
Overview of the Sales Discipline for Academics

or (Introduction to Sales and Sales management)

Background

Universities, on top of their traditional research and academic activities, aim to prepare their graduates for real-world business environment. To better achieve this aim, universities offer practical and useful courses within the framework of the different programs. Students of MBA programs (and sometime students of technical disciplines) attend courses such as general courses in marketing, marketing management, product development, branding etc. and more niche courses such as fund raising, pricing models and customer service models. These courses are very relevant, and thus very important.

However, my experience suggests, that more often than not, newly-graduated alumni are finding themselves in sales oriented positions in all sizes of organizations. Often their success, in the first years of their work careers, is judged on their success in these positions. Some examples of positions are: Entrepreneurs, business owners, partners in practices, customer operations, customer service, start-up employees, direct sales on various levels, indirect sales, sales support, pre-sale, etc.; after all, businesses are about customers.

In practice, many graduates spend their time dealing somehow in the one part of the marketing mix that is not taught - Sales.

As a result graduates can come across situations in which they were not prepared for, have no previous knowledge of, and/or lack tools to deal with. The success of the university alumni, and the departments in which they work, is often measured in reaching targets. Often these targets involve sales performance or customer satisfaction.

This course aims to fill the existing gap. Through the lessons, assignments, exercises and readings, the course aims to give the student basic knowledge and understanding of sales and sales related issues. To open the students' eyes to the importance, complexity and sensitivity of the sales discipline. The course also aims to help the students understand various situations and provide guidance as for where to look for more information about them. It is important to stress, however, that this course is NOT meant to be a sales training course.

By understanding in greater depth the sales discipline, alumni who do not end up functioning in a sales related position, or who may only indirectly interface to the sale teams and departments, will then have the tools to understand interact with and manage their colleagues.

A final note: All of us, in any role, sell. It could be a sales representative at Cellcom, an account manager at IBM, a managing partner in a venture capital fund, a law firm partner, business consultant or a researcher at the university who seeks research grants for his/her project. All of these people are measured on their ability to convince people and make sure that these "customers" come again. It's not all about selling, but rather the understanding of the sales processes that can contribute to a person's ability to succeed.

Course Description

This course provides students with a broad introduction to sales, sales processes, sales management and other factors that affect or are affected by sales in the organization. At the same time the course aims to develop important academic and study skills that will aid students in dealing with real customer related situations. This course examines the broad context of sales by examining the sale process and discussing issues at the level of an organization as well as the role of the individual. The course will benefit students who are new to this as those with field experience in sales. However, it is NOT a sales training course.

Prerequisite

None

Course structure

The course is made of weekly classes, reading, and written work. The classes will include frontal lectures, class discussions, practical exercises and guest speakers.

The purpose of guest speakers and exercises is to let students gain from their own experience and from other people experiences. Exercise creates understanding of the difficulties in selling (a product, an idea) and how these difficulties are overcome.

Mark

Class attendance and class exercises - 40%

Written work - 30%

Exam - 30%

Minimum attendance of 5 out of the 6 meetings is required for completing the course.

Reading list (to be updated)

- Fundamentals Of Sales Management, Matthew Schwartz, American Management Association
- The Secrets of Great Sales Management, Advanced Strategies for Maximizing Performance, Robert A. Simpkins, American Management Association.
- Cheverton, P. (2004) Key Account Management 3rd ed. London: Kogan Page
- Jobber, D. and Lancaster, G. (2006) Selling and Sales Management 7th ed. Harlow: Pearson Education
- Selling to the Very Important Top officer, Parinello, Bob Adams Inc
- SPIN Selling, Neil Rackham, McGraw, Hill.
- Solution Selling, Bosworth, McGraw Hill

Other recommended reading

- Six Thinking Hats, Edward de Bono
- Only the Paranoid Survive, Andrew S Grove, Harper Collins Business

Guest speakers

Oren Pelleg, Sales Vice President Septier Systems Ltd. (native English speaker)
and experienced “*Target Account Selling*” Instructor

More to come...

