

## **TECHNICAL SUPPORT SALES REPRESENTATIVES BUSINESS**

### **Marcia Rohr da Cruz**

Post-Graduate Program in Administration,  
University of Caxias do Sul – Caxias do Sul, RS, Brazil  
E-mail: marciarohrcruz@gmail.com

### **Eliana Andréa Severo**

Post-Graduate Program in Administration,  
University of Caxias do Sul – Caxias do Sul, RS, Brazil  
E-mail: elianasevero@hotmail.com.br

### **Vilson Siqueira de Moraes**

Post-Graduate Program in Administration,  
University of Caxias do Sul – Caxias do Sul, RS, Brazil  
E-mail: wilsonmoraes@brturbo.com.br

### **Maria Emilia Camargo**

Post-Graduate Program in Administration,  
University of Caxias do Sul – Caxias do Sul, RS, Brazil  
E-mail: kamargo@terra.com.br

### **Marta Elisete Ventura da Motta**

Post-Graduate Program in Administration,  
University of Caxias do Sul – Caxias do Sul, RS, Brazil  
E-mail: kamargo@terra.com.br

### **Walter Priesnitz Filho**

CTISM – Federal University of Santa Maria, Santa Maria, RS, Brazil  
E-mail: prof.walter@gmail.com

### **Rosecler Maschio Giliol**

University of Caxias do Sul, Caxias do Sul, RS, Brazil  
E-mail: rgilioli@terra.com.br

## **Abstract**

*For an increase in their profits or increase the sales of a product companies must perform a set of methods and resources aimed at increasing the level of sales, so the promotion should provide a concrete benefit to the consumer, making them aware in that moment and bringing the return that he seeks or needs. In order to verify the effectiveness of the support given by the manufacturer of air springs to their representatives to achieve sales, whether the company knows the playing field representative of each of your product, identify the profile of sales representatives influence and find out how is the approach to the customer's representative is that this study was conducted. As for the construction methods were used quantitative analysis to support how the company was going in view of their sales representatives and even qualitative analysis identifying the issues that must be worked to improve customer service. With this study was identified that the manufacturer must work together with all sales representatives, providing technical support for both the achievement of sales but also in helping to solve problems and meeting the needs of those who purchase the product. It was also noted by most respondents as the technical support provided by the manufacturer is meeting their needs for the realization of sales and technical customer service. The company knows the playing field representatives and it was not possible with this study verify that the profile of influence on their sales representatives.*

**Keywords:** *Sales, representatives, business support.*

## **1. Introduction**

The market demands that organizations that allow them to make their businesses or products reach the consumer regardless of where that is fast, trouble-free service and satisfying their needs.

As consumers' needs whether it be natural or legal person is constantly changing and knowing that the demands are increasing in the case of a purchase, companies seek to create ways to meet this demand of demand for consumption of products and services.

The commercial representation is one of the organizations found to get closer to your customer, as this can act professional in your city to the needs of the local market and keeping with the company that represents a contact of service provider.

The sales representative is a professional sales representative who acts as stand-alone or as a company representative, responsible for sales of equipment or products from a manufacturer in a given region, usually working in the same business segment. (e.g. food, beverages, footwear) may sell to retailers, wholesalers, distributors, etc.

This professional does not have a fixed place of work, should be in contact with customers of the products it represents, for this to happen need to travel locally or across the country to visit clients. The use of computer and other electronic media is essential to maintain communication with the company and meet the customers when they need them. Interact with a variety of people, customers, sales managers, finance, marketing, technical and other sellers

The sales professional should do an analysis of how your customers buy, they are based and to evaluate when making a purchase and this action strategies from the market should be adopted. So the manufacturer needs to be in contact with your sales representative to be aware of how this professional is acting in the market and what is the impression you are leaving your customers about your product.

For Battle (2001, p. 151), "the whole production chain must think on how to offer more integrated customer value at less cost (acquisition, use and disposal), offering convenience in obtaining the value and showing all these attributes in time to communicate products and services to customers. " Every change that occurs is motivated by changing your pattern, or new laws on the consumer side chain make the suits (Megiddo and Xavier, 2003).

