or because they perceive the behaviour to be instrumental to achieve a desired, yet separated outcome. Early research on motivation has therefore suggested to distinguish between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation (Porter and Lawler, 1968). Intrinsic motivation is characterized by pure interest in an activity and the mere enjoyment of engaging in a specific behaviour. In contrast, extrinsic motivation stimulates behaviors because they facilitate favourable consequences and/or help to avoid unwanted outcomes. SDT does uphold this differentiation between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, but further suggests that the perceived level of self-regulation is central to an advanced understanding of the nature of motivation (Ryan and Deci, 2000). Hence, a key assumption of SDT is that motivation can be autonomous or controlled. Whereas autonomous (or self-determined) motivation is reflected by feelings of acting of one's own volition and choice (self-regulated), controlled motivation, in contrast, implies feelings of pressure and a sense of being forced towards engaging in an activity. Intrinsic motivation always reflects a purely autonomous form of motivation and is therefore perceived to be fully self-determined. Extrinsic motivation, however, is not necessarily the opposite – i.e. controlled motivation. In fact, extrinsic motivation lies along a continuum and can vary from being self-determined to fully controlled, which explains differences related to the quality of motivational states. In light of the focus of the current research, co-workers could, for example, be motivated to support a salesperson because they understand this behavior to be relevant to achieve customer satisfaction and to foster the long-term success of their own company or, in contrast, they possibly just provide support to obey the managements

directive to support sales force's sales opportunities. In both cases the co-worker is obviously externally motivated. However, the former case rather implies feelings of own choice and free will, whereas the latter one is characterized by compliance with the managerial control. Thus, whenever someone is extrinsically stimulated to engage in an activity, this person's motivation "can range from amotivation or unwillingness, to passive compliance, to active personal commitment" (Ryan and Deci, 2000, p. 71), whereas high levels of motivational and behavioral engagement result from feelings of being self-determined (autonomously motivated). The distinction between autonomous and controlled forms of motivation results in a taxonomy of six different motivational states, including amotivation, intrinsic motivation and four different types of extrinsic motivation, all of which are underpinned by different regulatory processes and varying levels of self-regulation (Ryan and Deci, 2000). Amotivation and intrinsic motivation lie at the extreme, yet opposite ends of the continuum. Amotivation is described by a complete lack of motivation due to missing competences to perform a behaviour or because a person does not value the activity and/or its outcomes. In contrast, intrinsic motivation is characterized by interest and pure enjoyment of performing an activity.

Extrinsic forms of motivation are located between the two extremes. Subdividing extrinsic motivation into a) External Regulation, b) Introjected Regulation, c) Identified Regulation and d) Integrated Regulation is beneficial for a nuanced view on extrinsic motivation and its consequences (Ryan and Deci, 2000). *External regulation* is a typical form of controlled motivation. Externally motivated persons act solely to achieve desired outcomes or to avoid negative consequences. In the context of co-worker support, pure external regulation often becomes visible, when employees provide SIS because they expect to receive valued resources in return. This type of motivation is a typical driver in social exchanges at work because co-workers maintain relationships as long as they are mutually instrumental to achieve personal goals through ongoing resource exchanges (Halbesleben and Wheeler, 2015). Another type of motivations that involves a relatively high level of control is *introjected regulation*. Introjection means that a person is taking in a regulation which is not fully accepted as one's own. Behaviors driven by introjected motivation are performed to avoid feelings of guilt and anxiety or to bolster one's ego. Co-workers that are motivated by introjection may support a salesperson to show off their exclusive knowledge and/or skills or to feel one's self as a worthy person and good colleague. Even though internally driven, introjected behaviors result from perceptions of external expectations and therefore involve feelings of (self-)control. *Identified regulation* represents a more autonomous form of extrinsic motivation. This type of motivation is characterized by feelings of self-determination as the focal person truly identifies with an activity and its value for one's self. Feelings of volition are then salient because the person's behaviour is in line with his or her goals and identities. Co-workers, for example, support salespeople, because they have truly accepted this behavior as part of their own job role and recognized its relevance for their company's and personal long-term success. A co-worker that experiences regulation through identification feels self-determined and acting autonomously, even if supporting a salesperson is not enjoyable or interesting (intrinsically motivating) in itself. The most autonomous type of extrinsic motivation is labelled *integrated regulation*. Behaviors driven by this type of motivation are perceived as an integral part of the self. The quality of integrated regulation is close to intrinsic motivation. However, it is still an extrinsic form of motivation as the behavior serves to achieve some separable outcome. Applied to the context of the current research, a co-worker that experiences integrated regulation in regard to his or her motivation to support salespeople perceives his or her role as a 'helpful co-worker' to be central to the own identity and as an important part of the self. The four different types of extrinsic motivation are located along the continuum ranging from low self-determination (external regulation) to high self-determination (integrated regulation), whereas higher levels of self-determination result from internalization – that is, 'taking in' a behavioral regulation and valuing it (identified regulation) or assimilating it to the self (integrated regulation) (Ryan and Deci, 2000).

Scholars in the field of SDT typically consider identified, integrated and intrinsic regulation as self-determined forms of motivation (autonomous motivation). In contrast, external and introjected regulation are considered as nonself-determined types of motivation (controlled motivation) (Ryan and Deci, 2000). As briefly mentioned above, it is of importance to view one's motivation in light of its underlying level of self-determination because the level of self-determination reflects the quality of one's motivation that subsequently determines the

behavioural performance and outcome performance. Accordingly, autonomous motivation results in better outcomes than controlled motivation, for example, higher levels of task persistence and creativity, cognitive performance and also organizational citizenship behaviors (Gagné and Deci, 2005; Ryan and Deci, 2000) which is a particularly relevant outcome in the context of the current research.

