

Determinants of Sales force Effectiveness: Financially Based Rewards versus Nonfinancial Rewards

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Abstract

The current economic environment in Nigeria has prompted significant cost savings, especially in manufacturing firms and has led to demands for more accountability. In turn, there have been calls for evaluating the contribution of the marketing functions to the firm. Within the marketing department, sales managers are becoming increasingly concerned about justifying their investment in competition for scarce resource, such as additional sales people. This study examined the importance of selected rewards in improving the overall effectiveness of the sales organisation in order to provide sales managers with insights and contribute towards filling an important gap in the literature. Principal component (PC) extraction model was employed in the multiple-factor analysis to predict inter-dependency and interaction outcome among variables. Out of the twenty-nine (29) components analysed, only six principal components extracted accounted for 85.75% of the variation. This suggests that salary compensation, commission incentive, bonus payment, fringe benefits, recognition opportunity for promotion and advancement were the major factors that account for sales persons motivation and effectiveness.

Keywords

Salary, Commission, Bonus Payment, Fringe Benefits, Sales Contests, Recognition Award Opportunity for Promotion, Job Enrichment, Encouragement from Management.

Introduction

Given a set of performance objectives, management must determine the most effective combination of methods to motivate their sales people to achieve their objectives. Motivational tools could be financially based rewards or nonfinancial rewards. Managers often assume that financial incentives are the best motivators and that developing a good compensation package is the only thing they must do to motivate their salesforce. However, some firms, regardless of their size or position in their industries, follow a deliberate policy of offering their sales people opportunities to earn both financial and nonfinancial incentives. Whereas other firms assume that money is not always the best motivator.

Today, few managers actually carry out necessary surveys when designing motivation programs because they presumably believe they know their sales people's needs and desires well enough. Yet, when salespeople's actual valences for rewards have been compared with their manager's perceptions of those valences, the manager's perceptions sometimes turn out to be very inaccurate. For example, in Nwabuko and Uduji (2008), top sales executives believed that their recognition program (nonfinancial reward) was an important reward in the eyes of the salespeople in the brewing firms in Nigeria. But in a subsequent survey of other salespeople's actual valences in the pharmaceutical firms, it was discovered that they rated recognition as the least attractive of seven alternative rewards (Nwosu and Uduji, 2009). Rather than offering rewards that managers think their sales people find attractive, it could well worth the time and effort to conduct a study of salespeople's actual valences for rewards before designing a motivation program for a firm. Therefore, studies that investigated the determinant of salesforce effectiveness can provide senior sales managers with important insights and contribute towards filling an important gap in the literature. Hence, the purpose of this study is to examine the importance of selected reward factors in improving the overall effectiveness of sales organisations in Nigeria. Identification of these factors that have an impact on overall effectiveness can serve as a benchmark against which firms can compare and evaluate their own criteria.

Establishing benchmarks is important both for comparisons among different reward elements within the motivation mix of the firm, as well as between firms and its competitors. External comparisons can provide useful clues about profitability and market share. Internal comparisons of performance measures have the additional benefits of differentiating among the reward variables that competing for the firm's scarce resources. Therefore, sales managers

have the crucial responsibility to make sure that their salesforce contribute to the organisation's objectives effectively and efficiently. The current economic environment in Nigeria has prompted significant cost savings especially in manufacturing, and has led demands for more accountability. In turn, there have been calls for evaluating the contribution of the marketing function to the firm. Within the marketing department, sales managers are becoming increasingly concerned about justifying their investment and are facing stiff competition against each other competing for scarce resources, such as additional salespeople and the components of their reward mix.

