

Today, I Fired My Sales Force!

By

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Well actually, it's been 18 months since we rolled out the product and distribution changes to capture the new opportunities being created by digital business. And today, I replaced the last of the original team except for Lynn who is calling on our biggest customer. I'm wondering how long I can hold on to even Lynn. She keeps delivering the revenue but margins are shrinking and the relationship just isn't moving forward.

I tried everything to get the team to change. I fought for special incentives, new lead generation resources, extra training, and one-on-one sales calls. I showcased wins on team calls, changed our CRM system, and even hired a consultant to come in and train the entire sales force in consultative selling. There were a couple of sparks of hope, but in the end the only thing that worked was

to change the people. I feel terrible about the impact on the people and their families, and not to mention the incredible loss of customer relationships and tribal knowledge. But, what else could I do?

Sound familiar? To aid business and sales managers who need to chart a path through sales

Companies literally spend billions training sales people and yet continue to have problems transforming sales teams. This paper describes the results of a pilot survey conducted with sales teams in the Americas and Asia.

transformation, two theories: innovation diffusion theory and informing science in a complex landscape, are applied to help explain this ubiquitous problem. In addition, results of a global pilot study are presented that provides insights into the sales transformation

process and best practices to manage through it. Sales managers, business leaders and sales people alike can use these research insights to illuminate their own journey through sales transformation.

Keywords: Sales, Innovation Diffusion, Motivation, Organization Change, Training, Change Management, Management

Introduction

Over the past 30 years as a business leader and now as a researcher focused on sales transformation I've observed, participated, and led sales transformations across industries and regions. Sales transformation is a common event. A competitor enters the market, technology disrupts the value chain, regulations/laws are passed, customers drive a company to add value to the product and distribution channels are modified to include hosted services. In each case, the sales force has to pivot--hard. Companies change strategy with a single decision, but sales people and the supporting organizations don't. The managerial reflex is to attribute the challenge to sales person motivation, the organization needs to work harder, or simply that people resist change. But as our intrepid sales manager in the Executive Summary explained, these tools are not enough to transform a sales organization. And the option of last resort is to replace the people.

To move past folklore and pop culture "fix it" management, research rigor and new theories are needed to examine the sales transformation phenomena with a different lens. This paper presents two theories that provide new clarity to the problem, a summary of the academic literature, and the results of a pilot study that examined sales resource opinions before and after a formal 2-day sales training program.

Innovation diffusion and informing science present new paradigms to the common approach of managing change. Much like new theories in the physical sciences change our understanding of events and causes in nature, changing management perspective by applying different theories to managing people, challenges the conventional paradigm and provides renewed energy to tackle longstanding vexing problems. Although innovation diffusion has been studied for many years in various disciplines, it was the hybrid corn study in the 1940s that has most impacted its development (Ryan & Gross, 1943). Researchers were interested in finding out why some farmers adopted new crop methods and others delayed. The results demonstrated that people adopt innovations at different rates and little can be done to make someone adopt before they are ready. Innovation diffusion theory helps to explain why despite trying "everything" our example manager was unable to affect the change he was seeking.

Informing science is another important part of the puzzle. Informing Science attempts to explain the process of transferring information to people. Informing science is a transdiscipline that came to light

in the 1990s to foster collaboration across disciplines that study informing. A particularly valuable insight from informing science is the concept of a complex landscape. A complex landscape is indicated when a person has optimized behavior at a point of localized fitness. Or stated alternatively, a sales person has found a set of tools and behaviors that works in the given environment. Informing science suggests that sales people will not change behavior until such time that the point of current fitness becomes sufficiently uncomfortable for the salesperson. This reluctance to change is caused by a loss of efficiency that naturally occurs as one moves from one point of fitness to a new localized point of fitness. Applying this theory to sales--a sales person will continue doing what s/he has previously done until s/he cannot be successful with the current behavior.