### **Autonomous Motivation, Controlled Motivation and Salesperson Internal Support**

In work contexts, SDT has been applied to investigate employees' overall motivation for their job, but also to understand workers' motivation for specific tasks or parts of a job (Fernet, 2011; Gagné et al., 2015). In this regard the distinction between autonomous and controlled motivation has been found to account for substantial variance in work outcomes (Deci, Olafsen, and Ryan, 2017). Thus, studies have not only shown higher levels of autonomous motivation to positively affect work outcomes, for example overall work performance or task performance (e. g. Kuvaas, 2009; Gagné et al., 2015; Dysvik and Kuvaas, 2008), but also contrasted the impact of different forms of motivations, thereby revealing the advantages of autonomous motivation over controlled motivation in regard to its positive effects on various outcomes, such as overall work performance, task performance, affective commitment and effort (e. g. Gagné et al., 2015; Kuvaas et al., 2016; Kuvaas et. al., 2017). Although no past research explicitly investigated the effects co-workers' support motivation (controlled vs. autonomous) through the lens of SDT, research based on this framework dealt with constructs that clearly fall into the realm of co-worker instrumental support, such as altruistic organizational citizenship behavior, helping behaviors or knowledge sharing behaviors. For instance, autonomous motivation positively affects organizational citizenship behaviours (Dysvik and Kuvaas, 2008) and its altruism dimension (behaviors directed at co-workers - e.g. assisting others to solve work related problems) in particular (Lazauskaite-Zabielske, Urbanaviciute and, Bagdziuniene, 2015; Güntert, 2015), whereas controlled motivation does not affect altruism (Güntert, 2015). With regard to helping behaviors in the workplace Lin, Savani, and Ilies (2019) show perceived autonomous motivation to induce a state of positive affect in helpers, which subsequently strengthens their future helping behaviors. Controlled motivation, in turn, is associated with lower levels of positive affect which results in less helping behaviour. Furthermore, Koopman and colleagues (2020) found autonomous motivation (i.e. intrinsic motivation) to build a barrier to "anti-cooperative behavior" in the workplace. More precisely, the authors have shown intrinsic motivation to citizenship buffers the negative effect of helping pressure on instigated incivility mediated through negative affect. In the context of co-worker knowledge sharing, Andreeva and Sergeeva (2016) provide evidence that autonomous motivation (i.e. intrinsic motivation) is more positively associated with knowledge sharing than external regulation. Foss et al. (2009) further show introjected motivation to be less positively related to knowledge sharing than intrinsic motivation. In their study external motivation was even found to be negatively related to knowledge sharing. Finally, Gagné et al. (2019) found autonomous regulation (identified and intrinsic motivation) to more positively affect knowledge sharing than external regulation. In their study the authors found no relationship between introjected regulation and knowledge sharing. Interestingly, the authors further distinguished between knowledge sharing frequency and knowledge sharing usefulness and show that autonomous motivation strongly affects knowledge sharing frequency, but also the usefulness of the shared knowledge. In contrast, external regulation is only related to knowledge sharing frequency and the effect is much weaker compared to the impact of autonomous motivation (Gagné et al., 2019).

In conclusion, SDT suggests that a person's behavior can vary in its level of self-determination. Autonomous types of motivation are more self-determined and result in higher levels of behavioral effectiveness and outcome performance in non-work as well as work settings. Research related to interpersonal support behaviors at work empirically support this assumption and provide evidence for the superiority of autonomous motivation over controlled motivation. Therefore, I propose:

*Proposition 1: Co-workers' autonomous motivation to provide support results in higher levels of salesperson internal support in terms of frequency and quality compared to co-workers' controlled motivation to provide support.*

## A SELF-DETERMINATION THEORY INFORMED MODEL ON SALESPERSON INTERNAL SUPPORT

Purely intrinsically motivated activities do not need to be provided with any reward because enacting the activity itself provides the reward (Deci, Olafsen, and Ryan, 2017). Intrinsic motivation is most evident in activities, such as sports, but can also occur in work contexts, as employees can be intrinsically motivated for their jobs or specific aspects of it (Deci, Olafsen, and Ryan, 2017). However, people typically do not enjoy all aspects of their responsibilities and not every task is interesting, especially in work contexts (Fernet et al., 2008). This is probably also true for SIS provided by co-workers. For instance, from a co-worker point of view it may not be particularly exciting for a marketing employee to customize a presentation to fit the needs of a specific customer or an engineering employee may not be thrilled about providing a salesperson with technical product information. Hence, extrinsic motivation is a common phenomenon in work contexts and often the driving force of favorable workplace behaviors (e.g. SIS). According to SDT, extrinsic motivations, however, can differ in terms of the experienced level of self-regulation (autonomy) that subsequently impacts the behavioral performance. Hence, the quality of extrinsic motivation matters. Self-determined types of extrinsic motivation (identified and integrated regulation) are characterized by true internalization of the value of an activity, share many qualities of intrinsic motivation and result in better outcomes than controlled motivation (Ryan and Deci, 2000). Against this background, it seems beneficial for individual salespersons to affect co-workers' motivation with the objective to bolster their experienced self-determination (autonomous motivation) in regard to their supportive behaviors towards the salesperson.

Indeed, SDT proposes that social-contextual factors in the workplace (e.g. feedback, communication, reward) have the potential to positively (or negatively) affect the level of self-regulation of extrinsic motivation through the satisfaction (frustration) of three basic psychological needs – the needs for a) competence, b) relatedness and c) autonomy (Ryan and Deci, 2000). If work contexts support the satisfaction of these three needs, the internalization of a regulation with respect to a behavior can be fostered. Thus, in accordance with SDT, co-workers are more inclined to internalize and integrate the motivation to support a salesperson to the extent that a) they feel able and skilled enough to perform the behaviors required to deliver support, b) they feel connected to the salesperson, and c) experience their supportive behaviors to emerge from their own free choice and volition. Research from the management domain supports these assumptions. In fact, a large body of literature provides evidence that work environments that support the satisfaction of the three basic psychological needs facilitate the internalization of work-related motivations (Gagné and Deci, 2005; Deci, Olafsen, and Ryan 2017). Looking particularly at research related to interpersonal support behaviors at work, this link is most evident in the empirical research on the positive impact of need supportive work environments on self-determined knowledge sharing motivation/behavior (Foss et al., 2009; Buch et al., 2015; Foss et al., 2015; Gagné et al., 2019) and interpersonal organizational citizenship behavior (Grant, 2007; Güntert, 2015). Most of the research at the intersection of need support and self-determined work motivation has been focused on the positive consequences of need-supportive work designs, compensation systems and leadership styles (Deci, Olafsen, and Ryan, 2017), though some recent studies point to the relevance of peers and colleagues as relevant sources of psychological need support. Hon (2012), for example, provide evidence that a worker's feelings of autonomy, competence and relatedness are positively affected by the behavioral styles of other employees, which subsequently enhances autonomous motivation. Similarly, Ilies et al. (2018) show that support from peers at work positively affects a worker's perceptions of interpersonal need fulfilment that further affects organizational citizenship behaviors. Moreover, peers' autonomy supportive behaviors strengthen a worker's self-efficacy (i.e. competence) and overall work motivation (Jungert et al., 2013) as well as feelings of psychological empowerment which implies feelings of competency and autonomy (Liu et al., 2011). In sum, peers' behaviors may serve as a relevant source of need-satisfaction that bolsters self-determined motivational states at work.