Literature Review

For any motivational program to be successful, the sales reps must understand all aspects of their jobs. The reps should have a detailed job description and a careful explanation of what is expected of them. They also need

Table 1: Specific Elements in Motivational Mix

<p>(a) Financially Based Rewards</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Basic compensation plan (salary, commissions, bonus payments, fringe benefits)2. Sales contests <p>(b) Non Financial Rewards</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Recognition awards, such as pins, trophies, certificates2. Praise and encouragement from management3. job enrichment4. Opportunity for promotion (this may also be a financial reward) <p>(c) Other Elements</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Sales meetings and conventions2. Leadership and supervision3. Sales training programs – induction and continuation4. Sales mentoring5. Sales planning elements (forecasts, budgets, quotas, territories)6. Evaluation of salesperson's performance7. General management elements (organizational structure, management's leadership style, channels of Communication)
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Source: Spiro, R.L.; Stanton, W.J. and Rich, G.A. (2003) *Management of a Salesforce*, New Delhi: Tata McGraw-Hill.

to understand how their accomplishments will be evaluated. The key is to establish specific performance objectives which have been agreed upon and can be measured by both the manager and the rep. Given a set of performance objectives, management must determine the most effective combination of methods to motivate their salespeople to achieve their objectives. Motivational tools may be divided into two categories: financial based rewards and nonfinancial rewards. Each type is outlined in table 2.10. Note that many of these are found in the basic sales management tasks of planning, training, compensating, and evaluating (Spiro, Stanton and Rich, 2003: 223-241).

Money is a powerful motivator. Surveys show that salespeople prefer pay raises and cash incentives over any other type of motivational program. These types of rewards are the easiest to administer as well. As a result, many companies use lump-sum cash awards for their salespeople. On the other hand, salesforce *contests* are awards to motivate sales reps to achieve goals specified by management. Contests are a popular motivational device. A contest should have a clear – cut, definite purpose, such as something management wants a salesforce to do that it isn't doing. Contests are best used to achieve such specific goals as getting new accounts, selling specific products, or relieving certain overstocked inventory positions. In planning and conducting a successful contest, managers must design the contest, select the prizes, and promote the contest. The contest should be designed so that each person has

an equal opportunity to win. If the average or poor reps learn that the top producers win all the prizes, they will silently withdraw from the competition. Opportunity to win may be equalized through the use of quotas or by allowing for differences in territories and selling abilities. The rep who makes the greatest improvement relative to others is the winner. In this way, even the poorest salesperson has a chance to win (Marshal and Michael, 2001: 15-17).

A variation of the design, described above, is an open-ended contest in which there is no limit to the number of people who can win by meeting their present goals. In this way, people are competing only with themselves. This is in contrast to a closed-ended contest in which there are a limited number of winners. Johnson and Johnson (US) has successfully used an open program, whereas Glaxo Smithkline (UK) recently used a closed program, which is described in the nearly *International Perspective* box (Nierenberg, 2009:51-53). Another method of broadening the opportunity to win is to use a tiered contest. In this type of program, two or more levels of prizes are awarded. If salespeople perform at or above a certain level, they get a certain prize—say a trip to Europe or North America. If they achieve at a lower level, they get a different prize—may be a trip to South Africa. This can be used in conjunction with an open-ended contest in which everyone can win. Hoffmann-La Roche (Switzerland), a company that sells and leases surgical lasers, has an incentive program in which there are eight levels of prizes with choices at each level (Tungaraza, 2008: 1193-1196).

Contest success depends to a great extent on the attractiveness of the prizes. Cash prizes, merchandise, and travel are frequently used as incentive. Cash prizes have the advantages of giving the rep the greatest choice in how to use the prize. On the other hand, travel and merchandise are more visible and interesting to promote and publicize. Also, some studies have found these noncash prizes to be more effective for motivating sales reps in developed countries than in developing and undeveloped countries. (Pullins, 2001:403-413). In the Hoffmann-La Roche contest described above, one of the top prizes is a two-week African safari. One way to increase the choice associated with merchandise is to use a point system where the winners earn points towards merchandise they may select from a catalog. The sales contest and the prizes which will be given should be widely and continually publicized throughout the duration of the contest. At least 10 percent to 15 percent of the budget for the contest should be spent on promotion. The goal is to keep everyone excited (Colletti and Fiss, 2002:72-94).

