

MARKETING AND SALES MANAGEMENT IN ELECTRONIC SETTINGS

RESEARCHED AND WRITTEN BY

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BACKGROUND

Marketing has come to embrace almost all aspects of consumption in an economy. Some of these biggest aspects include: Average consumers; local and federal government; the industrial sector; the commercial sector, and international (global) trade. Interestingly, none have focused on marketing to these same buyers while utilizing electronics in the contact, sales presentations, closing the sale, delivery of the product and post sales contacts with buyers.

In conducting a search of peer literature, little was found to be presented in an organized manner to allow senior management in organizations to understand the changes required to implement an electronic marketing strategy based on effective training and performance of the marketing function in large organizations. Although some trade publication articles, some appendices to business texts, and other partial approaches has provided some substance and some structure to support electronic marketing, there is lacking a systematized approach to the training, education, and evaluation of marketing managers and the evaluation of their sales representatives.

This research report examines the field, the literature, materials available for training and education use, and the applications available for improving sales results from the electronic sales component of organizations.

PURPOSE

This paper is intended to contain information useful to sales representatives, sales managers and sales executives who are engaged in or intend to be engaged in marketing and sales while utilizing electronic media. There is an ever-increasing list of ways electronic media can be used. There are internet-based consumer sales, internet-based business to business sales, CD ROMs and/or audio/videotape explaining and making sales offers, telephone marketing, and many other efforts. All these are characterized by a missing physical face to face engagement. In this setting both the seller and the buyer represent a faceless entity communicating with the other through the electronic void.

ABOUT THE RESEARCHERS

Each of the two researchers has a complex background that provides strong credentials to support the research and analysis efforts provided in this document.

James Sliman has served as an officer in the United States Armed Services in two separate and distinctly different career fields: Nursing and Communications. In both he completed the required educational requirements, and then received extensive theoretical and practical training. From the start, first as a registered nurse, then as a communications officer, Mr. Sliman has been immersed in client teaching and education using a variety of media. Both fields also required a high degree of familiarity with the use of the applications, practices, and functional utilization of computer electronics in transaction-based environments. Additionally, Mr. Sliman has experience with the medical/hospital

community and has served as a nurse in complex environments where medical supplies and materials were acquired and ordered electronically.

Mr. Sliman received a Bachelor's of Science in Nursing from The Pennsylvania State University under a United States military scholarship. He subsequently graduated from a communications specialty school prior to being honorably discharged from military service.

At the time of this research, he is completing the last credit hours for his Master of Science Degree which has as its focus the Management of Technologies. He also is engaged in consulting for a web-based firm that specializes in marketing electronic advertising, and also offers electronic products and services to consumers and businesses.

John Michaels' experience includes: Marketing and sales of computers and computer services; financial services; distance education by electronic link; and consumer services and products. Mr. Michaels has owned and operated several companies, to include: Commercial and industrial laundries; machine shop service providers; decoration services; and computer equipment and software sales. Dr. Michaels worked as a sub contractor for the US government after honorable discharge from his military duties.

He currently provides extensive consulting and sales training services while also serving as a full time employee professional for his own organization. He is a significant

financial investor in at least two firms engaged in electronic sales, electronic marketing and electronic advertising.

Dr Michaels received his Doctorate from George Washington University after completing his Masters in Business Administration from American University.

SCOPE

This research effort will address the differences between electronic marketing and traditional marketing. The training of sales representatives and sales managers will also be addressed. The scope will include specific mention of differences and similarities between the traditional and the emerging electronic sales world.

LIMITATIONS

This work will not provide extensive and in depth coverage of sales techniques. Although many case examples exist it is not the intention of this paper to address, examine and analyze cases to extract additional learning. That remains for the contents of a more complete and extensive work. It is not the intention of this paper to address in depth the training of sales management and the training and education of sales and marketing executives. That assignment remains for a lengthy manuscript containing extensive structure and detailed material.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The following research questions will be asked, examined and addressed in this paper:

1. What are the differences between classic marketing and electronic marketing?
2. What special marketing practices will be required to improve results of electronic marketing efforts?
3. What training and education is required for electronic marketing, and how will they be implemented?
4. How can successful electronic marketing be identified and quantified?

These questions will be examined and addressed in the subsequent parts of the paper.