In this regard, the current research considers salesperson PS to be a valuable competence for effectively influencing co-workers' psychological need satisfaction. More precisely, this research suggests that politically skilled salespeople are especially apt to provide psychological need support to co-workers that fosters co-workers'

autonomous motivation to support through enhanced internalization, which in turn leads to heightened levels of co-workers' self-determined support provision for a salesperson. Firstly, salesperson PS is presumably positively related to co-workers' perceived competence to provide a salesperson with valuable support. Politically skilled salespeople display a calm self-confidence that in turn elicits feelings of competence in others, reflected by heightened levels of perceived empowerment and a strengthened self-esteem (Ferris et al., 2007; Sun, Pan, and Chow, 2014). Furthermore, a salesperson equipped with PS is inclined to structure tasks (Frieder et al., 2019), which helps co-workers to understand what kind of support is required at what time to effectively support a salesperson to fulfil complex customer needs. This reduces co-workers' ambiguity towards the provision of the "right" support at the "right" time throughout the sales process, and enhances co-workers' perceptions of his or her impact on the sales process, which should elicit feelings of personal competence. Salesperson PS is moreover positively related to his or her inclination to involve co-workers in decision processes (Thompson, Buch, and Kuvaas, 2017). This presumably enhances co-workers' competence perceptions as they feel that their voice is heard and their input is important to the sales success. Secondly, salesperson PS positively relates to co-workers' perceptions of autonomy. Again, salesperson inclination to participate co-workers in sales processes is important to co-workers' self-determination. As salespeople participate co-workers in sales processes, co-workers are encouraged to play an active part in customer solution provision. Moreover, politically skilled individuals show interest in others and take co-workers' perspectives and into account (Ferris et al., 2007; Frieder et al., 2019). Hence, salespersons with high levels of PS pay respect to their co-workers approaches and practices of sales support provision, which arouses a sense of choice in co-workers that implies feelings of volition while supporting a salesperson. Because of their sincere appearance politically skilled salespeople display authentic behaviors that are related to co-workers' feelings of empowerment in the workplace (Joo and Jo, 2017). Finally, salesperson PS has the potential to enhance co-workers' perceptions of relatedness which has been shown to be especially important to stimulate self-determined prosocial motivations of others (Pavey, Greitemeyer, and Sparks, 2011). PS impacts interpersonal interaction frequency with others at work (Shi et al., 2013), which is an important precondition to develop relational ties. Within these interactions a politically skilled salesperson is further equipped with a networking ability that helps him or her to build high quality relationships and friendships at work (Ferris et al., 2007; Wei et al., 2010; Brouer et al., 2013). Interacting with a politically skilled salesperson should therefore enhance co-workers' feelings of belongingness and interpersonal closeness at work because such a salespersons helps co-workers to develop a sense of "I count around here" (Sun, Pan, and Chow, 2014, p. 219). Furthermore, politically skilled salespeople are expected to actively participate co-workers in pending sales transactions, thereby enhancing co-workers' feelings of being needed and important to the organization which should subsequently enhance co-workers' perceptions of their social embeddedness at work (Thompson, Buch, and Kuvaas, 2017). Through their sincere appearance, politically skilled salespeople are perceived as acting with integrity (Frieder and Basik, 2017) which engenders feelings of trust with other members of the organization. Because of their sincere appearance politically skilled salespeople also demonstrate genuine interest in co-workers (Ferris et al., 2007), which is especially important to satisfy co-workers' need for relatedness (Ryan and Deci, 2008).

Besides the satisfaction of the three basic psychological needs, a second crucial precondition must be met to effectively promote internalization – that is, co-workers need to be provided with a meaningful rationale for providing SIS (Ryan and Deci, 2000). Generally speaking, it is necessary that one understands the meaning, value and personal relevance of a behavior as this an important condition for identifying with a behavior and internalizing a regulation. Social contexts that provide personally meaningful rationales that imply a high degree of self-relevance of a behavior promote internalization (Ryan and Deci, 2000). Thus, if a salesperson is able to provide a co-worker with a rationale for support provision which is meaningful in the eyes of the co-worker, the internalization of the co-workers' motivation to support a salesperson will be facilitated (Hon, 2012). In other words, if a salesperson manages to get the co-worker to truly "take in" the motivation to support and accepting it as his or her own, feelings of autonomous motivations will be fostered in co-workers (Deci et al., 1994). Achieving this requires the salesperson to effectively convey the importance and value of support provision. This implies that salespeople not only point out the importance of support, but also explain to co-workers *why* support is necessary and *why* their inputs are valuable for the overall success of a sales opportunity. This requires the

salesperson to adopt the co-workers' point of view to understand his or her mental frame to grasp how the co-worker understands the support opportunity and what rationale would help the co-worker to identify with his or her role as a "sales supporter". Politically skilled salespeople are especially apt to understand others and their perspectives due to a strong sensing ability (i.e. social astuteness) (Ferris et al., 2007). It is therefore reasonable to expect that salespeople high in PS can put themselves in the co-worker's shoes to better understand how to frame the support need to eventually enhance its relevance from the co-workers' point of view. Socially astute salespeople precisely sense co-workers' goals and aspirations at work and know why others behave the way they do (Ferris et al., 2007; Frieder et al., 2019). Once a politically skilled salesperson understands how to provide a co-worker with a personally meaningful rationale, this salesperson possesses the interpersonal influence skills to adapt his or her interpersonal style to the co-workers' mental frame to heighten co-workers' perceptions of the personal relevance of providing salesperson support. PS, for instance, enhances one's capacity for rational persuasion (Kolodinsky, Treadway, and Ferris et al., 2007), which should help salespeople to provide meaning through the ability to effectively communicate the importance of internal collaboration to meet the customer's need. Consequently, this stimulates a sense of purpose of the work and efforts of all members of the selling center, facilitates co-workers' identification with the support behavior and results in a self-determined motivation to provide support (Ryan and Deci, 2000). This reasoning corresponds to Munyon and colleagues' (2015) general belief that political skilled individuals are talented communicators of visions and have the capacity to shape cognitive frames of others in organizations.