While contest can increase sales and boost morale, they may also have some unintended effects. Frequently, sales contests lead to undesirable selling methods, such as overstocking, overselling, and various pressure tactics. In the short-run, such tactics may enable a sales rep to win the contest, but in the long-run they can cause trouble. Many executives object to contests on the grounds that they create morale problems. To some extent, the open-ended and tiered programs can alleviate the possible morale problems. One of the biggest objections to sales contests is that, almost inevitably, a decline in sales occurs afterwards. The salesforce cannot keep up the high level of creativity indefinitely. Also, some crafty sales reps “stock pile” orders by getting customers to delay orders in the period just before the contest begins. Many questions have been raised about the long-run benefits of a contest. If a contest has achieved wider distribution and new dealerships, long-run benefits should occur. But if the contest has focused mainly on sales volume, its long-range value is questionable. Lack of permanent accomplishment is not necessarily bad, however. For instance, many contests are designed for short-run purposes such as selling out one overstocked inventory. In summary, then, contests can be effective motivator, but they must be carefully and thoroughly designed to encourage participation by the greatest number of people (Churchill, Ford and Walker, 2000: 114-126).

Nonfinancial Rewards: Managers often assume that financial incentives are the best motivators and that developing a good compensation package is the only thing they must do to motivate their salesforce. However, evidence suggests that sales reps are motivated by both financial and nonfinancial incentives. In fact, there is evidence that money is not always the best motivator (PettiJohn, PettiJohn and Taylor, 2002: 743-757). A variety of factors, including job enrichment, recognition, promotion, encouragement, and praise, motivate performance. These factors are discussed as follows: *Job Enrichment* – salespeople thrive on challenge. One way manager can challenge reps is by giving them greater responsibility, authority, and control over their jobs. Also, most people like to have variety in their job-related tasks. Doing the same things over and over again quickly becomes boring to someone who is seeking challenge. If managers vary some aspects of the sales job, this can provide a stimulus for increased level of motivation. Finally, like everyone else, salespeople want to feel that they are performing a meaningful task that will

make a significant contribution to their companies and to those around them. Managers must make sure that each salesperson understands that importance of his or her contribution to the company's performance (Piercy, Cravens, Lane and Vorhies, 2006).

Recognition and Honour Awards – A fundamental principle of good human relations is to give full recognition to individuals who deserve commendation. Most salespeople enjoy public recognition of their accomplishments. Plaques, pins, or certificates can be used to recognize accomplishment levels. It is really difficult to give too much recognition to anyone. *Promotions* – Title changes can be another source of motivation. Changing a rep's title from sales representative to a senior sales representative, for example can be used to recognize different levels of accomplishment. Sanofi – Aventis (France) recognizes eight levels of achievement for career salespeople from *detail rep* to *Corporate product executive*. Each level entails a major increase in responsibility (Lucas, 2009: 41). Of course the possibility of being promoted into management is a motivating factor for many salespeople. *Encouragement and Praise* – The easiest and least expensive form of motivation is personal encouragement and praise from the manager. Small things such as a word of encouragement, a personal note, a pat on the back, or a thank you for a job well done goes a long way. Most reps like to feel that someone knows and cares about how much extra effort went into heading off the competitive threat to their largest account or how hard they tried, even though they didn't get that new account (Shaw, 2001: 28-30).

Sales Meetings: Sales meetings are one of the most commonly used methods of motivating salespeople. Most companies have one or more sales meetings a year and some have them as frequently as once a week. The most important aspect of the sales meeting is communication. It gives sales reps the opportunity to interact with management and with fellow reps and makes them feel part of a team (Donavan, Mowen and Brown, 2004: 128-146). Management can use sales meetings to communicate the company's long-term goals and strategic objectives and to explain how important the salesperson's role is in achieving these goals. This instills in the sales rep a sense of self-esteem and pride in and identification with the company. This kind of communication is particularly important for salespeople, who are so often physically isolated from their companies. Also, many of them rarely see each other except at sales meetings. Thus the meetings enable them to develop friendships and build team spirit and solidarity (Jap, 2001:95-108).