In order to verify the effectiveness of the support given by the manufacturer of air springs to their representatives to achieve sales, whether the company knows the playing field representative of each of your product, identify the profile of sales representatives influence and find out how is the approach to the customer's representative is that this study was conducted. After the introductory section, this article is organized as follows: the theory background; the methodology of the study; the results and discussion and the final considerations.

## **2. THEORY BACKGROUND**

### **2.1 Disclosure of the product**

The forms for disclosure of a product are different, the first step to be followed may be to encourage viral marketing (Seth, 2001) or marketing word-of-mouth that involves the smallest investment, this form of marketing is any strategy that encourages individuals to pass along your marketing message (your sales pitch), creating an opportunity for exponential growth in exposure and influence of this message. Viral second Seth (2001) is a type of promotion where the product or service itself promotes spreading over the network like a virus.

After you have exhausted the potential of interpersonal communication, the company can invest in mass media such as television, radio, newspaper, magazine, outdoor, cinema, pamphlets, etc.

Another option for sales to happen is the company seeking commercial representation, many businesses and branches of business you choose to rely on the service of the representatives of their products in other cities in all states, or even in the city where it is inserted.

The representative assumes the identity of that company that hired his services and from that part of the same group, wear the same shirt and go looking for more sales or even the acquisition of new customers for your business (SEBRAE / SP).

The sales representative can use tools that will assist in your sales, you can resort to more targeted media, directed and focused, you can also choose to make visits in person, as well as take advantage of marketing tools, internet, newspaper advertisements and magazines with specialized audiences.

If the company has a limited marketing reach, and as public areas and do not have large financial resources to invest in marketing, it can seek to have point of sale that is where the relationship with the client effectively.

For this reason it happens is where the culmination of an entire economic cycle that begins in the very selection of what the customer will buy or what will be manufactured and which is not confined to its own purchase, but the expectation that a relationship is established long term which results in different shopping experiences.

### 2.1.2 The 4 Ps of Marketing

In marketing, the principles that form the indispensable basis to support the implementation of successful strategies of the market, are represented in a combination of four letters: the four Ps. They represent the key areas where marketing should work: Product, Price, Promotion and Point.

The University of Michigan Professor Jerome McCarthy (1997), enhanced the Theory of Borden and defined as the four major groups of activities that represent the ingredients of the compound and separated: 1 Product, Price 2, 3 and 4 Place Promotion. Currently, the marketing mix is known internationally as "The 4 Ps of Marketing." Therefore, many countries have tried to translate it into your language groups in the 4 words that keep the spelling starting with "P". In Brazil, the group went to be called: Product, Price, Promotion and Place (or Point of Sale). The first "P", ie, product is tied to quality, presentation and Brand.

Philip Kotler (1985), a product is all that can satisfy a craving. When making your purchase decision, the consumer, does taking into account tangible and intangible aspects. The tangible aspects can be the size, color, model, style, packaging, labeling, etc. While the brand may be intangible, the guarantees, the image, the status that derives from its consumption, bundled services, etc.

The second "P", which represents the price, can be conceptualized as the monetary expression of value of an asset, or the price is the value that consumers are willing to pay in the purchase of property. In view of Grönroos (2003) the added value is achieved by facilitating services and support services. Support services, however, are used only as a means of competition

The third "P" with respect to the Promotion. Merchandising and Sales Promotion appear in the books of Management and Marketing can not be considered new topics and as cited by Kotler (1996, cited in Boston, Allyn & Bacon, 1967, p. 401).

The effects of sales promotions are usually measurable and mediate more than propaganda. However, there is little research and construction of decision models for her. "After a few years to promote sales already appeared as an incentive tool to encourage the purchase more quickly or in greater volume by customer or dealer."

According to Kotler (1998, p. 577), sales promotion is a key ingredient in marketing campaigns. While advertising offers a reason for buying, sales promotion offers an incentive to buy. Sales promotion includes tools for consumer promotion (coupons, discounts, awards, gifts); promotion intermediaries (special conditions of purchase discounts, contests and free goods) and promotions for the sales force.