Taken together, the four dimensions of PS jointly facilitate co-workers' internalization of a self-determined regulation through co-worker need satisfaction and the provision of meaningful rationales that convey a sense of purpose of internal collaboration. Thus, I propose:

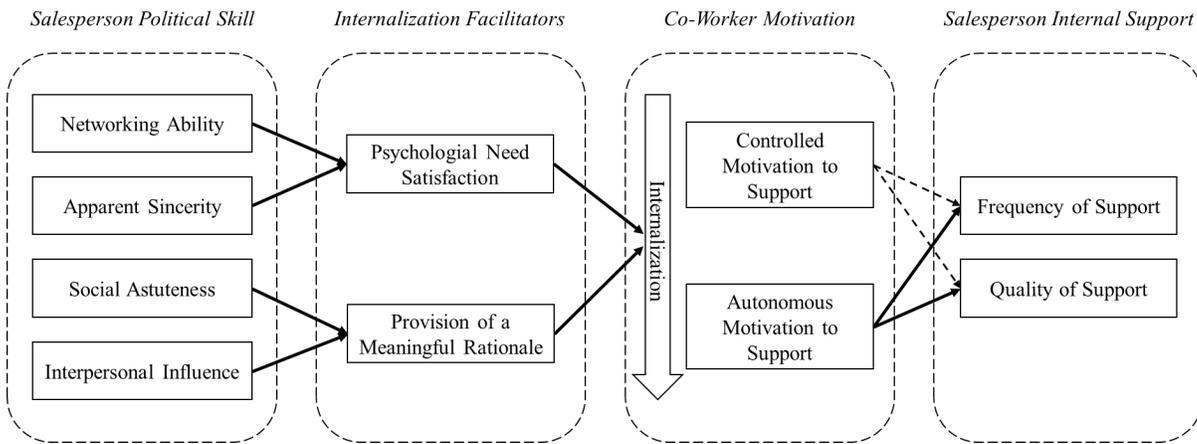
*Proposition 2: Salesperson political skill facilitates co-workers' autonomous motivation to provide salesperson internal support.*

As the PS dimensions are related yet distinct concepts, research has stressed scholars to investigate their differential relationships with organizational phenomena (Ferris et al., 2007; 2012), and a few conceptual and empirical works have started to conduct dimensional investigations of the PS effects (e.g. McAllister, Ellen, and Ferris, 2018). The current research responds to this call and further suggests that salespersons' networking ability and apparent sincerity are primarily related to co-workers' psychological need satisfaction, whereas the PS dimensions of social astuteness and interpersonal influence are expected to be more strongly related to the provision of meaningful rationales for support. Salespeople's networking ability is reflected by frequent interactions with co-workers (Shi et al., 2013), which should not only stimulate co-workers' feelings of relatedness, but also arouses co-workers' sense of being involved in sales processes. This reasoning is supported by Thompson, Buch, and Kuvaas (2017) who show that networking ability is the only PS dimension that is positively related to the implementation of participative practices. The opportunity to participate engenders co-workers' feelings of competence and autonomy because it drives co-workers' perceptions of playing a role in sales opportunities and having an impact on the sales success. Furthermore, the sincere appearance dimension of PS conveys a sense of real personal interest, integrity and trust (Ferris et al., 2007, Frieder and Basik, 2017), and moreover implies genuine and authentic behaviors that elicit feelings of psychological empowerment in others (Ferris et al., 2007; Joo and Jo, 2017). Co-workers' that interact with a salesperson that demonstrates honesty and personal interest should feel their point of view to be valued and respected, which corresponds to perceptions of autonomy, competence and relatedness.

Social astuteness in turn reflects a salesperson's sensing abilities. Hence, it helps the salesperson to understand the co-workers' mental frames and guides salespersons' interpretation of the co-workers' understanding of his or her own role and motives in the workplace (Ferris et al., 2007; Frieder et al., 2019). Consequently, socially astuteness is primarily related to salespersons' ability to choose appropriate behaviors and communication styles to provide meaningful support rationales to their co-workers. The interpersonal influence ability, on the other hand, is the action-oriented component of the effective implementation of meaningful rationales as it enables

salespersons to adapt their interpersonal style and behavior to the individual communication needs of different co-workers (Ferris et al., 2007). Thus, salespersons social astuteness and interpersonal influence are expected to be strongly related to the provision of meaningful rationales. Hence, I propose the following:

*Proposition 3: Salesperson networking ability and sincere appearance are primarily related to co-workers’ psychological need-satisfaction (competence, autonomy, relatedness), whereas social astuteness and interpersonal influence more strongly relate to the provision of a meaningful rationale to provide support.*



**Figure 1: Proposed Conceptual Framework**

## CONCLUSION

SIS is essential for salespeople to succeed in today’s complex selling environments and has therefore attracted the interest of scholars and practitioners alike (Bradford et al., 2010; Plouffe, 2018; Steward et al., 2010; Bradford et al., 2019). Despite the relevance of this issue, little research has been done on the precursors of salesperson obtainment of internal support (e.g. Bradford et al., 2019; Plouffe & Grégoire, 2011; Steward et al., 2010). This paper conducts a deep exploration of the effect chain between salesperson PS and SIS, and proposes that PS unfolds its beneficial effects on co-workers’ support provision through its operation on co-workers’ motivation. Drawing on SDT to underpin the developed arguments and propositions, this research contributes to theory building, both in the area of sales research, and in the general field of research on PS where knowledge on how an individual’s PS and its dimensions operate on others is still limited (Munyon et al., 2015; Ferris et al., 2012). This paper suggests to take the co-workers’ level of autonomous motivation to provide support into account because perceptions of self-determination affect the co-workers’ behavioral effectiveness and engagement (Ryan and Deci, 2000). Whereas past research implicitly assumed SIS to be a unidimensional phenomenon (Bradford et al., 2019; Plouffe and Grégoire, 2011), this paper stresses the relevance of distinguishing between the quantity *and* quality of support provision to better understand SIS. In a knowledge sharing context Cockrell and Stone (2010), for instance, discussed the phenomenon of “pseudo-knowledge sharing” – that is, knowledge that is not useful to co-workers. Hence, even if co-workers share knowledge quite frequently, this knowledge is not necessarily useful to its receiver (Gagné et al., 2019). Thus, though salesperson support in a given situation might be seemingly high, it may only contribute to sales success if the support is useful to promote a sales opportunity (e.g. co-workers’ provision of relevant information).

