

THE IMPORTANCE OF A SENSE OF PURPOSE FOR SALESPERSONS: MORE THAN JUST A FINANCIAL ASPECT

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ABSTRACT

In a competitive business environment, the role of a salesperson is not only limited to achieving financial targets, but also involves creating strong relationships with customers and contributing to the company's long-term goals. In this context, it is important to understand the role of a sense of purpose as a powerful motivator for salespeople, which goes far beyond just the financial aspect. This research aims to explore the importance of a sense of purpose for salespeople and its impact on performance, customer relationships and mental well-being. The research method used is qualitative with a descriptive analysis approach. Data was obtained through in-depth interviews with salespeople from various industries and content analysis of relevant literature. The research results show that a sense of purpose plays a key role in increasing sales force motivation, performance, and job satisfaction. Additionally, a sense of purpose also influences customer relationships, with salespeople who have a strong sense of purpose tending to be more caring and empathetic towards customer needs. Additionally, a sense of purpose is also linked to mental wellbeing, with salespeople who have a clear sense of purpose tending to have lower stress levels and better mental wellbeing.

Keywords: Sense of purpose, sales force, customer relations.

INTRODUCTION

Salespeople are a group of individuals who have an important role in bridging between companies and customers in the context of marketing and sales. They are responsible for carrying out various activities aimed at identifying, reaching and influencing prospects and potential customers to buy the products or services offered by the company. The definition of a salesperson includes a variety of roles, from making product presentations, explaining its features and benefits, to negotiating prices and purchase terms (Hidayati, 2023). More than just selling, they must also be able to build strong relationships with customers, understand their needs, and provide the right solutions according to the situation at hand. Salespeople also have the responsibility to gather market information and provide feedback to the company regarding customer trends and preferences. They are often the face of the company in the eyes of customers, so good interpersonal and communication skills are very necessary in carrying out their role. The definition of a salesperson also includes the ability to work independently, manage time, and manage customer and prospect lists efficiently. Apart from that, they must also have in-depth knowledge of the products or services they sell and the ability to explain clearly to customers the added value provided (Azmi, 2022).

In the era of digital and globalization, sales forces must also be able to adapt to rapid changes in technology and market trends. The current definition of a sales force includes the ability to utilize digital tools and online platforms in executing marketing and sales strategies. They must also continue

to learn and develop their skills to remain relevant and effective in the face of increasingly fierce competition (Hardi & Noor, 2023). Thus, the sales force can be considered the main driving force in achieving the company's sales goals as well as maintaining good relationships with customers, which ultimately contributes to the overall success of the business. In the competitive business world the role of salespeople cannot be ignored. They are the company's spearhead in establishing relationships with customers, promoting products or services, and creating profitable sales. However, the success of a salesperson does not solely depend on his ability to achieve financial targets alone (Suhairi et al., 2023). One factor that is often overlooked, but has a significant impact on improving sales force performance, is a sense of purpose.

Salespeople have a crucial role in the success of a company. They are the spearhead that interacts directly with customers, conveys company messages, and converts leads into sales that generate revenue. However, often the pressure to achieve financial targets can cloud the view of the importance of non-financial aspects of their work. The role of a salesperson is not just about selling products or services. They are also responsible for building strong relationships with customers, understanding their needs, and providing the right solutions. To be able to do this effectively, salespeople need to have a deep understanding of the goals they want to achieve in their work (Nurpratama & Anwar, 2020).

A sense of purpose provides a solid foundation for salespeople to carry out their work with passion and dedication. When someone has a clear understanding of why they do the job, they will be more motivated to give their best in every interaction with customers (Pitaloka & Kardoyo, 2023). A sense of purpose also helps salespeople persevere and adapt despite the challenges they may face. In the sales profession, there are psychological challenges that can hinder performance, such as rejection, failure, or pressure to achieve targets. A strong sense of purpose can be a driving force to better overcome these challenges. When someone has clear goals, it will be easier for them to stay focused and optimistic even when faced with these obstacles (Saebah & Merthayasa, 2023).

Financial aspects refer to everything related to finance or money in the context of individuals, organizations or the economy as a whole. The definition of financial aspects includes a variety of elements, from daily cash management to long-term financial planning (Rahmawati, 2024). This includes income, expenses, investments, debts, and all types of financial transactions that occur. At an individual level, financial aspects include how a person earns, manages, spends and invests their money. Meanwhile, at the organizational level, the financial aspect includes managing the company's financial resources, including income, operational costs and investment strategies to achieve the company's financial goals. In an economic context, financial aspects include fiscal and monetary policies, capital market movements, currency exchange rates, and all factors that influence the health and stability of a country's economy (Nuraini et al., 2022). The definition of financial aspects also includes the study and analysis of how financial decisions taken by individuals, companies, or governments can affect economic growth, inflation, employment, and the distribution of wealth. It includes disciplines such as economics, finance, accounting, and financial management that aim to understand, analyze, and predict financial behavior.

The financial aspect also involves understanding risk and managing it, including insurance, hedging, investment portfolio diversification, and other risk mitigation strategies. This definition includes efforts to minimize losses or potential losses associated with certain financial activities. Meanwhile, financial aspects also consider psychological factors and human behavior that influence financial decisions, such as risk preferences, financial biases, and financial behavioral theories. Overall,

financial aspects are a broad and complex domain that includes all aspects of life related to money, both at the individual, organizational and larger economic scales (Wahdiniawati, 2024).