Sales meetings are also used to inform reps about product changes and new products, to explain new advertising and marketing programs, to provide training, and to inspire the sales staff to work harder and smarter. Meetings such as these can help the sales staff understand what is expected, improve their knowledge and skills, and build confidence in their efforts to succeed. Planning is the key to success. A poorly planned sales meeting is probably worse than no meeting at all. A boring, tedious meeting in which salespeople have no opportunity to interact and participate can be demoralizing. This problem can be avoided by careful planning, by using speakers who are effective communicators, and by using a variety of communication formats. Videotapes, small-groups discussions, role playing, demonstrations, and question – and – answer sessions can all be effective communication methods. Soliciting input from the reps about what they think should be covered in the meeting can help as well (Johnson and Bharadwaj, 2005: 3-18).

Salesforce Segmentation: It is necessary to stress the importance of recognizing individual differences of the salespeople. Yet it is impractical to design totally different motivational programs for each salesperson. On the other hand, using one program to motivate every rep may not be very effective. Salesforce segmentation offers a balance between the extreme of individual motivation and blanket motivational approaches. In this approach, the salesforce is first segmented or divided into several groups. For example, sales reps can be grouped according to their career stages or their sales expertise. Compensation, communication, supervision, and recognition incentive programs can all be tailored to the specific needs of the group. Another approach is for the company to offer several alternative compensation and benefit packages and let each rep choose which program he or she wants. The company can even offer a menu of incentives and benefits, letting reps choose from the list and in effect design their own programs. Segmentation is a means through which managers can provide rewards that appeal to all the salespeople rather than just some of them (Chonko, Dubinsky, Jones and Robert, 2003: 935-946).

It is important to remember that motivation – the desire to expend effort – is not the only requirement for successful sales performance. Salespeople must have the ability to perform as well as the motivation to do so. The ability to perform sales tasks can be acquired or learned through training and experience. Some pharmaceutical companies hire only experienced, proven salespeople who already have the necessary skills. But when companies hire inexperienced people, management must provide the training for them to gain the necessary skills. It is not enough for the reps to be motivated; they must also know how to do what is expected of them. Recruiting and selection procedures are also important. If pharmaceutical companies hire inexperienced people, they must be certain that those selected have the desired set of skills. It is also importance in both cases to select people whose needs are consistent with the demands or rewards of the particular sales job. The motivation program must be integrated with the entire sales management program. A good motivational program will not compensate for poor recruiting, selection, and training. Motivational policies must be a part of a well-planned and executed sales management program (Uduji and Nnabuko, 2008: 172-196).

Research Method

Data from the study were analysed using descriptive and inferential approaches. Simple tables, charts and table of means were employed as descriptive tools. For hypothesis testing, t-test and correlation analysis were used to judge the significance of the result obtained. In formulating necessary mathematical model that would depict the relationship among the research variables for the purpose of predicting the values of dependent variables, regression analysis was used. SPSS for windows (SPSSWIN Version 15) was used to process and analyse the generated data. Principle Component (PC) extraction model was employed in the multiple-factor analysis to predict inter-dependency and interaction outcome among variables.

Principle Component (PC) extraction model was employed in the multiple-factor analysis to predict inter-dependency and interaction outcome among variables.