The data presented in this paper was obtained from two pilot survey groups. The first group was from the Americas and the second group was from Asia. Both groups received the same surveys before and after a certified instructor led a two-day training course in consultative selling. The surveys were created to explore the key tenants of the two suggested theories (innovation diffusion and informing science in complex landscapes) and explore sales resource reactions to the training. As predicted by the two theories, the data shows differing attitudes toward adopting the new sales skills as well as information pointing towards a complex landscape. The data from the surveys is summarized in the findings portion of the paper that follows.

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Innovation Diffusion

Innovation diffusion theory attempts to explain why people adopt innovations at different rates. Everett Rogers in his seminal work *Diffusion of Innovations* shares that the phenomena has been observed across cultures and regions. Rogers describes examples in farming, family planning, education, public health (HIV/AIDs prevention) and marketing to name just a few. In this paper, innovation diffusion theory is explored as a framework to explain the differences in sales person adoption of new selling techniques. The paper also suggests techniques that could be employed within the theory to accelerate change.

Innovation diffusion explains that people will adopt an innovation at different rates. Plotting the population's rate of adoption, the distribution is a standard "bell" curve. A population can be divided into five innovation adoption categories based on the time it takes for the group to adopt an innovation (Moore & Benbasat, 1991):

- Innovator
- Early Adopter
- Early Majority
- Late Majority
- Laggards

Plotting the population innovation adoption against time results in a plot that resembles an “S” laying on its side (“S” curve). Research suggests some of the parameters that affect innovation adoption are the amount of interaction an individual has outside of the population and how easily the innovation can be trialed and observed. One often used tactic to accelerate innovation adoption is to introduce a change agent to the population. The change agent works in the population to instruct, understand objections, and suggest approaches to mediate concerns.

The described research hypothesizes that sales transformation includes adopting new innovations and that the sales force is similar to other populations, and as such exhibits the normal curve distribution of innovation diffusion types. The results of such a finding would call into question the common practice of attempting to train an entire sales force at the same time.

Informing Science and Complex Landscapes

Informing science is the study of systems that inform. In the context of this paper, informing science provides insights into the process and struggles of communicating, and having sales people adopt new tools and information. A complex landscape suggests that each sales person is at a point of fitness based on his/her collective experiences and personality traits (Gill & Hicks, 2006), (Gill, 2008). Each sales person has developed his or her unique collection of skills to sell effectively and has had these experiences validated by meeting sales quotas. For Informing science this complex landscape therefore mandates that to be effective, the anticipated training would need to address the fact that each sales person was starting from a different point with his/her own unique skill set and would thus require a personalized unique training journey.

It is hypothesized that the sales force is a diverse population operating at different points of fitness. This complex landscape presents a challenge for training in that each sales person is operating at a point of fitness. As such, significant effort must be applied to move the sales resource from the current point of fitness to a new point of fitness. Stated differently, sales people are comfortable where they are and sales management must make the current state

uncomfortable enough to warrant moving away from the current behaviors to a new set of behaviors.

Review of Research

Given that sales is the transfer function that converts a company’s products into cash, it’s no surprise that improving sales effectiveness is a topic of great interest to researchers. Type “sales training” in google scholar search and you will receive a list of more than 1.8M results. Sales training literature is expansive with diverse topics and perspectives. Surveying the sales training literature, one finds papers on training processes, assessments, effectiveness, and tools. Interesting articles are available that describe training shortcomings (Honeycutt, Howe, & Ingram, 1993), high tech tools (Erffmeyer, Russ, & Hair, 1992) and effectiveness (Román, Ruiz, & Luis Munuera, 2002) to name just some of the topics. While interesting and informative, the literature focuses heavily on the effect of different tools on productivity results and tends to treat the sales force as a single entity. One article that alludes to individual differences in training results was published in *Industrial Marketing Management* by Dubinsky. Dubinsky comments,

“Effects of sales training are mediated by trainee aptitude and other personal characteristics.” Later in the same article Dubinsky adds, “The paucity of sales training research is probably because sales managers intuitively feel training makes a positive

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contribution to the sales force... academicians do not perform the research necessary to support sales manager’s assumptions” (Dubinsky, 1981). Similarly, a potential explanation for so much of the literature addressing the salesforce as a single entity may be that companies tend to train the entire sales force with the same curricula. Thus, the data available to study pertains to a group rather than an individual.