The reasoning of this paper is based on an extensive review and synthesis of different literatures. Nonetheless, a considerable part of the empirical research that buttresses the paper’s theoretical considerations on the role of PS for co-workers’ motivation is derived from leadership research. Acknowledging the fact that salespeople typically do not possess formal authority, some caution is necessary when transferring this knowledge to the salesperson-co-worker level. This said, salespeople often hold informal leadership roles within in their organizations as they

actively coordinate the efforts of various functions towards satisfying a customer demand (Weitz and Bradford, 1999; Moon and Armstrong, 1994), which allows to expect that insights from leadership research are presumably applicable to salesperson-co-worker dyads. However, the validity of this assumption has yet to be explored, which is why empirical tests of the developed framework will be a fruitful avenue for future research.

From a managerial point of view, the proposed conceptual model provides insights into how support for salespersons can be facilitated and suggests PS to be important in this regard. For managers this is an actionable insight as PS is a trainable competence that can be developed within the salesforce (Ferris et al., 2012). Beyond this, the current research highlights the importance of employees self-determined motivation when it comes to SIS. Past research has found several managerially actionable factors (e.g. work designs) that facilitate employees' self-determined behaviors (Gagné and Deci, 2005). Taking these factors into account when shaping work environments is valuable to strengthen internal collaboration, especially because it is particularly hard to include the quality of support in formal control systems.

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## **CAN A SECRET MESSAGE IMPROVE STUDENT SALES QUESTIONING SKILLS?**

Mary E. Shoemaker, Ph.D. (Widener University)

Asking good quality, appropriate questions during a sales call is widely understood to be essential to meeting the objectives of the call. Students, however, seem to be challenged to ask those questions. They often resort to telling their buyer what they know, instead of risking asking questions which might lead them to areas where they are unsure. Giving some serious thought to asking the right questions in a manner that leads to useful answers would improve student sales call role plays. This exercise uses a secret message mechanism to hold student interest in thinking about the questions they use. Students have to select the best question from choices on a PowerPoint to reveal the secret message.

Cialdini (2005) writes that the power of mystery draws the audience into material where a description fails to engage. Mysteries create a need for closure. He suggests that beginning a class with a question that the class needs to answer will encourage students to seek to answer the question. My objective is to engage the students in the development of better questioning skills for their sales calls by using the power of a mystery.

“When you’re a student, you’re judged by how well you answer questions. Somebody else asks the questions, and if you give good answers, you’ll get a good grade. But, in life, you are judged by how good your questions are.” (Robert Langer) HBR 2018

## **COFFEE & CAREERS**

David E. Fleming, J. Ricky Ferguson, Allison Crick (Indiana State University)

One of the challenges facing sales programs is the desire of companies to get in front of students. Exposing students to potential employers and letting them hear about what skills they need to be successful directly from employers is important; however, it is difficult pedagogically to cut into student contact hours that can be used to create those skills. This is an especially touchy subject in programs that have a sales center with corporate partners who are the ones asking to come to class. This presentation offers a solution to putting employers in front of students without giving up class time using events we call Coffee Corners. Coffee Corners occur once a week and are an informal networking event between students and prospective employers. Each week a different employer brings coffee and donuts along with any promotional materials they choose to provide. Students can drop in any time during the event to chat with the company, have a snack, and learn about internship or job opportunities. Coffee Corners can easily be transitioned to an online meeting when needed. The presentation includes instructions on execution, along with the benefits of this program from the perspectives of the faculty, students, and center director.

The objectives of implementing this teaching moment are to (1) Create career-ready students, (2) Develop oral communication skills, (3) Develop career management skills, and (4) Connect students with prospective employers so that they can find a good match to jumpstart their careers in sales.

# THE CRITICAL INCIDENT TECHNIQUE AS A TEACHING TOOL TO ENHANCE SALES NEGOTIATION SKILLS

Michel Klein (University of Montpellier)

## ABSTRACT

Effective negotiation skills are critical in the field of commerce. General principles for effective sales negotiation can be taught in a classroom setting, however becoming an effective negotiator requires practice in role-playing situations. The relational nature of negotiation presents a challenge: transforming students' interpersonal behaviors. Merely providing students with opportunities to experiment via role-playing situations provides opportunities to practice new skills, but is unlikely to be truly transformative. In addition, the current move to online learning requires educators to develop new active learning activities. When teaching sales negotiation, the use of role-playing situations combined with the critical incident technique makes it possible to overcome these challenges. Either in face-to-face, online, or hybrid teaching settings, this combined approach offers tremendous advantages.

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**APPENDIX 1: EXAMPLES OF ROLE DESCRIPTIONS FOR ROLE-PLAYING FOR THE UNDERGRADUATE LEVEL (E.G., FIRST YEAR)**

<b>Seller</b>	<b>Buyer</b>
<p>You are a landlord meeting a prospective tenant for your studio apartment in Paris.</p> <p>The flat is very small and at the top of 4 flights of stairs (there is no lift). It has a living room/kitchen and one bedroom, plus a tiny shower room and toilet. You have been trying to get €600,- for this flat of 20 m<sup>2</sup>, but now you are prepared to reduce the rent to €500,- if reliable tenants present themselves. The electricity bill is very low as the flat is well-insulated, so be prepared to include the costs of electricity in the rent if it is required in the negotiation.</p>	<p>You are meeting the landlord of a flat you are interested in renting. It is tiny and on the top floor without a lift but the situation is perfect for you and you are very keen.</p> <p>The asking price is €600,- per month; try to negotiate €450,-. You can eventually agree to €500,- if the electricity is included.</p>
<p>You are selling your old bicycle at a car-boot sale. Although it cost €200,- it is now 8 years old and well-used. The minimum price you would like to accept is €50,-</p>	<p>You have seen an interesting bicycle at a car boot sale. Negotiate a price with the seller; it looks like it would be worth at least €100,- but obviously you would be happier to get it for cheaper than that.</p>
<p>You are a small market stallholder selling fruit and vegetables; it is 11.45 am. The market closes in 15 minutes. You have 20 melons left that are ripe and will not be good for sale by next market day, so you are keen to sell them. You paid €20,- for these melons and you don't want to accept less than that.</p>	<p>You visit the market just before it closes as you need to buy 20 melons to provide a starter at a party you are hosting. Negotiate the price with the stallholder, bearing in mind that normally 20 melons of this quality costs at least €40,-</p>
<p>You are a sales assistant selling electrical appliances.</p> <p>The Miele Turbowash which is on special offer at the moment, includes a range of special features including special cold wash cycle and is only € 319,-. (€26,60 per month for 12 months).</p> <p>You can offer the customer interest-free credit terms.</p>	<p>You want to buy a new washing machine. Visit the electrical appliance shop and see if the sales assistant will offer you a discount.</p> <p>You are budget-conscious, and would respond positively if interest-free credit terms are offered.</p> <p>You can afford up to €50,- per month on credit payments.</p>