Factor analysis is a statistical technique whose common objective is to represent a set of variables in terms of a smaller number of hypothetical variables. That is, it assumes the existence of a system of underlying factors and a system of observed variables, which is linearly dependent on the underlying factors. It assumes that there is a certain correspondence between these two systems and exploits this correspondence to arrive at conclusions about the level of influence of the respective underlying variables to the observed variables. The model has the advantage of determining interaction outcome through the use of pattern matrix and structural matrix, to arrive at the characteristics or variables that are most important in classifying, qualifying or capturing dimensions of change like woodland conversion. When the liner weights associated with common factors according to Jeon and Charles (1978) are arranged in a rectangular form, they are jointly referred to as factor path matrix or factor structure matrix or matrix of factor loadings e.g.:

$$\begin{aligned}X_1 &= b_{11}F_1 + b_{12}F_2 + d_1U_1 \\X_2 &= b_{21}F_1 + b_{22}F_2 + d_2U_2 \\X_3 &= b_{31}F_1 + b_{32}F_2 + d_3U_3 \\X_4 &= b_{41}F_1 + b_{42}F_2 + d_4U_4 \\X_n &= b_nF_1 + b_nF_2 + d_nU_n\end{aligned}$$

where: $b^2_i = b^2_{i1} + d^2_{i2}$. Path matrix differs from structure in that path matrix consist of standardized linear weights

(path coefficients) only, while structure matrix contains respective correlation coefficients between the factors and observed variables. If factors are uncorrelated, that is, one common factor model, a path Matrix is equivalent to a structure matrix: The general form of determining the level or proportion of variance of respective observed variables X_s , as determined by the common factor (underlying factor) is expressed thus: $\text{Var } X_1 = b^2_{11} + d^2_{11}$ or

$\text{Var } X_2 = b^2_{21} + d^2_{21}$ The weight (b^2_i and d^2_i) represents the square of the correlations or square of factor loadings and explains the proportion of the X_s that is determined by the common factor and unique factor receptively. This proportion (i.e. the square of the factor loading) is called communality (h^2) in factor analysis. The uniqueness component is $1 - h^2$, while the covariance of the underlying factors and the observed variable (cov F, X) is their correlation or their standard regression coefficient. The covariance of X_1 and X_2 is b_1b_2 when one common factor or orthogonal multiple common factors are involved. Factorial determination of variance refers to the degree to which the observed variables are determined by the common factor: $\sum h^2_i/m$ where m stands for number of variables. This index is the average of proportion of variance of observed variables explained by the single common factor. Significant loadings are those $\geq \pm 0.30$ (absolute value) for sample size of ≥ 50 . Also the result of the structural/path matrix expressed in % gives the overall factorial determination (D^2), which represents a percentage of the variance among the observed variable that is determined by the common factors (Ugwuonah, 2005; Ugwuonah and Uduji, 2008; Jeon and Charles, 1978; Thurstone and Mueller, 1979).

Data Presentation and Analysis

Principal components (PC) extraction on the determinant was used to analyse the proportion of variations in the observed variables that are associated with the common factors. It produced the six principal components (PCs) also called common factors or underlying factors as shown in table 2.

Table 2 Component Extraction and Total Variance Expected

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	17.814	52.393	52.393	17.814	52.393	52.393	12.214	35.924	35.924
2	4.304	12.658	65.052	4.304	12.658	65.052	6.415	18.869	54.793
3	2.195	6.456	71.507	2.195	6.456	71.507	3.584	10.541	65.333
4	1.946	5.724	77.232	1.946	5.724	77.232	3.283	9.656	74.989
5	1.492	4.388	81.620	1.492	4.388	81.620	1.911	5.619	80.609
6	1.397	4.109	85.729	1.397	4.109	85.729	1.741	5.121	85.729
7	.957	2.814	88.544						
8	.891	2.621	91.164						
9	.692	2.035	93.199						
10	.632	1.859	95.058						
11	.475	1.396	96.454						
12	.252	.742	97.196						
13	.218	.642	97.838						
14	.169	.498	98.336						
15	.138	.404	98.741						

16	.112	.328	99.069					
17	.075	.221	99.290					
18	.054	.160	99.450					
19	.045	.134	99.583					
20	.037	.110	99.694					
21	.026	.075	99.769					
22	.019	.055	99.824					
23	.017	.049	99.873					
24	.010	.029	99.902					
25	.009	.025	99.927					
26	.007	.020	99.947					
27	.006	.018	99.965					
28	.004	.011	99.977					
29	.003	.010	99.986					
30	.003	.008	99.994					
31	.002	.005	99.999					
32	.000	.001	100.000					
33	7.003E-5	.000	100.000					
34	1.512E-5	4.446E-5	100.000					

Source: Analysis of Field Data, 2010.