SUMMARY OF PAPER

In part one of this thesis the mechanics of the paper will be presented. This part will address how the paper is to be structured and will provide information on the background and scope of the research. Biographical material about the researchers will be provided to establish credibility.

Part two of the paper will consist of a review of selected texts pertaining to the areas of research. Peer review journals, pre-existing research, trade magazines, online newswires, and documented interviews with experts in the fields pertaining to the research questions will be assembled and examined.

Part three will discuss the basis for the research methodologies employed in the paper.

Here the reader will find the researchers addressing descriptive and field research.

Likewise case studies and their attendant analyses will be examined. Objective research including surveys and evaluations will be utilized in research efforts that extend beyond the present state of this paper.

Part four of the paper will summarize the information collected and will contain selective answers to the research questions.

Part five, the final part of this thesis, will contain conclusions, recommendations, answers to the primary research question and recommendations for future research. If applicable, this section will address things which should be done differently if the research is to be repeated.

TIMELINE AND BUDGET

The timeline for this research extends from December of 2003 to August of 2004. The effort, as it has expanded, provides evidence that an appropriate, lengthy, text is ultimately required if all appropriate issues are to be satisfactorily addressed. The budget for this paper will include allocations for travel, telephone, site visits, preparation of presentation media, conferences, meetings and interviews. The budget for these items is expected to top \$9000.00.

SUMMARY

In this, PART ONE, of the research paper the researchers present the background, scope, timeline, budget, purpose and information about the credentials of the researchers. In the next part, the bibliographic entries will be addressed.

PART 2

This Part will address the differences between classic marketing and electronic sales and marketing efforts. The research question to be addressed is: What are the differences between classic marketing and sales training and similar training for selling electronically?

In Kotler (1999), the author argues for an organized approach to moving products and services through the sales cycle. Kotler describes different scenarios for approaching industrial sales, commercial sales, and consumer sales. The sales cycle is described and the author supplies numerous examples and suggestions. Kotler tells what to do as well as what not to do in the sales and marketing effort. Recognized as an eminent authority in the theoretical and in some components of the real world of business and marketing, Kotler and his works have reflected classic thought and accepted theories in the field of traditional marketing. Kotler's texts are used in many undergraduate and graduate programs.

Others in the field (Ziglar, 1985), describe the physical contact and the approach to customers. Ziglar argues for appropriate settings for exchange of information, extracting objections, which should begin early in the sales presentation, making the buyer comfortable, and then moving to close the sale. Ziglar states that personalization of sales presentations tailored to the buyer are effective in sales of large ticket items like large scale computers, heavy construction equipment, and similar merchandise. Having demonstrations of how things work and displays of products in real life settings, like

appliances in model kitchens, serve as aids to closing sales (Ziglar). These appeals to appearance act as a 'decide to buy' stimulus for prospective buyers.

(Ziglar) adds that having the product ready for delivery is an effective sales closer. It allows the buyer to experience the benefits of the product quickly and painlessly.

Authors and researchers maintain that prompting for a sale both early and frequently allows objections to be brought to the forefront, where they can be addressed and resolved, and to move the client to a decision - either yes or no.

(Blanchard and Bowles, 1993) argue for moving emotional selling into the sales presentation equation by using words and phrases which project the buyer into situations using the product: "I can see you and your family driving out in the country in this new van... enjoying the sunshine and feeling confident that your family is safe and comfortable". This tactic would be exceedingly difficult to accomplish in an electronic sale, where the seller has little, if any, knowledge of the person being persuaded to purchase. Likewise, the prospective buyer would have little or no knowledge, and therefore no interpersonal trust, for the seller.

Stuart Crainer, in reviewing Kotler's works, comments that the challenge in marketing is to move it higher up in the boardroom agenda. In his interviews with Kotler, Crainer argues that financial evaluations and communications issues are high on the list of challenges. (April, 2004).

The Nation (Thailand, April 2002) reviewed “Holistic Marketing” and noted a common thread—“that markets are changing faster than our marketing”. This is not news, but how products and services are to be delivered as the future, is the challenge.