# **TELL STORIES THAT MAKE SENSE: AN EXAMPLE OF TRAINING BUSINESS LOGIC IN SELLING**

Christine Lai-Bennejean (Emlyon Business School), Maud Poil Burtin (Emlyon Business School)

## **ABSTRACT**

Teaching selling skills step by step throughout the sales process is a common pedagogical method. Integrated with sales technologies, more and more sales courses are designed to teach students how to use digital tools to plan their visits, manage their time and tell compelling stories to prospects or customers. However, the presence of sales technologies has increased their dependence on these digital tools. The over-reliance on sales analytics tools in the sales process may erase the underlying rationale of the sales actions. The logical reasoning in selling is mandatory to enable salespeople to nurture the prospects and engage the customers. The goal of the current project is to alert the needs of training business logic in selling and provide an example as an entry of such training in sales courses for more discussions. We also consider the characteristics of the z-generation and adopt the digital tools to enrich students' distance learning experience.

# **GETTING FROM WHY TO YES: USING ROOT CAUSE QUESTIONING IN THE DISCOVERY STEP IN THE SALES PROCESS**

Laura Munoz, Ph.D. (University of Dallas), Richard J. Miller (University of Dallas)

This teaching application is focused on overcoming pedagogical struggles such as students understanding how to write appropriate discovery questions, and aiding in providing a balanced approach between passive and active learning, which is key to retain student's attention and engagement, facilitate higher order thinking, and improve the teaching of complex topics as follows:

## 1) Adopt a solution early on solution to teach the sales process

Usually instructors start with the selling process by giving a broad overview of it. The challenge is then that the student does not have a relatable perspective. It is recommended to adopt a business, a solution, or represent a vendor, early on and use it to teach the sales process to allow for students to gain perspective. For example, assuming we are using a TV/Digital advertising solution, the students will then learn the features and benefits of this type of solution and focus on writing discovery questions for potential clients. Now the students are actively learning the sales process as they can now relate it to a business.

## 2) Engage in root cause questioning

While teaching the sales process is relevant, it is argued that if the student cannot identify why the client has an objection or an issue then, no number of sales discounts or added benefits may close the sale. One of the methods to ensure the issues or concerns are identified is through root cause questioning, which is a modified version of the "5 Whys" methodology that is commonly used in teaching Lean. A planning sheet is offered where challenges are listed and students have to identify the root cause of the client's challenge.

# **A CONCEPTUAL VIEW OF THE DYNAMICS OF GLOBAL SALES LEADERSHIP: AN EXAMINATION THROUGH HOFSTEDE'S CULTURAL DIMENSIONS**

Allison Crick, Ricky Ferguson and David Fleming (Indiana State University)

As organizations become increasingly more globalized, this research provides insights into how sales leaders need to be adaptable when leading employees from various cultures and working in a global environment. The research will measure to what extent culture of origin (where they were raised), culture of education (where they received higher education), and culture of residence (where they currently live and work) influence the needed leadership styles of salespeople from around the globe. The combination of our literature review and survey will yield results that can be then compared to the Country Comparison tool to see how countries measure for Hofstede's six cultural dimensions.

# **A SELF-DETERMINATION THEORY INFORMED MODEL ON SALESPERSON POLITICAL SKILL, CO-WORKER MOTIVATION AND SALESPERSON INTERNAL SUPPORT**

Achim Kiessig (Chemnitz University of Technology)

In today's complex selling environments, salespersons need to obtain internal support from co-workers to satisfy demanding customer needs and build strong relationships with customers. However, despite the relevance of internal support for salespersons' success, research has yet to explore the precursors and mechanisms that give rise to co-workers' provision of salesperson internal support at the interpersonal level. Against this background, this paper develops a conceptual model that links salesperson political skill and its individual dimensions to co-workers' motivation to provide support. Drawing on Self-Determination Theory, the current research contributes to sales theory building and provides actionable managerial implications.

# **CROSS-CULTURAL SELLING: THE IMPACT OF CULTURAL INTELLIGENCE ON SALES SKILLS AND SALES PERFORMANCE - PROPOSITION OF A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK**

Nadine Fischer (University of Montpellier), Christophe Fournier (University of Montpellier), and Hanene Oueslati (University of Upper Alsace)

In today's global business context, employees must be aware of cultural differences to overcome problems from working with clients from different cultural backgrounds. Earlier research has introduced a concept to evaluate a person's abilities and skills to adapt and interact effectively in an intercultural context: Cultural Intelligence (Earley and Ang, 2003). This concept has been used in HR or International Management to judge the effectiveness of expatriates, for example. But to date, it remains unclear to what extent this concept could explain variances in sales skills. Consequently, this communication proposes a model that links Cultural Intelligence to sales skills and, secondly, sales performance, and relationship quality

# **THE ROLE OF INCENTIVE-BASED COMPENSATION IN SHAPING THE RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN INTRINSIC MOTIVATION, SALESPERSON-SUPERVISOR IDENTIFICATION AND ORGANIZATIONAL OUTCOMES**

Michael L. Mallin, Bashar S. Gammoh and Ellen B. Pullins (The University of Toledo)

This research blends Self Determination and Social Identification Theory to examine the relationship between *intrinsic motivation* and *salesperson-supervisor relational identification* and its impact on important salesperson outcomes such as *sales performance*, *extra-role organizational citizenship behaviors*, and *job satisfaction*. A sample of 256 professional salespeople were surveyed. Study results revealed that intrinsically motivated salespeople feel a strong sense of identification with their supervisor. This strong sense of identification drives higher sales performance, organizational citizenship behavior, and job satisfaction. By introducing *incentive compensation* as a moderating influence, the impact of motivation and relational identification on these sales outcomes are magnified.

