

## FROM HUMAN RESOURCES TOWARD SALES FORCES

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### Abstract

*The sales forces have the role to distribute the products of that particular firm without using the classical commercial network; to investigate the market and to maintain a permanent dialogue with the potential consumers. The firm's representatives who establish and maintain the relationship with the customers are called sales agents. In order to maximize the organization's results, they must be trained and motivated correspondingly. The main sales forces' objective is the sales increment and the promotion of the firm and its image. The main sales forces' advantages are the direct realization of sales increment and the direct communication accomplishment between the firm's representative and the customers, which helps improve the firm's promotion and development. On the other hand, the sales agents are often trained and motivated in a non-corresponding way and therefore the customers' evaluation made by the sales agents is often partially and subjectively.*

### 1. SALES FORCES. GENERAL NOTION

The **sales forces** are constituted of an enterprise representatives group (its employees or delegates) that have the role to distribute the products of that particular firm without using the classical commercial network; to investigate the market and to maintain a permanent dialogue with the potential consumers.

To the present, the public aimed by the sales forces is mostly the industrial consumer and/or diverse commercial organizations.

The commercialized products are no longer small products for large-scale consumer. They are either long time period installations and equipments of high value or raw materials, materials and other products for which the firm's representatives will sign contracts with customers that demand higher quantities, which will be delivered on a longer time period.

The firm's representatives who establish and maintain the relationship with the customers are called **sales agents**. He/she is either a physical or juridical person who acts according to an order base that is given by the temporary merchandises' owner who commands the effectuation of commercial documents regarding the products' sales in his name and his account.

In order to be a good sales agent, one must fulfill a series of conditions, regarding both the inter-personal communication skills and even the physical appearance, and his/her knowledge regarding the commercialized products and the presented firm.

The sales forces may accomplish intensive and ample sales campaigns, which represent an important communication way between the organization and its customers, both potential and effective ones. In order to maximize the organization's results, the sales agents must be trained and motivated correspondingly.

Some persons or organizations are pretty hostile toward the sales agents and consider them to be too aggressive when it comes for sales, being often reticent about the quality of the offer they present and commercialize.

For removing these difficulties, as well as for diminishing as much as possible the costs in regard with the sales agents' network development and their activity's progress, one needs to take into consideration the **sales forces' projection and organization**.

This may be a real difficult process, depending on the sales forces' place and role within the organization.

*Thus, the following measures are mainly aimed:*

- the establishment of the sales forces' structure and strategy;

- the sales forces' recruitment and selection;
- sales agents' training;
- the sales forces' distribution;
- the sales agents' guidance;
- the activity's evaluation and the sales forces' remuneration.

If the sales forces would be correspondingly leaded, they could be a communication channel with double meaning and an extremely efficient promotion instrument. This way, the organization could aim and obtain more objectives than the simple sale of the products.

## 2. THE SALES FORCES' SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES. ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES

The main sales forces' objective is the sales increment. In the mean time, the information is transmitted and refers to both diverse commercialized products and organization.

Since the sales agents come directly into contact with customers and other market components, *one may actively pursue in achieving other objectives, such as:*

- market research and potential customers' identification;
- the determination of customer's characteristics and their consumer habits;
- the collection of information concerning the firm's and products' image;
- consulting services and technical assistance for the sold products;
- organizing some merchandising actions within the distribution network.

The promotion of the firm and its image is also aimed through the sales forces. As a matter of fact, the sales agents do contribute in a way to the organization's image by their behaviour and attitude.

## 3. ADVANTAGES OF SALES FORCES' UTILIZATION

The main sales forces' advantage is the direct realization of sales increment that would be more reduced if one may use the classical distribution channels; that's way a low investment organization obtains additional incomes. In the mean time, the organization and its offer is promoted without using practically additional expenses, except for the promotion-presentation materials used by the sales agents (catalogues, booklets etc.).

Another major advantage is the direct communication accomplishment between the firm's representative and the potential and/or effective customers.

In this way, the organization has control over this process (the delivered message, the diffusion's method, the place and the time). Furthermore, the customer's reaction can be evaluated and even influenced.

The discussions held between the customers and the firm's representative help eliminating the formers' objectives, improving the organization's image, changing the offer's presentation method etc.

Afterwards, the sales agent may evaluate the characteristics, the motivations and the public consumer's habits.

The sales forces may deliver in real time information about the market and the customers. This way, the organization may adapt better and more quickly to the public's demands and to the subsequent market evolutions.

The sales agents that received good training and are well organized help increasing the customers' fulfilment. They do not only offer information regarding the products, facilitating this way their optimal utilization, but they are also doing some services required by the customers such as: service, consultancy over the whole utilization period, additional information's transmission regarding the improvements, exchange pieces' offer etc.

#### 4. DISADVANTAGES OF SALES FORCES' UTILIZATION

On the subject of many firms that opt for sales forces as a promotion and sales increment method, their utilization efficiency mitigates due to the fact that the efforts rely exclusively on the sales maximization.

What's more, the sales agents are often trained and motivated in a non-corresponding way. That's way the communication may be deficient and the organization won't gain neither profit from the possible sales maximization, nor the image improvement.

Another element that should be taken into consideration is the fact that customers' evaluation made by the sales agents is often partially and subjectively.

Generally, the sales agents also bring information concerning only the persons they've met directly; that's way their observations and evaluations regarding the market on the whole, should be first examined before being taken into consideration by the organization's marketing actions and politics.

In order to eliminate the disadvantages regarding the sales forces' utilization, one should give greater importance to the training, to the cooperation with the sales agents' and to their control. The way they communicate with the market, their behaviour and their actions have a direct influence upon the efficiency of sales forces' utilization.

#### 5. SOME CONDITIONS REGARDING THE SALES FORCES

Theoretically, the sales forces' utilization is easy to accomplish by every organization and the results are positive due to the certain sales increment.

When the promotion campaigns are not correspondingly organized, the results won't be the maximal ones in regard to neither the sales volume, nor the qualitative order effects such as: the firm's image, customers' confidence development etc.

*In order to optimize the sales forces' utilization, one should take into consideration the following aspects:*

- the aim toward a long-time relationship development between the customers and the firm's
- representatives;
- the establishment of a promotional-qualitative objections type and the adequate agents' training who reach the sales maximization;
- sales forces' adequate dimensioning;
- the sales forces' training in regard to the aimed public, the promotional offer, the organization's image and characteristics;
- the continuous communication and sales techniques improvement;
- the other promotion methods association, such as sales promotion, public relations or advertisement;
- the permanent sales agents motivation;
- the constant evaluation of the sales forces, the influential factors and the qualitative order effects.

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