The fourth "P", the point of sale or distribution can be understood as the combination of agents through which the product flows from the original seller (usually the manufacturer) to the end consumer.

Regarding the placing of the point of sale, should be given to some basic criteria to be achieved satisfactory levels of efficiency, they may be placed in areas of high traffic, so as to be seen by as many people as possible.

It is still necessary to avoid conflict between the product informed by the visual programming point of sale and the product effectively exposed on site, for example, the cleaning products industry, the exposure of a food product. The visual and physical access to the product needs to be facilitated, among other criteria.

There is also the need of the constant search for innovative point of sale, point of sale alternative. In these cases, two strategic aspects should be considered: the association of the product to the point of sale, and the reaction of consumers, attempting to avoid any damage, even if only potential.

### 2.1.3 Sales Administration

Relations with the sales team must be guided by the wide availability and efficient service to the promotional structure of the sellers, who must continually seek to develop, refine and recycle around the promotional theme.

According SEBRAE / SP (Art. 1 of Law 4.886/65) "carries on business representation independent person or entity, without employment relationship, which plays on a non-possible because of one or more mediation market for conducting business, managing tenders or requests to forward them to the represented, or not practice acts relating to the execution of business."

Communication is a key to the achievement of sales, and no negotiation is possible without effective communication, you also need a good relationship between all parties involved in negotiating for this to take place effectively respecting the individual interests of each party involved in business.

To reach an agreement must be put business options; they must be offered all the possibilities and find ways to convince the other party that is being treated fairly.

The comprehensive planning of sales consistent with the conditions of the company's expansion is critical because it is useless to choose an excellent professional if the company does not know how to use it.

For the company to obtain positive results it should listen to their sales representatives, by virtue of the representative to do field work with clients, he has information and different perceptions of who is in the office of the company. In general, this information may be used as "raw material" for identifying market trends, to develop new products, about the performance of competitors and to improve certain processes.

To generate mutual gains the principle governing the relationship with the representative is the "interdependence". Treat them as enemies that must be maximized, and vice versa, is the first step to destroy the relationship. The company knows that the representative is who takes your brand to all places (SEBRAE / SP).

The company and the representative must have a clear idea both need actions for mutual gain, both must be based on win-win policy. (Womack, Jones and Ross, 1991; HELPER, 1991).

## 3. Methodology of the study

### 3.1 Method

The research was descriptive type, using the case study strategy, as according to Yin (2001, p.25) "The case study is an empirical study that investigates a phenomenon and the current context within the context of reality when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly defined and are used in which multiple sources of evidence. "

For Yin (2001, p.43), any case study that would outline the unit of analysis, then, after analyzing the research question, it was defined as a parameter for analysis from the interviews in relation to the support provided by the company to representatives and also how they seek support for carrying out their work. For this analysis was carried out using a questionnaire applied to all representatives of the manufacturer of air springs, and these are representing the company's business across the country.

In relation to this research was conducted with 17 representatives of Alfa Industry and Trade Ltda.. The representation is made in the following states, regions or capitals. Amapá, Pará, Amazonas, Roraima,

Acre, Bahia, Sergipe, Ceará, São Paulo, Mato Grosso, Mato Grosso do Sul, overseas markets, Minas Gerais, Espirito Santo, Parana, Pernambuco, Rio Grande do Norte, Alagoas, Paraíba, Piauí, Maranhão, Rio de Janeiro, Rio Grande do Sul, Santa Catarina, Triângulo Mineiro, Goiás.

He was part of the research method used literature and questionnaire. According to Malhotra (2001), the literature helps define the research problem and identify key issues on the subject.

### *3.2 Characterization of survey*

In this investigation the initial population was composed of all the company's sales representatives; however were not all that returned the questionnaires, so the analysis was performed with the responses of 15 questionnaires, which equals 89% of the population to be surveyed.

The survey instrument was sent by the vendor's internal manufacturer of air springs, through the electronic address, means by which this is also the aid and support to sales.