## **WHAT VARIABLE PAY STRUCTURES EXIST AND WHY SHOULD RESEARCHERS CARE?**

Aaron Arndt and Kristina Harrison (Old Dominion University)

Sales researchers typically operationalize variable pay as a single category. Yet, there are many types of variable pay structures, such as fixed percentage, tiered percentage, bonuses, and draws. Extant research suggests that variable pay structures could influence salesperson customer orientation differently. This research examines pay structure using a survey of professional salespeople. Contrary to existing literature, this research shows that fixed percentage variable pay improves customer orientation compared to plans lacking variable incentive pay, whereas other more complex commission structures reduce it. Thus, these findings suggest that gaming behaviors used in complex structures are more harmful rather than variable pay itself.

# **OBJECTION PRACTICE USING A LIVE APPOINTMENT-SETTING PHONE CALL WITH SALES PROFESSIONALS**

Shannon Cummins (University of Nebraska-Omaha)

## **ABSTRACT**

Getting students comfortable with responding to customer objections is a challenge. This assignment introduces students to objection response using a live role-play conducted with professionals over the phone. The project typically takes 2 to 3 weeks to complete and is an excellent way to deliver value to professional partners in a time-efficient and location neutral manner. The project works equally well in-person or online. Results show that students participating in the live role-play call with professionals have higher actual and perceived learning regarding objection response techniques. Additionally, students who participate are more likely to receive a job or internship offer due to the networking embedded in the activity.

# A REAL PRODUCT TO REAL PEOPLE FOR REAL MONEY: SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY, SUSTAINABILITY AND EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

Mark W. McConnell (University of Mount Union)

## ABSTRACT

This paper describes a process through which those teaching an undergraduate sales class can enhance student learning by incorporating a semester-long experiential learning project into the course.

The project was introduced in 2014. Since then, 117 undergraduate students have learned about sales by selling a real product to real people for real money.

The paper will describe “lessons learned the hard way” and suggest methods for incorporating such a project into an existing sales class while still covering essential course concepts.

The project is distinguished by its significant focus on social responsibility and sustainability. Over six years, SLS360 has generated more than \$50,000 in total donations to support the soap recycling mission of *Clean the World*, a Florida not-for-profit. Additionally, the project has provided more than 15,000 assembled hygiene kits to not-for-profit organizations serving the communities surrounding the university.

Confucius said, “I hear and I forget. I see and I remember. I do and I understand.” This captures the *pedagogical* problem addressed by this innovation. One of the challenges of teaching personal selling is finding a meaningful way to incorporate experiential learning into the course. Ideally, such a course would include selling a real product to real customers for real money. But where does one find an organization willing to relinquish its all-important sales effort to a group of students for a single semester, only to have the group disappear after final exams?

This innovation also addresses other *non-pedagogical* problems. Among these are:

- According to Clean the World (2019), *pneumonia and diarrheal disease are two of the leading causes of death among children under 5 years old.*
- According to the World Health Organization (2019), *millions of young lives could be saved with access to bar soap and hygiene education.*
- According to Clean the World (2019), *more than 2 million bars of partially used hotel soap are thrown away (ending up in landfills) every day in the United States.*

This teaching innovation was introduced as a project in semester-long project in a 300-level Personal Selling class at a small private US university in Fall 2014. Each year since then, the project has been a key component in the course.

Understanding the project requires an understanding of Clean the World (CTW), a Florida-based non-profit, which has the following two-part mission: *Our mission is to collect and recycle soap and hygiene products discarded every day by the hospitality industry. The distribution of these and other donated products to impoverished people will prevent millions of hygiene-related deaths each year and reduce the morbidity rate for hygiene-related illnesses.* (Clean the World, 2019).

Most of CTW’s funding comes from a subscription-based business model through which hotels pay

CTW a monthly fee. Hotel partners send used soap and other bathroom amenities to CTW to be sanitized and/or recycled. The recycled products are then distributed to people in developing countries plagued by *diarrheal disease*. *Since 2009, CTW has distributed more than 53 million bars of soap to more than 127 countries (Clean the World, 2019).*

*To diversify its sources of revenue and to add value to its relationships with hotel partners, CTW introduced the ONE Project in 2013. Through the ONE Project, CTW partner hotels offer a unique, team-building, philanthropic activity to clients hosting meetings at their properties. Meeting attendees assemble hygiene kits (consisting of recycled soap and other bathroom amenities). The assembled kits are then distributed to local non-profits. The organization hosting the hygiene kit assembly event pays \$3-5 per “set” of ingredients, with the proceeds supporting CTW’s soap recycling mission.*

*Our teaching innovation’s brand is SLS360 (Sell. Learn. Serve. – with the 360 implying the sustainability benefit). Operationally, it is nearly identical to the ONE Project. The only real difference is that the sales class assumes the role of hotel meeting clients. Students obtain customer commitments to fund sets of ingredients, which students assemble into hygiene kits at the end of the semester. As with the ONE Project, the SLS360 hygiene kits are then distributed to local non-profits.*

The most obvious metric of SLS360’s effectiveness and impact are the outcomes of the students’ sales efforts. Since fall 2014, SLS360 has raised nearly \$50,000 to support CTW’s soap recycling mission. Additionally, the project has resulted in the donation of more than 15,000 assembled hygiene kits to local not-for-profits.

Those adopting SLS360 adoption should consider the following before launching:

- Share your plans with your institution’s advancement/development office.
- Touch base with your institution’s business office. Ask that a temporary account be established so money can be held safely until the end-of-semester donation is sent.
- Contact Clean the World. Because your SLS360 project is functionally identical to their ONE Project, you can expect exceptional cooperation from them.

The next step in implementing SLS360 is managing expectations through the syllabus:

- Explain that the class will be broken into teams of approximately three students each.
- SLS360 works best when the project represents approximately 35% of the student’s final course grade, which may be broken down as follows:
  - An initial written assignment (worth approximately 5% of the final grade, done individually) in which individual students propose a sales strategy.
  - As much as 25% percent of the final grade can be based on actual sales results.
  - An end-of-semester team presentation (5% of the final grade) allows students to reflect on the experience.