Refining the search to “sales transformation” uncovered an interesting article from the *Journal of Change Management* where Piercy and Lane describe that “traditional sales focus” is on the “seller” and a “strategic customer focus” is on the “end-user.” This distinction begins the path toward an internal/external orientation of selling behavior. Piercy and Lane also provide insights into purchase behavior when the authors commented about less sophisticated sellers, “The seller is no more than a commodity supplier, and can be treated as such (product is bought on price and technical specification).” However, like much of the broader research, Piercy and Lane focus on the sales force as a whole, likening the sales transformation process to “strategic supply chain models.” Seeking better insights into the role of

the individual in sales transformation--innovation diffusion and informing science were investigated as theories that could help explain the role of the individual in sales training. While the theories themselves provide important potential contributions to understanding the phenomena, the research is limited with regard to the intersection of sales training and the theories. Searching for innovation diffusion

Methodology

In support of the research, a pilot study was conducted in the fall of 2015. The pilot study consisted of a survey administered to two groups of sales people before and after a trained instructor facilitated a two-day sales training class in consultative selling. The sales people were from around the world, and represented a diverse set of experiences and varying years selling. While the observations and understanding of the issues surrounding sales transformation have been ongoing for almost 30 years, exposure to the innovation diffusion theory and informing science complex landscape theories was recent and occurred in the spring of 2015 during coursework at the University of South Florida. It was during a research course and a case writing course that the two theories were introduced along with other theories that are often applied to explain changes in the sales force. Two of the most commonly applied theories are self-determined theory (motivation) and agency theory (Miles, 2012). Literature reviews and readings of texts including Rogers *Diffusion of Innovation* and Gill's *Informing Business* provided new insights into the sales transformation problem.

Fortuitously, the opportunity to participate in sales training with groups around the globe arose. Four sales training sessions with the same content were planned. The first session was facilitated by an outside resource and the subsequent three were facilitated by the same certified instructor. First hand observations were made during the first two course deliveries. These experiences along with an expert panel and the theories provided the foundation for the surveys. The surveys were then administered in the final two sessions.

In addition to the theories, the surveys were created using a diverse expert panel consisting of sales, marketing, male and female resources aged from 20s to 50s. This same panel was leveraged throughout the development process and in reviewing the survey findings. The first step in creating the surveys was to meet individually with each panel member. These first sessions were open ended discussions. A discussion guide was used solely to ensure that the same key points were captured in each of the interviews. After developing the survey, each resource was again interviewed separately and reviewed the pre-training and post-training survey instruments. The third step was then to review the feedback from each of the individuals, meeting with the full panel in a collaborative session. Literature was also consulted in building the surveys. Support for employing the Likert scale was obtained from Hinkin's article on the development of measures for use in survey questionnaires (Hinkin, 1998). Beyond the structure of the survey, literature provided little additional insight as the research topic is novel and the reviewed literature did not include survey instruments. Once the surveys were completed and the data analyzed, the findings from the surveys were shared with the expert panel and the training instructor.

The surveys were provided to the respondents before the training began and during the final break at the conclusion of the training. Respondents filled out paper surveys and a single researcher coded all of the surveys. The data was entered in Excel and later analyzed using JASP. JASP is an open source front end tool for the statistical software R.