How training is to be utilized to train is the subject of several articles found on Lexis-Nexis. Business Wire, April, 2003 commented on e learning provided by Ninth House for the Department of Justice. The online training has a focus on making behavioral change. How this is done online and its retention in individuals is not clearly explained. However there may be merit in examining this further if results are positive, and lasting.

The European Journal of Education provided a lengthy article by Kramer and Schmidt examine tools and components for on-line education. The authors surveyed the technologies and other emerging tools for improving the effectiveness of presentations using electronic media. The authors argue for increased utilization of hypermedia in on line authoring tools. The incorporation of advanced technologies will stretch the ability of sales representatives to successfully provide improved sales presentations to distant prospects. The authors argue that research in software engineering for educational technology is leading to domain transfers of technologies to the training and education sectors. Kramer and Schmidt have done extensive work in knowledge engineering to create elaborate models incorporating web based tools utilizing multimedia to achieve a you see what I see model. Their works are worth study and consideration.

The US Department of Interior University, in a May, 2003 report by Business Wire, discussed how using streaming video, synchronized slides, charts, transcripts, surveys, quizzes, Adobe © PDF's, and hyperlinks to train managers produced the goals set by the Department. If the use of many media interventions adds to or takes from learning is another issue. Results over time may dictate that too much media is a complement to awareness, but may be an impediment to retention.

BRANDWEEK in their April 26, 2004 release reviewed another article by Kotler. In this article Kotler provides ten deadly marketing sins. Of interest here are two 'sins': Awareness of new technology well organized for efficient marketing. Both lack the emphases addressed in this research—that organizations are slow to prepare their marketing organization with tools appropriate to electronic marketing.

Of special interest in the Lexis-Nexis release of Business Wire June 23, 2004 is a discussion of Digital River, Inc and their efforts to provide e commerce outsourcing and on line training courses. Their electronic classroom may be the most up to date in offerings at this time. The firm is worthy of further research and study. Along with SAVVIS Communications, a firm offering IT utilities and e commerce training for many named stores, The Business Wire, in a July 28, 2004 release addresses the firm's offerings.

Many offerings similar to the above can be found on Lexis-Nexis and the theme running through all is on line training using various methodologies. Lacking is a proven program for training sales representatives in electronic sales .

SUMMARY

Part 2 has provided information that allows the reader to distinguish the classic approach to marketing. At the same time examples of electronic marketing efforts are also cited. From these two views the following can be distinguished and will serve to answer the research question:

What are the differences between classic marketing and sales training and similar training for selling electronically?

The attempt to answer provides these material differences:

- No physical contact
- Depersonalization
- Hard products are only displayed in two dimensions
- Descriptions and visuals may be colorless
- No textures, no feel, no taste, no smell
- Frequently no sound
- Difficult to extract and to answer objections
- Delayed product delivery
- Difficult to ask for the check

- Emotional content thin
- Difficult to convey seller/merchant honesty
- How to do relationship selling?

Other concerns that add to the difficulty of persuading buyers:

- Difficult to identify buyers psychological type
- How to get and give product and personal referrals

The differences posed by several authors provide strong evidence that substantial differences exist between the classic and the electronic sales and marketing approaches. The successes enjoyed by sales professionals who have mastered techniques and processes in the sales cycle are difficult to replicate in the electronic world. In upcoming parts of this paper, some suggested processes will be provided to show that an approach can be developed for compensating for the weaknesses in applying traditional sales techniques and procedures in the electronic world.

PART 3

This part will address the research question:

What special marketing practices will be required to improve the results of online electronic marketing?

Discussion with electronic marketing professionals provided insight into several issues. Killian (2004), with at least three years experience in electronic marketing, argues that much success or failure can be attributed to sales management training. Killian attributes his organizations' results to extensive training and continuous follow up with sales managers and sales representatives. Killian requires managers to practice sales calls with and without the sales representatives to polish their presentations.

Cohen (2004) insists on providing multiple examples as he trains and motivates new representatives in the sales process. His efforts have allowed many men and women to enjoy success early in their sales careers. Selling soft products, in this case, web-based advertising, calls for effective presentations. Cohen focuses his sales representatives on the 'one call sale'.

Another technique used by Cohen involves careful screening of applicants to assure that candidates are qualified for the effort. He spends much time reviewing resumes and continues to screen during the entire interviewing process. By carefully observing candidates in the training cycle, Cohen eliminates those who give signs of lack of interest

or commitment. Cohen argues that he will reject even experienced sales applicants who appear to create their own agenda despite the coaching provided.