The questionnaire was composed of blocks, the block I referred to age, education and time working with the sales representative.

In block II, the questions were about specific information, such as the use of the system (site) of the company for more information about the product that sells if the company's system has the necessary information to assist their work in sales, as sales are carried out, how often contact the representative with the merchants inside the company for information or assistance, when they come into contact with the inside sales needs are met, the representative is no customer contact beyond the sale, as are made the search for new customers, the support material (catalog, website) is effective for customer service; how customers perceive the work of the representative, the representative know you resell the products and that the Trade Representative considers the creation the technical department for product training.

Regarding the type of question was chosen to form closed, as are best suited to the study. However, a question was included in the "other" option so that if the representative had the need to report something could make it in this space, so you can refer to other important aspects not considered in the matter

#### *3.2.1 Company A Empresa Alfa*

Founded in 1995, operates in the area of road, being a pioneer in product innovation in its field. Aims to develop projects for clients as needed, seeking a prompt delivery with daily or weekly, depending on the schedule

Throughout its history, company Alfa has developed its own tooling vulcanization and molding for the production of pneumatic bellows - until now imported products - improving cost and flexibility in maintenance. Today the company occupies a pavilion of approximately 1000m<sup>2</sup> and has a staff of approximately 55 employees.

#### *3.2.2 Company sales representatives*

The choice of representatives is given according to the company as follows: "the selection is made by the representatives of the need to study a region. Today we serve nearly all of Brazil and there is no region that does not have a representative of our company.

The company was asked to draw a profile to choose their representatives and trade so that was the answer. "We have a unique profile for representation, but they study the numbers presented and if the poor performance to continue for a long time, we started with a plan of action on him and if not reverse the situation, we change. The profile of the desired representation is analyzed on the number of clients in its

portfolio, relationships with these customers and commercial representation of time, which ends up being converted into sales. "

We also asked the company because it has the trade representative and the answer comes in the sequence, "is the easiest way to find today to bring our products to the regions we want to address. Are not employees of the company and therefore has no obligation to sell. Stipulate certain conditions to the sale to promote them and encourage the sale of several ways, but we depend on them to sell. For now, the product is well accepted by the market but it will become a problem if the market does not absorb more than our production. "

### 3.2.3 The Data Collection Instrument

After completion of the theoretical framework was drawn up a script of questions for the survey was made of the data from the representatives of the manufacturer of air springs. The survey formed the basis for data analysis.

The script issues contemplated points regarding the profile of sales representatives, to the knowledge they have of products and also resell the service they receive from the company to effect sales. This study sought to verify that the profile of sales representatives influence on sales if the company is providing adequate support so that sales can be carried out and the investigation was also made as to whether the company meets the performance of their sales representatives.

To answer all these questions were sent an online questionnaire for each sales representative, which were answered and returned, and was also sent an online questionnaire to the company manager so that it could respond to questions by the company.

17 questionnaires were sent to all sales representatives of the company studied and returned to their questionnaire responses 15.

The questionnaire consisted of two blocks, where the first block of questions contained general information, whose objective was to profile the company's sales representatives. The second block of questions consisted of specific information and was intended to respond to the specific objectives of this study. The survey conducted with the manager had only one block of questions all aimed at achieving a satisfactory outcome in relation to the research objectives.

## 4. Results and discussion

The analysis was made from data collected with the manufacturer, and also by using percentage based on the theories of product disclosure, the four "Ps" of marketing and sales management.

Regarding the use of the system (site) the company's degree of agreement was 93%, which leads to the interpretation that this is the way that gives the relationship between the company and its sales representatives. Regarding the information contained on the site to assist with sales 73% said yes and 27% did not answer. The sale is made through direct contact with the customer 47% direct customer contact by phone and 47% and 7% by phone.

Contact with domestic sales of the company makes every day to 20%, up to once a week 20%, up to two times per week 20% once every fifteen days 7% once a month 7% and 13 % did not answer.

The inside sales representatives meet the needs of 67% where the needs are met, 27% needs are met partially, and 6% did not answer.

