



Managing an effective sales organization

A model for analyzing the performance of a sales organization in nine dimensions – *by Anders Sahlgren (co-author)*

How to increase performance and sales is a key question in most sales organizations. And what are the implications for those managing these organizations in the digital age? Today, there are many new ways in approaching and servicing customers, complementing the personal approach of a sales force. The speed of change is high, information is readily available, and performance can be measured instantaneously. Taking this into consideration, a fellow management consultant and I have written a book describing which areas to address and what tools are available for management to improve performance in their sales organizations.

The models described in the book are proven and based on academic research. Additionally, the models are further qualified through our decades of personal experiences as leaders for successful sales organizations and as management consultants. Under each area in the book, you will find practical examples of how companies have solved the various challenges in real life, as well as explanations of why it works with reference to marketing models, organizational theory and psychology.

The premise of the book is sales organizations with a sales force, wholly or partially, working in the field with business-to-business sales (B2B).

However, the book and its models are in many aspects applicable to other types of sales organizations, such as telemarketing organizations and sales forces aimed at consumers (B2C).

What is the background to the model

The model is based on practical experience in how to manage sales organizations and has been used as an analytical tool in several projects. As management consultants we have conducted over a thousand interviews of sales people and sales managers at 150 companies in 15 countries where the model has been tested and well received. Under each dimension in the book, we will give numerous examples to illustrate the problem areas and how different companies have handled the issues.

What are the parts of the book

The book is divided into three parts:

Part I provides basic knowledge of the sales organization. We describe its role, go through several common concepts and show the link between the sales organization's productivity and the company's income statement. Part I is primarily intended for readers who have no prior knowledge of marketing and sales organizations.

In part II we go through our model of how to analyze and influence the sales organization's productivity. The model describes nine performance areas, called dimensions, and the tools available for management to improve performance in each area. The nine dimensions are:

- Dimension 1: Territory management
- Dimension 2: Targets, follow-up and rewards
- Dimension 3: Visualizing the performance
- Dimension 4: Forecasting
- Dimension 5: Opportunity follow-up
- Dimension 6: Individual coaching and follow up
- Dimension 7: Activity levels and planning
- Dimension 8: Joint field visits
- Dimension 9: Performance improvement program

Part III provides ideas and methods on how to implement changes in the sales organization with the help of the model, as well as a number of other practical implementation tips.

Throughout the book, cases will be presented with anonymous companies from a wide variety of industries. These are primarily based on our own experiences.

What's the target audience for this book

The book was originally written for university students studying business administration and marketing. Since the book has a very practical perspective, it has also been very well received as a management book. In 2017 it was nominated as the best marketing book in Sweden (by Swedish Marketing Confederation), which inspired us to translate the book to English so it could reach a wider audience. It's suitable for anyone with an interest in sales, marketing or management in general.

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