

A STUDY ON THE EFFECTS OF SALES TRAINING ON SALES FORCE ACTIVITY IN NAPIER HEALTHCARE COMPANY

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ABSTRACT

The study on the effect of sales training on sales force activity in Napier Healthcare Company was carried out during the period of January 2018 to March 2018. The main objectives of this study were to analyze the effect of sales training on sales force activity in the chosen company. Descriptive research design with positivism research philosophy was adopted. Inductive approach and survey as the research strategy were used in this study. Its a pilot study work carried out with a sample of 10 employees. Simple random sampling technique was adopted in probabilistic sampling techniques. The study was carried out in the intention to understand the effectiveness of sales training and the sales force activity, training need, different types of the training programme, effect of sales training on employee performance and increasing the training programmes were the variable taken for analysis

KEYWORDS: *Sales, Sales Training, Sales Force Activity & Effective Training Needs*

INTRODUCTION

There are many changes that occurred in the sales field and affect the function of selling in the past decades and present. This happened due to the increasing amounts of information gained by customers. It also happened due to higher needs and demands of customers related to customer service and expectation. These changes need business organizations to innovate and improve their skills and experiences in many ways such as sales training (Manrai et al, 2015). The current paper is discussing the Effects of Sales Training on Sales Force Activity through many research methods.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

The objective of the research is to analyze the effects of sales training on sales force performance and customer orientation.

LITERATURE REVIEW

According to Jobber et al., (2004) personal selling has become very important in today's competitive marketplace. It can help to raise sales and improve the organization's performance and profits. It can also enhance the performance of salespersons. Salespersons have a great role in improving the sales' activity of the company so they need effective and condense training in order to help them to implement many sales strategies and techniques such as building effective relationships with customers, solving their problems and adding value to the sales process within time. Customer oriented selling is very necessary to enhance the sales persons performance and develop the sales activity (Donaldson, 1998).

Lee (2010) confirmed that training is the main development component and any company that needs success should invest in training its salespersons as it can improve their performance and their customer orientation activities. The salespersons should receive training from the company where they work in order to improve their performance and skills with customers and products. Roman et al, (2002) added that these types of training can be divided based on the purpose of training employees such as product training, sales skills training and sales methodology training. Sales managers also need training for supporting salespeople and managing their performance.

Seidman (2012), discussed sales training methods in order to let salesmen realize the problems of customers and find effective and fast solutions for them. Training can also improve their relationship skills that include two main parallel processes which are the personal relationship process and the sales transaction process. This involves many stages such as the pre-interaction stage, interaction stage, and the post interaction stage. Interaction is meant to improve the communicative skills of salespersons and sales managers in order to find out new communicative ways with customers that enable them to understand the needs of customers and meet them.

Sunardi et al., (2012) stressed the need for training employees in order to improve their sales behaviors and this can be done via main sales training methodologies that can be under two main categories which are the self -study category that includes pre-workshop assignment, readings and programmed instructions in addition to the category of workshops that includes lectures, case studies, discussions, on-the-job training, role play, and real-life experiences. They suggested that business organizations have to combine the two categories of training in order to help employees and sales managers. George (2008), also referred to the need to train employees on different selling techniques and preparing sales training programs that may vary depending on the way they are standardized.

Mikula (2004), asserted that when the organization train salespeople, a deep analysis for the organization should be made before starting training as it helps to understand the needs of training in the organization and raise the chances of the success of sales training which in turn of enhances the organization's performance and profits. This analysis can also find out the differences trainees and the characteristics of different jobs they each should perform and then to decide the best method for training them.