Godla (2004) views sales representatives from a different angle. He is concerned that something, once sold, remains sold. He argues that sales training must focus on good business. Making sales and then getting subsequent cancellations, or the short, 'I'll try it' sale is not the way to go. Godla argues that sales representatives in a hurry to close the deal and run create nightmares for organizations when customers refuse to pay and collections efforts become the focus of efforts in an organization. Godla states that lost sales and buyer remorse are to be corrected before the sale can really be called 'closed'. The post sales sale is as much of the overall sale as is the contract signing and the receipt of the check in payment.

Discussions with managers and executives in and from International Business Machines provided insight into how IBM allocated territories. Potential sales volume in a geographic area determined territory assignments. When IBM evaluations indicated potential sales sufficient for one sales person; then only one was assigned to the designated territory. If change occurred, that is, new organizations moved into the geographic territory, then a second sales person would be assigned a portion of the territory. IBM sometimes found that entire floors in a New York building might be assigned to one sales person as their exclusive territory. IBM would increase quotas to reflect realistic outcomes possible from each territory. Much of IBM's marketing success has been attributed to careful territory assignment and careful management of sales

quotas. Some sales representatives will broach territory lines and create morale problems in organizations. This is frequently handled by an exchange process where sales representatives sales outside their assigned territories are kept in a ledger and that ledger is reviewed with all parties affected by the issues. Agreements on commissions and sales quota credits are agreed upon and the book is closed for the year. The same processes are followed year after year to assure fairness to all.

Sales management implies procedures for closing potential sales. One aspect of this in the researchers experience has to do with call backs. Sales managers review the efforts of sales representatives and go over each sales call made by the representative in the time period under review. That time period may be daily or weekly or some other time period agreed upon. The sales manager may select one or two prospects for call back either together or with instructions to the representative as to what to say/do, or to ask/offer. Experienced sales managers have found the call back to be an effective closing tool, since representatives view positively the sales managers ability to spot potential closes and identify the issues which can be tuned to assist in the closing of a business deal

Frequently sales managers will go with sales representatives after a sales is made. This visit serves several purposes: it assures the buyer that the firm is committed to providing what was promised. It assures the buyer of delivery times. It confirms what the buyer believes they are receiving under the contract of sale. It places another person in the sales cycle to assure the buyer that there is more than one contact in the selling organization. At the same time it allows the sales manager to open discussion of other items or services

the firm can provide and the setting provides an opportunity for the sales manager to ask for another sale. This post sale reinforcement makes the buyer feel the selling firm wants their present and future business; that the one sale is not the final goal of the firm and allows the buyer to see that the selling firm has other products and services to provide, thus broadening the relationship between the parties.

These are some of the concerns of marketing managers. The challenge to them here is how these same efforts are to be carried out in the electronic sales environment. But, before that assignment is undertaken, one further question must be addressed: What training and education is required for electronic marketing success; and how can it be implemented?

Electronic marketing demands sales managers and sales representatives who are skilled in computer usage and are sophisticated users of computer and cellular technology so that effective material can be presented in simple, easy to use fashion for buyers. Little room exists for the clumsy, poor communicator to exchange ideas and present concepts. The demand is for the practiced, informed, capable technician.

According to electronic marketing trainers in SKEXZA (2004), it is not enough to be able to use a computer as 'just a tool'. Sales representatives must be computer savvy, as well as display the ability to convey through an electronic link sincerity, honesty, and a desire to fulfill the buyer's order. Salespeople must be able to supply the sensory input on the product that the consumer desires, and adapt on the fly to each individual customer's

adeptness with a computer and the internet. Text on an item of merchandise should relate concrete facts and well-defined concepts. Ads should be delivered embedded as images within email correspondence, or be displayed on the web page in a manner that gets the sales message of the ad across to the client with little or no intervention on the client's part. Much of this set of qualities must be in the individual prior to training specific to the firm whose products and services are being sold. Again the selection process must be appropriate for choosing personnel.