Several analysis techniques were employed to interpret the data and develop the findings. First, the data was cleaned to identify data gaps. The cleaning process resulted in 18 complete surveys. Next, descriptive statistics were used to get a sense of the range of opinions before and after the training, and in comparing before and after opinions. Means, maximums, minimums and range were calculated for the questions to quickly determine if there was diversity in responses. After the descriptive statistics, a correlation analysis was conducted to determine if the fitness point questions were correlated, and that the fitness points showed isolation. Next, a correlation analysis was completed for a weighted average of the fitness point questions. This was a critical step in showing that the questions were correlated to the average and isolation remained between the points. The final step in the analysis was to conduct linear regressions to determine the major contributors to each of the fitness points post training opinion averages. Several regressions were performed. The first set of linear regressions was performed using the post training sales behavior types as the dependent variable and selecting different parameters to determine the factors that had the greatest influence on the regression. In the second regression analysis pre-test and post-test sales behaviors were combined due to the lack of difference in responses and regressions were performed to determine the factors that most contributed to describing the sales behavior type.

and sales training returned various articles on the diffusion of sales force automation (SFA) software and product diffusion in the marketplace. Sales training and informing science was even less fruitful, with just a few articles describing learning tools like e-learning. More valuable to understanding were texts dedicated to applying the theories in different situations. *Diffusion of Innovations* (Rogers, 2010) and *Informing Business* (Gill, 2010) were particularly helpful in understanding the theories and practical applications. Rogers' fifth edition of *Diffusion of Innovations* provides numerous examples where concepts are innovations (Rogers, 1973) and the innovation theory appears to be deeply rooted in human nature being found in various regions and cultures (Deutschmann & Borda, 1962). This is an important antecedent of much of the research which today seems to focus on product and process adoption. A key element of the theory is that people adopt an innovation at different rates and respond to different stimuli. This individual characteristic of adopting a sales transformation, or in other words an innovation, appears well aligned to what is observed in the field. Similarly, informing science in a complex landscape helps to explain reticence in that a salesperson is operating on a localized point of fitness. Moving off this point of fitness means the sales person will be less efficient. In sales, this presents the very real potential to affect a sales person's near term compensation. Additionally, Gill instructs that informing science includes the concept of individualized filters which mediate information adoption for the individual.

Findings

The first finding of the research is that the approach of conducting a training class for the entire sales force was not effective at changing sales resource opinions regarding opinions about four distinct sales approaches: selling on the basis of price, selling based on the value of differentiated features, selling

based on discounts derived from bundling capabilities, and selling based on solving a customer problem with a solution. As shown in Table 1, this finding is supported by the mean response scores that showed little change before and after the training for any of the sales behavior types: price, feature, bundle or solution. Additionally, there was minimal difference between the survey groups before and after the training for the survey groups.

The second finding from the pilot study is that there is a significant disconnect in reasoning between what management believes and what sales people believe. As evidenced by conducting the formal classroom training sessions, business management believed the sales force needed to perform differently. Conversely, noting the lack of difference in the before and after training mean opinion scores, the sales resources reported on average that they already had the required skills.

More interesting is the third finding that there are distinct sales behavior types represented in the population which indicates the sales population is a complex landscape. This suggests that the sales resources are operating on different localized points of fitness with regard to sales behaviors. Every respondent to the survey responded affirmatively that there were different sales types. Further, all but two of the respondents also confirmed that the different sales types had different levels of complexity associated with the sale behavior type. Interestingly when asked to list sales behavior types in an open-ended response, sales resources chose words that reflected observed sales actions. Examples included words like relationship and aggressive. In retrospect, the observed behavior word choices make sense as the sales resources can only observe peers--they cannot know a peer's thoughts. Similarly, this insight can help to explain the difference between management's belief that training is needed and the resources belief that they have command of the material. The disconnect between knowing and

Finding: there is a significant disconnect in reasoning between what management believes and what sales people believe.

Table 1: The mean opinion scores from before and after training

	Before Price	After Price	Before Feature	After Feature	Before Bundle	After Bundle	Before Solution	After Solution
Means	3.2	2.9	3.7	3.6	3.9	3.6	4.6	4.6
Sample 1 Mean	3.0	2.7	3.6	3.6	4.1	3.6	4.7	4.6
Sample 2 Mean	3.5	3.2	3.8	3.6	3.6	3.4	4.4	4.4
Mean Sample 1 - Sample 2	-0.4	-0.5	-0.1	-0.1	0.5	0.2	0.3	0.2

observing also suggests a substantial problem in achieving change in that the training targets don't believe change is needed.