Research Philosophy, Approach, and Strategy

The research philosophy is the development of the research background, nature and knowledge and it is also the framework that includes within different theories, practices, and perceptions used for conducting a research. It can also be the procedure that involves different steps the researcher uses to relate the research question to its objectives. The research philosophy can be pragmatism, positivism, post-positivism, realism, phenomenology or interpretive. The current paper depends on the positivism research philosophy because according to Crossan (2002), positivism is a research method that depends on the quantifiable observation that can lead to statistical analysis, it is said to support knowledge that results from human experiences. It has an atomistic, ontological view of the world as comprising discrete, observable elements and events that interact in an observable, determined and regular manner(Mkansi and Acheampong, 2012).

The research approach is the plan or the procedures used and applied for research and it decides the steps from different assumptions for many methods of data collection, analysis, and interpretation. This plan involves some decisions that specify the decisions to be taken in writing the research(Teherani et al, 2015).

The inductive approach which is also referred to as the inductive reasoning is a research approach that begins with theories and observations that are presented in the research to its process end and resulting from the observations. It involves searching for the pattern from the observation and explanation development (Thomas, 2006).

The research strategy is the general plan of the research that the researcher uses in order to reach reasonable answers for the research questions. The current paper is using the survey research strategy because the benefits of this strategy cost, extensive, Flexible and dependable (Badke, 2011).

Ethical Implications in this Research

Research ethics ensures the protection of rights and information related to the research. During evaluation of this research, some ethical implications are set into considerations such as informed consent from the participants in the research questionnaire, voluntary participation is ensured, participants are ensured to participate in the research with no harm, confidentiality of information is also ensured and the research only assesses relevant components.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The research design depends on some methods and procedures for data collection and on some analysis measures used for measuring the different variables that are specified within the research paper and relevant to the research problem. The current study type is the descriptive analysis as it is basically semi-experimental. Data collection methods depend on the journals relevant to the topic, books and internet articles that are trustworthy. Analysis plan depends on a questionnaire presented for people working in Napier Healthcare.

Sampling

Sampling depends on collecting answers of the questionnaire from 10 employees in Napier Healthcare which is a healthcare company in Oman. Participants were all agreeing and consents were taken from them before starting the questionnaire. Samples were randomly chosen from different types of employees in the company. Simple random sampling techniques were used mainly.

Data Collection Methods

Data was collected from different resources; mainly primary data was gained from the questionnaires that were delivered to employees of Napier Healthcare Company as questionnaires were delivered to them after their consent. Secondary data was got from books, journals that are relevant to the topic and online sites as well. Data was too much and then it was analyzed in order to choose the most relevant data to be used in the research, most recent and evidence-based data were chosen.

Tools Used for Analysis: Percentage Analysis

For analysis, tools are chosen carefully; percentage analysis is used and applied in order to know the real percentages of answers to the questionnaire. An analysis is applied in order to know real answers related to the sales training of salespersons and sales managers and how far the sales training is important to sales activity development.

Structure for Questionnaire

Five questions were set in the questionnaire in order to be delivered for participants. There are four questions for quantitative analysis and they are close-ended and there is one question which is open-ended for qualitative analysis.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

Data was collected using a questionnaire of five questions that were delivered to ten employees in the Napier Healthcare company and answers were analyzed as follows:

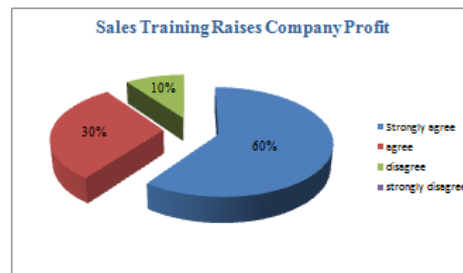


Figure 1: Sales Training Raises Napier Healthcare Company Profits

The above Figure shows clearly that 60% of employees were strongly agreed that sales training raises Napier Healthcare Company's profits, 30% of employees agreed and 10% of them disagree with. This means that more than half employees strongly see that sales training raises the company's profit. This also means that there are others who think that this is true as the 30% think so, the 10% who disagree don't think so which means that there should be more efforts in the organization to raise employees' awareness regarding the needs and benefits of sales training for improving the organizational performance and raise profits.