Faculty members adopting SLS360 should share the following in the first class meeting:

- The complexity of the project (and the product) is challenging. This is like many B-to-B sales situations.
- There are no assigned markets or territories. All prospective customers are fair game.
- Your role, as professor is equal parts teacher, coach, boss, trainer and arbitrator.
- No sale is considered final until the team has received payment in full.
- With student input, establish a class quota for the semester, and assign an equal share of that quota to each team. Add additional points for teams who meet their quotas.
- Appeal to students’ hearts. It is essential that students understand how their sales success can save lives. CTW’s site offers several videos that share this effectively.

Once the semester is underway, consider the following ways to enhance the financial and learning outcomes of adopting SLS360:

- To minimize procrastination, announce a “fast start bonus” early in the semester.
- Post or email weekly performance updates (by team) throughout the semester.
- Seize every opportunity to relate textbook and lecture concepts to SLS360.

Finally, capitalize on the prospective career benefits of being among the first educators to adopt SLS360. The project combines several topics currently popular in higher education, including social responsibility, sustainability, and experiential learning. SLS360 offers significant opportunities for favorable publicity and inter-disciplinary initiatives.

According to Shawn Seipler, co-founder and CEO of Clean the World, SLS360 represents a significant source of incremental revenue that had previously been unconsidered. “If a single, once-a-year class at one small university can raise more than \$50,000 in six years to support our mission,” says Seipler, “I can only imagine the impact that adoption at a hundred other institutions might have on addressing today’s global health crisis” (S. Seipler, personal communication, November 13, 2019).

While SLS360 was born in a sales course, the brand was created in an IMC course, and this program became a client in direct marketing and internet marketing courses. These relevant adaptations of SLS360 in other marketing courses indicate that there is true potential for this innovation to create a significant impact, not only on students’ learning, but also in fostering students’ understanding of real-world sales applications and encouraging these young professionals to contribute meaningful service toward a worthwhile cause.

#### **REFERENCE**

*Clean the World: Health Statistics*. (2019, November 14). Retrieved from <https://cleantheworld.org/>

## LINKEDIN EXERCISES AND EVALUATION RUBRIC

Robert M. Peterson, Ph.D. (Northern Illinois University)

### ABSTRACT

Buyers also review LinkedIn profiles of the sellers who will be engaging with them. It's not just sellers who "creep" on people. What are they looking for? What does a professional seller profile contain? In my usage case, the students are cold calling to set appointments for account executives. In that process they will leave many voicemails and engage numerous gatekeepers. Prior to most set appointments students find their profile has been reviewed by the prospect to know who they are dealing with. As such, their profiles should be sharp and exceed expectations.

- 1) Proper photo: Must be real, not an avatar, etc. Your LI picture should not be your senior high school, a dance, a wedding you attended and then cut out the person next to you.
- 2) Personalize Your Public Profile URL: Make your public profile URL reflects your name, your business, or your area of expertise  
<https://www.linkedin.com/learning/linkedin-quick-tips/claim-your-custom-url?u=76215914>
- 3) Professional Branding Starts with Your LinkedIn Banner: <https://vengreso.com/blog/update-linkedin-banner>
- 4) Submit a list of 10 people and the skills you endorsed them for, max 3 endorsements per person. At least 5 of the 10 should be fellow sales students in the program. One must be a NIU faculty or staff...support your network! No endorsements for "Excel", "Time Mgt", "Communication", "PowerPoint"...etc. True value-added sales skills are best!
- 5) Summary profile – Start strong, write in the 1<sup>st</sup> person, industry key words, short paragraphs/bullets.  
<https://business.linkedin.com/talent-solutions/blog/linkedin-best-practices/2016/7-linkedin-profile-summaries-that-we-love-and-how-to-boost-your-own>

# BUILDING YOUR QUESTIONING MUSCLES: FOUR TECHNIQUES TO GROW OUR EQ AND SALES POWER

Laura Munoz, Ph.D. (University of Dallas), Richard J. Miller, (University of Dallas)

## ABSTRACT

In business-to-business settings, professional selling calls for a strategic approach where a long term view is adopted by sustaining the relationship between sales people and clients. This approach allows for trust to grow and relationships with customers to deepen.

Yet, the main drivers of providing an outstanding customer experience reside in sales people interacting with customers. Sales people need to be customer centered by employing techniques where their emotional intelligence allows them to adapt as needed.

This teaching application presents four questioning techniques to empower sales people:

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Technique 1: <i>Why/ What if/ How</i>	Why questions: help to find the root of a problem. What If questions: open the floor for creative solutions. How questions: focus on developing practical solutions.
Technique 2: <i>The question - formulation technique</i>	Starts from a statement that is the basis for all the questions developed known as the “question focus statement.” Questions are brainstormed, then refined, and prioritized.
Technique 3: <i>Open ended questions</i>	Prompt the beginning of a longer conversation by asking questions starting with "why," "how," and “what if.” If you asked a close-ended question, follow it up with an open one: Tell me more, could you explain, in what ways did you..?
Technique 4: <i>How might we?</i>	“How might we” questions help to address challenges. Once a team has a list, see if the team agrees on one “How might we” question or solution to adopt and solve.

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**LEVERAGING THE CONCEPT OF PROXIMAL DEVELOPMENT TO CHALLENGE STUDENTS IN A WAY THAT ENGAGES, EXPANDS, AND GROWS THEIR CONFIDENCE – GAINING YOU BETTER TEACHING ASSESSMENTS**

Bryan Hochstein

**ABSTRACT**

The zone of proximal development is a theoretical concept designed around keeping learning just at the edge of what a student is capable of “reaching” to learn, while not stretching too far beyond their limits or staying too close to their comfort zone. When students are challenged within their proximal zone, they become “comfortable with being uncomfortable” and engage in deeper learning. The outcome of this approach to learning is a student that gains confidence and pride in their accomplishments – realizing they are better for the effort. In addition, teaching within the proximal zone is a “secret sauce” for gaining student respect, admiration, and positive assessments of your teaching ability.

To adapt sales assignment to each student’s proximal zone, three assignments can be utilized to 1) quickly get students to a common level of understanding of sales practice, 2) learn how to prospect while also learning more about the sales role as part of a flexible assignment, and 3) have students bring together all of their skills in a safe environment that offers the instructor a good way to give direct feedback and encouragement based on the progress each individual student has made. Overall, this three assignment process can improve instructor ratings, as students enjoy learning at their pace.