A correlation analysis was performed across the various questions, averages for the behavior types and among the average behavior types to determine if there was separation between the behavior types. The correlation analysis showed reasonable correlation between the averages and the specific questions (.6 < x < .94) and generally good separation between the weighted averages and the other specific behavior type questions (-.19 < x < .56). The observed separation provides evidence that the sales behavior types exist as hypothesized. Interestingly, the correlation analysis showed greater correlations between price, feature and bundling (.49, .56) than with solutions. This observation prompted additional analysis resulting in the fourth finding that sales behavior types relate in a more complex manner than a simple linear progression of complexity.

The fourth finding is that there is a complex relationship between the sales behavior types. Prior to the research, the operating assumption was that the four sales behavior types were linearly related based on complexity and built upon each other, moving from price to feature to bundling to solutions. The correlation analysis challenged this assumption, so further analysis was performed on the data. Through regression analysis it was discovered that the relationship between the sales behavior types is better explained by recognizing price and solution as two very different behavior types at the end points. The two remaining behaviors (feature and bundling)

include elements of both end points (price and solution). Pictorially the relationship can be visualized as a 2x2 matrix with complexity on one dimension and orientation on the other, as shown in Figure 1.

The final finding from the pilot survey has significant managerial implications. The best predictor of not using a price based sales behavior and using solution selling was if the sales person had formal sales training on his/her first job. The "T Value" for "Did first job have a formal sales training program?" in the price regression was -1.96 with a sample of 18 surveys. In contrast, the "T Value" for the same variable was 2.92 for the solution regression. The importance of first sales job formal sales training was then reviewed and corroborated by the expert panel in the post survey findings review.

Discussion

Not surprisingly the research confirms that the sales force is a heterogeneous population. What was unknown prior to the pilot survey and research was the relationship between the selling behaviors and the application of innovation diffusion and informing science in complex landscape theories to longstanding sales transformation problems. Sales has been studied for years using a variety of theories including external and internal motivation and agency theory. What these theories fail to explain is the varying rates of adoption of the sales skills and the

Finding: The relationship between the sales behavior types is better explained by recognizing price and solution as two very different behavior types at the end points.

uniqueness of the population. This research shows the sales force has unique opinions and operates on multiple localized peaks of fitness. Innovation diffusion and informing science theories suggest and the surveys confirm incentives have asymmetric and in some cases limited effects on a sales person's behavior. One of the questions asked in the survey was: How much more money would need to be paid to sell a new complex product? Responses ranged from no additional payment to 100 times more compensation. Similarly, respondents were asked what was needed to occur before they would sell a new complex product and multiple respondents replied "when the customer asked."

Anecdotally, sales managers know there is diversity in the sales force and yet one of the common tactics in transformation is to conduct a single training class for the entire sales force. Innovation diffusion theory suggests that the sales force will adopt a new skill at differing rates and no instruction will be successful convincing a laggard to adopt without first being able to see the innovation successfully deployed first hand. For later adopters, being able to trial and observe success are key to enhancing innovation

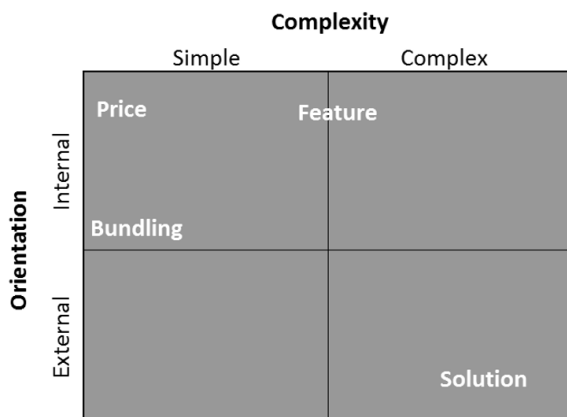


Figure 1: The fourth finding: There is a complex relationship between the sales behavior types.