Figure 2: The Need of Sales Training for Sales Managers in Napier Healthcare Company

According to the above Figure, 40% of employees were strongly agreed that sales managers need sales training and 10% of them were strongly disagree. Answers show that employees and managers are not aware enough that managers should receive sales training, as well as employees, do. Less than half of the participants strongly agree that sales managers should receive sales training and this means that there is low awareness of the benefits of training to managers. According to Kunkle (2017), sales managers who are well trained can in turn train salespeople on the different sales techniques and systems in order to improve the organizational and individual performance and employees' relationship with customers.

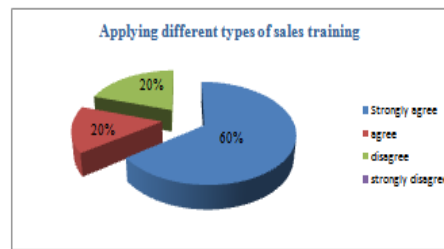


Figure 3: The Importance of Applying Different Types of Sales Training in Napier Healthcare Company

Answers to this question ranged between 60% strongly agree, 20% agree and only 20% disagree as shown in the above Figure. This gives an idea that employees and managers think with a big percentage of 80% that it is important to have differed types of training. It means that they are really in need of diversified training types and they have to deliver different types of training. The 20% who disagree may not be able to understand the need for having different types of training and may need more effort in raining awareness to be trained in sales.

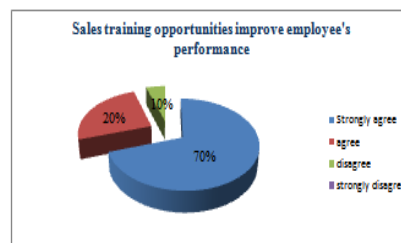


Figure 4: Sales Training Opportunities Improve Employee's Performance in Napier Healthcare Company

Based on the above Figure, 70% of the employees strongly agree that the organization should give them better sales training opportunities in order to improve their performance. That 10% who don't agree refer to the low awareness among employees that should be developed.

The Reasons for the Importance of Sales Training for Many Business Organizations

The final question provided many answers as some employees and managers think that globalization is the reasons behind making sales training important, others suggested that it is competition and others said that training can raise the company's profits. Training can also improve communication skills. Training should also involve learning how to communicate effectively with all kinds of characters. Training on training can teach a proven salesperson that has proven to be successful. This gives a salesperson a roadmap to keep it on track. You should learn how to look for different signals that indicate a ready-to-buy option.

Reliability and Validity

According to Golafshani, N. (2003), using reliability and validity are common in quantitative research and currently, it's reconsidered within the quantitative analysis paradigm. The validity of this research was three months and it was not enough to accomplish all the facts of the research. Any successful research must be given a lot of time in order for the research to be reasonable and add more value to the reader's knowledge. In my opinion, the result of my research is different from other researches, because the research philosophy, approach, and strategy used in it were tangible and reasonable. Finally, the sample of employees selected for the questionnaire was enough to give better results, but more questions should be added and data should be analyzed in more details

CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, the research philosophy is the development of the research background and the research ethics ensures the protection of rights and information related to the research. Choosing the appropriate research approaches and analysis will help to obtain better results and benefits for any research. Also, it is important to refer to the need for sales training for business organizations in order to improve the sales activity in them. It is able to make salespeople more communicative with customers, realize their needs and meet them. It can also improve the performance of salespeople and make them more effective in delivering the services. I also conclude that companies should raise the awareness of their employees and managers towards the need for sales training in order to make them aware of its benefits.

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APPENDIX

Questionnaire

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. Do you think sales training raises the company profits?				
2. Are sales managers in need for sales training?				
3. Is it important to apply different types of sales training?				
4. Do you think training is able to improve your performance?				

5. State the reasons for the importance of sales training in your organization.