In addition to performing sales representatives in 67% make a contact to see if the customer's need was met, 20% is after-sales service and 13% make a contact to verify the customer's need has been met and after-sales service.

The contact with new customers is 67% done with visits to workshops that work with the sale of the product, 13% did not seek customers, they go to the store, 7% do telemarketing, 13% do telemarketing and conduct visits to workshops work with product sales and 6% of the city is seeking.

Regarding the effectiveness of the support materials (catalog and Web site) for customer service to 60% partially, 33% and 7% did not fully use the material for disclosure.

The representatives indicated that customers' perception about their work is: very good when asked for 87% and 13% very good with immediate feedback.

With regard to knowledge of the products that represent 60% this is for very good because it is always being updated, 20% good, knowing full product line, 13% fair, it does not know our product and 7% did not answer.

The creation of the technical department would be of fundamental importance to sales under 93% of sales representatives and 7% in shares would help in situations of buying and selling.

## **5. Final considerations**

When performing the data collection and compilation of the same make was identified that the work of sales representatives succeed from the moment that the goals, objectives and provisions of these are the same as the company has.

In this context a company needs to provide solid support for professionals working in sales, sales representative in this case, because that way they can better serve their customers and consequently the company will fulfill its role and achieve its purposes.

Were corroborated ideas (Womack, Jones and Ross, 1991; HELPER, 1991) which report that the company and the representative must have a clear idea both need actions for mutual gain, where everyone must be based on policy win-win. Otherwise if someone has lost both of dispute behavior as it affects the reliability of the market and this will hurt both the manufacturer and to the representative.

It was clear from the survey data that the company knows the playing field representatives, which is itself already determined by the time it contacts the trade representative, but not aware of how they conduct their sales , ie, they are based to address customers.

For the sales representatives to examine ways of approach to customers is made by telephone, are also visits to workshops. It follows then that there is a direct contact with representatives of customers.

He noticed also that the support offered by the company to achieve sales are meeting the needs of representatives, but needs improvement on site updates, access to catalog and technical support, and in this specific improvements are already being implemented by including the sales team for a Technical Promoter.

## REFERENCES

- Batalha, M. O. (2001). *Gestão agroindustrial*. São Paulo: Editora Atlas.
- Gil, A. C. (1999). *Métodos e técnicas de pesquisa social*. 5.ed. São Paulo: Atlas.
- Godin, S. (2001). *Marketing ideavirus: como transformar suas idéias em epidemias que irão incendiar o mercado*. Rio de Janeiro: Campus.
- Grönroos, C.. (2003). *Marketing: gerenciamento e serviços*. Rio de Janeiro: Elsevier, 481p.
- Helper, S. (1991). How much has really changed between U.S. automakers and their suppliers? *Sloan Management Review*, p. 15-28, Summer .
- Yin, R.K. (2001). *Estudo de caso: planejamento e métodos*. 2 ed. Porto Alegre: Bookman, 205p.
- Kotler, P.. (1985). *Marketing (ed. compacta)* - 3a. Edição. São Paulo, Atlas.
- \_\_\_\_\_, P.. (1998). *Administração de Marketing: análise, planejamento, implementação e controle*. 5. ed. São Paulo: Atlas.
- \_\_\_\_\_, P. (1996). *Marketing. Edição compacta*. São Paulo: Atlas.
- Malhotra, N. K. (2001). *Pesquisa de marketing: uma orientação aplicada*. 3. ed. Porto Alegre: Bookman.
- McCarthy, E. J.; Perreault Jr, W. D. (1997). *Marketing Essencial – uma abordagem gerencial e global*. São Paulo: Atlas.
- Megido, J. L. T., Xavier, C. (2003). *Marketing & agribusiness*. 4º ed. São Paulo: Editora Atlas S.A.
- Womack, J. P., Jones, D. T., Roos, D. (1991). *The machine that changed the world*. New York: Harper Perennial.
- [Online] Available: <http://www.sebraesp.com.br/pesquisa.aspx?bsc=Representante> (August 20, 2009)