adoption. Similarly, informing science in a complex landscape instructs that each individual has a set of filters that the information must pass through before being adopted. These filters have differing components and importance. Moreover, informing science in a complex landscape explains that a person must become sufficiently uncomfortable on the current point of fitness before making a change to pursue a new point of fitness. Innovation diffusion and informing science provide plausible explanations for the varying degrees and speed that a population adopts an innovation like consultative selling. And, moreover, these theories argue for thoughtful consideration by management in selecting who, when and how to train a sales force.

More immediately actionable was the finding that a sales resource having formal training on the first job predicted both aversion to price selling and adoption of solution selling. This finding has significant managerial implications as it presents a simple screening question that can be used to evaluate prospective hires and current employees. This question by itself is a critical finding that can provide substantial benefits by reducing the guesswork and risk of hiring new sales resources.

The finding also makes a strong statement as to the value and lasting effects of early work place training.

Less anticipated was the discovery of the relationship between the four sales types. Prior to the research, it was believed

that there was a natural progression in the four sales types based on complexity. In analyzing the responses, a more complex relationship emerged. Rationalizing the data, analysis and researcher/panel experience--it is hypothesized that first job sales training creates an orientation shift from focusing on what the company has to sell/seller wants (internal orientation) to an external orientation where the seller focuses on what the customer needs and wants. These new insights explain the observed correlations and regressions that suggest a multi-faceted relationship where price and solution anchor selling behaviors on the poles with feature and bundling, exhibiting elements of complexity and orientation, and aligning with the more rigid and very different price and solution anchor selling behaviors.

Conclusions

Business practitioners spend billions on sales training annually (Kumar, Sunder, & Leone, 2014). And yet, despite these expenditures, businesses continue to struggle with sales transformation. Sales transformation is a constant in industry resulting from internal, external and regulatory market forces. Research

and experience has shown that prior work has not provided adequate actionable insights to address this incredibly expensive business challenge. Some of the prior work in this area has focused on motivation and agency theory. The notable gap in these theories is in addressing individual adoption and providing actionable insights beyond internal and external rewards to incite behavior change. This paper suggests applying innovation diffusion and informing science in a complex landscape paradigms to sales transformation to enhance our understanding of the underlying challenges. Innovation diffusion and informing science improve upon other theories in that they can explain the diversity and time lags of a sales force adopting new skills. Innovation diffusion uses the concept of different groups of adoption (innovator, early adopter, early majority, late majority and laggards) to explain time differences in adopting innovations. Meanwhile, informing science in complex landscapes adds the challenge of personal filters and localized points of fitness that must be overcome before a person will move from any given localized point of fitness.

New and previously not researched before this paper

Finding: a sales resource having formal training on the first job predicted both aversion to price selling and adoption of solution selling.

is the concept of identifying dominant sales behaviors, and training the sales force with the concepts from innovation diffusion and informing science. While the initial research has a limited sample (18), the survey results showed separation between the

different sales types, and suggested sales resources will adopt innovations at different rates. This finding alone calls into question the business practice of hiring a sales trainer and rolling out a sales training program across the organization homogeneously. A more thoughtful approach would be to select the sales resources that are prone to adopt early and train these resources first. Then, only after the first group has demonstrable success, train another group. Also critical is creating discomfort for the sales people at the current point of fitness. It is not sufficient to incent change. Special incentives should be accompanied with discomfort, or a sales resource will be unwilling to change to the new point of fitness. An example of this type of discomfort for a sales resource would be to change the compensation plan.