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Table 2 shows that out of the twenty-nine (29) components analysed, only six principal components extrated accounted for 85.75% of the variation. This suggests that salary compensation, commission incentive, bonus payment, fringe benefits, recognition of awards for outstanding performance, opportunity for promotion and advancement were the major factors that account for salespersons motivation. These components were further used as independent variables to regress customer relationship management index. The result showed statistical significant effect of the independent variables of the CRM at $P \leq 0.05$ level of significant, and a correspondence of $F = 129.925$.

Table 3 Component Loading on Variables

	Component					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
Salary	.757	.148	.258	-.145	.054	-.020
Commission	.598	.563	.021	-.007	-.113	-.259
Bonus payments	.728	.412	.048	-.109	.082	-.149
Fringe benefits	.720	.395	.132	-.233	.194	.133
Recognition of awards for outstanding performance	.501	.527	-.103	.384	.190	-.178
Opportunity for promotion and advancement	.512	.391	-.068	.526	-.053	-.324
Participative goal setting	.701	.527	.081	.135	-.163	-.259
Praise and encouragement from management	.787	.080	.107	.140	.481	-.137
Job enrichment, such as greater responsibility	.655	.001	.424	.055	-.303	-.238
Sales training programs, such as ICT	.725	-.123	-.212	.347	.274	-.405
Sales planning elements such as forecasts	.754	.214	.364	-.260	.155	-.154
Sales contests	.729	.016	.440	-.237	.076	-.007
Evaluation of salespersons performance	.764	-.067	.429	-.226	.050	-.004
Management leadership style	.706	.279	.302	-.140	-.220	-.010
Adequate salary gives a salesperson degree of effectiveness	.944	-.160	-.201	-.062	.070	.099
Commission incentive is a strong motivation factor	.927	-.014	-.246	-.014	.068	.168
Tying bonus payments to the accomplishment of sales goals	.907	-.307	-.053	.031	-.158	.146
Providing fringe benefits work to increase the effectiveness	.964	-.081	-.105	.018	-.115	.084
Special recognition awards encourage salespeople	.926	.021	-.301	.022	.040	.162
Opportunity for promotion and advancement moves salespeople	.898	-.336	-.066	.082	-.070	.087

Source: Analysis of Field Data, 2010

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Table 3 shows the component loading that described the relationship that exist between the study variables and the components. Some of the components in the table load higher on some variables than the other. While some load evenly on all variables. The table indicates a covariances of the original variables with the components. The sum of squares of each of the loadings for each component above, gave the variance accounted for by each component.

Implication of Findings

The implication of these findings is that sales managers should:

1. Get to know what each salesperson values and what each one is striving for (unrealised needs).
2. Be wiling to increase the responsibility given to salespeople in mundane jobs.
3. Realise that training can improve motivation as well as capabilities by strengthening the link between effort and performance.
4. Provide targets that are valued to be attainable yet provide a challenge to salespeople.
5. Link rewards to the performance they want improved.
6. Recognise that rewards can be both financial and nonfinancial to achieve a salesforce effectiveness

Recommendations

It is therefore recommended that sales managers should:

1. Convince salespeople that they will sell more by working harder or by being trained to work hard (e.g. more efficient call planning, developing selling skills).

2. Convince salespeople that the rewards for better performance are worth the extra effort. This implies that the sales manager should give rewards that are valued, and attempt to sell the worth of those rewards to the salesforce. The reward should be both financial and non-financial

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