Lesson No.	Subject	Description	Comments
1 Week starting 3 July	Introduction - What is sales The importance Why is it a difficult role The role of a sales person Case studies discussion	Basic terminology, The similarities and difference between Sales and marketing. The image of sales people, the link between sales and entrepreneurship. Types of sales <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The connection between the sold products to the sales process, adapting the sale type to firm strategy, sale type impact on profits. The importance of the sales function to the organization The role of the sales person, sales manager. The role of the sales person as a function of the business context Repeating sales and service, customer focused organization. Discussing case studies	Why this course - many MBA graduates find themselves in sales or sales related positions. Often without any training. In business (indeed in life) we always sell something - a product or ourselves
2 Week starting 10 July	Sales Ethics Buying behaviors	Positive aspect of sale ethics, negative aspects. The legal view. Definitions, types of customers, wants vs needs, buying behavior models. Influencing factors, internal and external. Decision making processes in organizations (DMP, DMU) Sales practice and analysis (15 - 20 min) (or a guest speaker)	
3 Week starting 17 July	The Sales Process We will discuss sales in the broadest context - see comment.	Definition of the Sales process stages Pre Sales <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finding and identifying customers. Avoiding certain clients. Setting the meeting Preparations The Sale Meeting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rapport building / ice-breaking Basic communications skills Identify needs and problems - 	We will study the sales process also in context that is not directly "Sales". Cases such as fund raising, finding clients for an independent practice, self promotion in an organization etc. Communications skills - body language, body posture, eyes, expressions, cultural context, personal space,

		<p>open and closed questions, listening skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing information, product information, presentations. • A structured presentation vs a flowing conversation (discussion), Technical presentations (features benefits) <p>Practice and analysis - obtaining information (15 - 20 min) (or a guest speaker)</p>	listening skills.
4 Week starting 24 July	The Sales Process - cont.	<p>The Sale - Cont</p> <p>Objections - a closing tool.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is an objection • Real and fake objection • Objection handling <p>Negotiations and Closing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding these stages <p>After the Sale</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who is handling the customer, responsibility of the sales person. • Service and support as a sales tool (TQM processes) • What does the sales person do when there is no immediate new sale <p>Problems and mistakes in the sales process. The strategic implication of a flawed sales process</p> <p>Practice and analysis - Objection handling (15 - 20 min) (or a guest speaker)</p>	<p>What is an objection - a real issue, an excuse not to buy, need for more info</p> <p>We will not learn TQM, just mention it</p>
5 Week starting 31 July	<p>Impacting factors (what helps to sell)</p> <p>Introduction to Account Management</p>	<p>Business intelligence</p> <p>Sales person related factors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Networking • Motivational factors and compensation • Integrating innovative business and financial models into the sale process <p>Customer focused organization</p> <p>What is an account, Who fits to the definition</p> <p>The purpose and targets of AM</p>	of account,

			<p>Account selection strategies</p> <p>Account mapping: values, competition, buying processes, needs</p> <p>AM Role: from the customer point of view, from the organization point of view.</p> <p>Account plan: approached for account plan development, success conditions, benchmarking</p> <p>Practice and analysis - (15 - 20 min) (or a guest speaker)</p>	
6	Key Account Management (KAM)	to Sales	<p>Identify the Key Account,</p> <p>The basics of key accounts handling</p> <p>The difference between a sale person to a sales manager, DISC theory, territory, sales forecast, recruitment.</p> <p>Motivating sales people, creating defining sales targets, training, recognition and rewards.</p> <p>Performance measurements: what to measure, how to measure</p> <p>Characteristics of indirect sale,</p> <p>Types of channels</p> <p>ROI on channel promotion, Co-marketing,</p> <p>International markets - HQ based sales people vs. local sales people.</p> <p>Crisis management:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Installation gone astray <p>Debt collection - when a customer doesn't pay</p> <p>When to refuse or give up a customer.</p>	
Week starting 7 Aug	Introduction management			
	Channel management			
	Difficult customers			
	Preparation for the exam			
7	Sales Models		<p>SPIN Selling, Solution Selling, Relationship Selling, Consultative Selling</p> <p>Why, what parameters to follow, Between CRM and sales automation,</p> <p>Existing packages: ACT, Sales Logic, Sales Force.com, Goldmine, CCI for Channel management,</p>	
Spare material if I have time left	Computerizing the sales process			