The surveys conducted in support of this research presented two particularly noteworthy findings as well. First, there is evidence of a complex relationship between the four sales behavior types. Specifically, price and solution anchor the ends of selling behavior spectrum with feature and bundling, incorporating elements of the other two behaviors. Prior to analyzing the data, it was hypothesized that

the behaviors built upon one another, growing more complex at each level. The analysis showed a more complex two-dimensional relationship. One dimension is the complexity of the sales behavior and the second is the seller's orientation. A solution sale is more complex than a price sale and requires a customer (external) orientation. In contrast, a price sale is relatively simple (discounting) and is focused on the seller's company (internal orientation). Similarly, a feature sales behavior is more complex than price, but also still an internal orientation. Conversely, bundling is less complex than feature, but requires an external or customer orientation.

An additional major finding from the research was the importance of a sales resource having formal training on his/her first job. This single item was an excellent predictor

of aversion to price selling and a good predictor of solution selling. This finding has significant practical application as managers can inquire during interviews and in coaching sessions, and obtain important insights into a sales resources' selling behavior tendency.

The four findings are summarized in Table 2. While these findings from this initial body of work are interesting, more work is warranted and planned. First, additional surveys will be delivered as part of ongoing sales training. These additional samples will help improve statistical significance and potentially

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add to the findings. With the added survey samples, the statistical analysis will be revisited along with investigating the natural groupings through cluster analysis. After confirming the findings from the pilot survey effort with more samples, a full-scale survey will be conducted that includes questions that more fully explore individual attributes related to informing science and innovation diffusion theories. The full-scale survey will provide a larger sample size and questions for management as well as sales people providing the opportunity to validate both sales and management opinions.

In closing, a final word of caution: Business practitioners reading this paper should not myopically pursue an entire sales force of solution sellers. As there is diversity in the sales force, there is certainly diversity in the

customer population as well. One can imagine the seller-buyer relationship as the well-known prisoner's dilemma. In the prisoner's dilemma, the best outcome is achieved when both prisoners match lies and in the event one prisoner tells the truth and the other lies there is a win/lose outcome. It is likely that the best sales outcomes are achieved when the selling behavior matches the customer's buying preference. It is easy to envision scenarios of a seller pursuing the prize of a win/win solution sale only to find the customer focused entirely on price and as a result the seller being less successful.

Table 2: Findings and impacts from the research on the four sales behavior types.

Finding	Impact
A sales organization is a complex landscape.	Training an entire sales force at one time is ineffective at changing sales behavior opinions.
A sales organization is a complex landscape.	Incentives are not sufficient to change sales behavior opinions. The current point of fitness must be made uncomfortable as well.
There is a complex relationship between the four sales behavior types.	Price and solution sales behavior types anchor the ends of selling behavior. Feature and bundling incorporate elements of both price and solution.
Training on first sales job predicts solution and price selling.	Management has a simple and effective method to determine a sale person's predisposition toward price and solution selling by simply inquiring if the individual had formal sales training at their first sales job. This finding provides guidance to management in staffing, change management and makes a strong case for early career training investments.

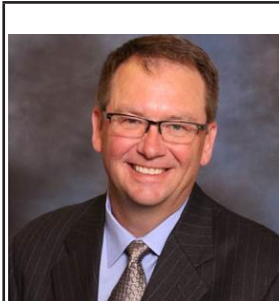
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Review

This article was accepted under the **constructive peer review** option. For further details, see the descriptions at: <http://mumabusinessreview.org/peer-review-options/>

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Rob Hammond is a practitioner-scholar and business go-to-market expert with over 30 years of global leadership experience in enterprise strategy, product management, sales, and engineering. Rob is the Managing Director of RH Insights LLC, a business advising firm. He has been at the epicenter of innovation throughout his career, working with both start-ups and mature companies, and has worked at some of the world's most iconic global companies including Microsoft, Motorola, Sprint, and General Dynamics. Rob is currently a doctoral candidate at the Muma College of Business, University of South Florida, with expected graduation in 2017. He also holds a Master of Business Administration, a Master of Science in Engineering, a Bachelor of Science in Electrical Engineering, and five patents..