Ultimately the sales representative should know how to employ different sales closing processes. Sometimes it is best to assume the sale has been closed; sometimes it is necessary to ask directly for the sale. At other times, a progressive close can be utilized where one issue after another is resolved, and notes and order forms are filled out as the sales process unfolds. All that remains in the end is for the buyer to review the order form, and, if all is in order, to affix signature and submit payment to the organization represented.

Summary

Part 3 has addressed the special marketing practices and the training and education requirements needed by electronic marketers to successfully enter the field. The marketing manager must be able to screen applicants effectively, and then select and cull from them the best equipped to contact prospects and close sales using electronic technologies in a sophisticated but simple manner. Representatives must be able to utilize computer-based graphics and sound, as well as animation and film clips, to show and

persuade buyers of the effectiveness and beauty of the products and services being sold. Variety and attention-grabbing items must be taken seriously. This means that color and other attributes used to provide an appropriately attractive sales environment are wisely utilized and consistently provided. These are provided as sales assists; not as gimmicks.

PART 4

Part 4 will address the research question:

How can successful electronic marketing be identified and quantified?

Marketing vice presidents study marketing results by product line. When product lines are not producing the expected income the causes for the shortfall are investigated.

Sometimes the cause is easy to identify. For example, the competition may be desperate and may be selling below cost. Other times, the investigation might send conflicting messages as to cause effect relationships. In either case quantification can sometimes assist in determining cause and effect in a decaying model.

Selected tools used include comparative studies. How is the product selling in different regions? When did the sales volume begin to decline? Who were the sales managers and who were the sales representatives at the time of decline? How is the competition doing and what are their experiences? What is happening with substitutes? Are the substitutes' sales increasing? What is happening with the demographics in the regions the firm is

selling? What do the numbers tell the firm about the amount of each product and service sold? Sometimes sales are taken from one product and shifted to another.

Financial results tell still another story. Are there hints in the financial results telling the firm that pricing models need to be reexamined? Is there need for budget priced items and/or for upscale offerings? Sometimes the numbers and types of products offered provide a conflict that only shows under selected economic conditions. This may result in an unstable condition and cause sales numbers to fluctuate dramatically. Weather, holidays, training and recruiting cycles, competitor's changes, and other factors can skew results in an analysis. The marketing executive should always go into the field to interview the marketing managers, to talk to the marketing representatives, to visit with a sampling of the firm's customers, to speak with prospects, and to join on sales calls with representatives, in order to eliminate as much erroneous or misleading input, and get the clearest possible picture.

The Vice president would go over the numbers region by region and manager by manager. Sometimes one customer can account for a dramatic drop in sales if the customer decided to do something in-house that the firm was acquiring from our marketing department. Careful quantification and mapping out of data will improve understanding of the location most affecting the drop in sales. Profitability is another quantitative factor that must be addressed. Sometimes a drop in sales is a good thing.

Some quantification of sales will provide generalized evidence about profits. The generalization goes something like this: Firms have discovered that 20% of customers have contributed 80% of the profits for marketing departments. But this sometimes hides the fact that these customers may not have always been the big customers they are today. Many perhaps were small fish who grew to whale size. This growth may have been coincident with the sales firm assisting in the marketing through some chain of connections. Every customer contributes to the success of an organization. If the 'customer' is negative or a cost to the firm, then it is best to identify the need to part company, since the relationship is no longer 'customer' but 'contender'.

Collections tell management something about the economy, the industry, the customer base, economic conditions and other factors. Rational thinking puts this into perspective and, with help from the finance and accounting departments, decisions can be made in the firm's best interests. This quantification allows latitude to be given where it should be given, and limitations to be applied where they should be applied.

Summary

Firms utilize quantification at all times. Records tell the marketing and sales executive where things are moving, who is doing what, what needs to be done, who needs additional resources, who is using resources wisely, who is wasting resources and how things are progressing or regressing. Executives want bad things to regress and good things to show progress. Both sides of the coin bear watching and deserve evaluation.

The tools available to executives include quantification of every data item comparatively, and similitude evaluation and assessment. Geographic and demographic information and data must be accounted for and examined longitudinally. The numbers of products and services offered must be accounted for and reason should be used to find evidence to support adding or dropping products and product lines. Similarly, financial results must be reviewed constantly to support or challenge pricing practices, and additions or subtractions to the product line.

PART 5

This final part will address the summary, conclusions and recommendations of this paper.

The section will also illustrate how the research questions were answered.

The primary research question asked is:

What are the differences between classic marketing and electronic marketing?

In previous parts the differences between the classic model as presented in voluminous writings by Kotler and others, and in the sales training advocated and institutionalized by Zigler and others, were presented. Then, a single firm, SKEXZA, reflecting experiences from several firms offered their model. The SKEXZA organization is a model for electronic sales. Starting with the selection process, continuing with the sales representative training and launch and continuing with motivation and post sale selling, the firm produces a high number of excellent producers for sales of their electronic products and services. Other entities have made contributions to the sales process, to the

psychology of sales representatives, and to other training, testing, and evaluation processes to aid in selecting sales and marketing personnel. As well, several other case studies are available but in the interest of time only one is presented in this writing.

Successful electronic marketing requires a technologically educated individual with effective communication skills who can present an easy to use product fashion model, explaining the value of the products or services offered by his or her firm. The sales representative's education and training must have them prepared to effectively use snail mail and electronic mail for marketing and sales purposes. It must prepare them to effectively explain to buyers how to see and efficiently use the company's products to their personal advantage. The representatives must be able to send several messages to buyers at once, and to incrementally explain their products and services without coming across as an annoyance, or a 'spammer'.

Representatives can be trained to ferret out objections and resolve the objections, providing answers which can be accepted by the buyer. As well, good sales techniques can be learned to allow representatives to sell their firm and its capabilities and to also sell ones ability to assist the customer and make that assistance felt by the client as a commitment on the seller's part. Additionally, the sales person will effectively learn how to sell the product or service, sell their post sale service, and then sell their continued availability to the new buyer.

The electronic marketing firm adds to their training for sales representatives the analysis of the calls to the help desk or the complaint desk. The training addresses the philosophy behind the ratio of hits to misses in the sales process. By using quantification techniques and individualizing the training the effective electronic marketer can improve the ratio of hits to misses and increase income substantially.

As a representative's training and education show increasing payoffs, the sales manager will groom him or her for management responsibilities. Excellent sales persons can create other excellent sales persons. The adage that success breeds success is evident as successful managers hire other successful managers and the firm enjoys higher levels of success. The best known example of this is the IBM model in selecting individuals for promotion.

The concern for many electronic buyers is: 'Where is the office?' This reflects the buyer's reluctance to select a sales entity a long distance from them, and the consumer's belief that proximal distance implies good customer care. It is the task of the electronic marketing salesman and manager to show the client that, with the advent of the world-wide internet, this is no longer so.

ADDITIONAL DIFFERENCES BETWEEN ELECTRONIC AND CLASSICAL MARKETING AND SALES PRACTICES

Evidence provided in the cases indicates that the sales representatives ability to electronically use animation in electronic presentations along with video shots of the representative working with a real client conveys reality. By following with an adequate audio mix containing customer praises and support, the sales person provides a measure of conviction to prospective buyers.

Offering electronic payment methods that are encrypted, or accepting electronic funds transfer using a known secure method, the buyer may find it easier, and maybe in time comfortable, to conclude a transaction online. Electronic third party credit cards are becoming a new way to allow buyers to conclude a transaction while minimizing personal risks.

Sales persons who avoid reflecting the image of a telemarketer will find concluding the sale a pleasant experience. The conscious raising of their image to one of a professional assisting another person in making a sound decision is lifting the sales process to a higher standard. And, if similar sales firms have created a bad reputation which a newer firm must overcome, then arranging for a bonding company to provide bond would demonstrate to buyers the intent of the newcomer to maintain their integrity and carry out responsibilities with honor, as stewards unwilling to compromise their character.

It is concluded that the answers to the secondary research questions have supported the answers to the primary research question.

THINGS WHICH SHOULD BE DONE DIFFERENTLY

If this research is repeated, then there should be more field interview data. This data should be acquired by interviewing more firms, including those which have failed as well as with those who have enjoyed success. There should be a line of difference between those whose success was based on being in the right place at the right time, and those who have done things right and will continue to be successful. There are many examples of the web dot-coms that grew fast and fell faster. The electronic marketer with a solid basis will have continuing success while the flashes in the pan will be stunning for only the shortest of periods.

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