In addition to its impact on performance a sense of purpose also contributes to the job satisfaction and mental well-being of salespeople. When people feel that their work has a meaningful and relevant purpose, they tend to feel more satisfied with their work and have lower stress levels. Studies have shown that salespeople who have a strong sense of purpose tend to be more productive and perform better. They are more motivated to achieve company goals, and this is reflected in achieving more consistent and higher sales targets.

By understanding the importance of a sense of purpose for salespeople, companies can take steps to ensure that their employees have a clear understanding of their purpose in their work. This can be done through coaching, development and open communication regarding the company's values and how each individual can contribute to achieving these goals. In doing so, companies will not only see improvements in sales and overall business performance, but also in the satisfaction and well-being of their employees.

RESEARCH METHODS

The research method used in this research is qualitative with a phenomenological approach. This approach allows researchers to understand salespeople's subjective experiences in internalizing and implementing a sense of purpose in their work (Sugiyono, 2017). The research steps will involve in-depth interviews with a number of salespeople from various backgrounds and experiences. This interview will aim to explore their understanding, motivations and experiences related to a sense of purpose in their work as salespeople. Data analysis will be conducted thematically, where common patterns and individual differences in perceptions and experiences of sense of purpose will be identified and analyzed.

The data sources used in this research are academic journals, related articles, and books that discuss the topic of the importance of a sense of purpose for salespeople. Data from these sources will be used to strengthen theoretical understanding of the concept of sense of purpose as well as to support findings from interviews. Data analysis will involve triangulation of data sources, where qualitative data from interviews will be compared and matched with findings from relevant academic literature. Thus, this research method will provide a deep understanding of the importance of a sense of purpose for salespeople that goes beyond the financial aspect.

The data analysis technique used in this research is thematic analysis. Thematic analysis is used to identify, analyze, and report thematic patterns or motifs that emerge from qualitative data obtained from interviews with sales personnel. The steps of this data analysis technique involve (Sugiyono, 2018):

1. Data Coding

Interview data will be recorded, transcribed, and then coded. Coding was carried out by looking for thematic patterns or motifs that emerged from the interview transcripts. Each theme or motif will be given an appropriate label or code.

2. Identify Themes

After the data has been coded, the researcher will identify the main themes that emerge from the data. These themes are general patterns or concepts related to the importance of a sense of purpose for salespeople that goes beyond the financial aspect.

3. Theme Development and Mapping

The themes that have been identified will be further developed and mapped in a hierarchical structure. This involves mapping the relationships between more general and specific themes, as well as identifying sub-themes or dimensions of each main theme.

4. Interpretation and Analysis

Once the main themes and sub-themes have been identified and developed, the researcher will carry out further interpretation of the data to understand the meaning behind the findings. Analysis will reveal relationships between themes, common patterns, and individual differences in the understanding and experience of a sense of purpose for salespeople.

Through this data analysis technique, the research will yield a deep understanding of the importance of a sense of purpose for salespeople, as well as the factors that influence their perceptions and experiences related to this concept.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In a study conducted by (Changar & Atan, 2021) the results highlight the importance of a sense of purpose for salespeople that goes far beyond just the financial aspect. Through in-depth analysis of interviews with dozens of salespeople from various industries, this research found that a sense of purpose is a key factor influencing salespeople's motivation, performance and job satisfaction. These findings suggest that having a clear sense of purpose in their work provides a powerful incentive for salespeople to achieve higher levels of performance.

Research conducted by (Itani et al., 2023) reveals that a sense of purpose is not only related to achieving sales targets or seeking financial gain alone, but also involves a deep understanding of the company's values and goals and how they can contribute to achieving these goals. Respondents stated that having a sense of purpose gave them additional motivation to persevere and remain dedicated in the face of challenges and obstacles in their work.

The results of research conducted by (Child, 2021) show that a sense of purpose also has a positive impact on relationships with customers. Salespeople who have a strong sense of purpose tend to be more open, caring, and empathetic to customer needs, which ultimately increases customer satisfaction and strengthens long-term business relationships. This illustrates that a sense of purpose has a broad and comprehensive impact in the context of salespeople's work, which goes beyond simply achieving sales targets or financial aspects alone. In conclusion, this research confirms that the importance of a sense of purpose for salespeople cannot be ignored. Recognizing and managing a sense of purpose is a key element in human resource management strategies to improve sales force performance and job satisfaction. Therefore, companies need to pay attention to and facilitate the development of a strong sense of purpose among their sales force as part of efforts to achieve long-term success in their business.

The importance of a sense of purpose for salespeople is a broad and deep topic, due to its highly relevant implications in the context of human resource management, marketing, and business strategy. In this study, findings about the importance of a sense of purpose for salespeople went far beyond just the financial aspects to become the subject of in-depth analysis. The research results highlight that a sense of purpose plays a significant role in motivating salespeople to achieve higher levels of performance. When someone has a clear understanding of the company's goals and values, they tend to be more motivated to give their best in their work (Bolander et al., 2021). This is consistent with motivation theory which emphasizes the importance of having meaningful goals in improving individual performance.

The importance of a sense of purpose for salespeople is also reflected in their relationships with customers. Research finds that salespeople who have a strong sense of purpose tend to be more caring and empathetic to customer needs. This creates closer and more meaningful relationships with customers, which in turn increases customer satisfaction and strengthens customer loyalty. The discussion should also consider the human resource management implications of the results of this research. Companies need to recognize the importance of paying attention to and facilitating the development of a sense of purpose among their sales force. This can be done through training and coaching programs that focus on strengthening understanding of the company's goals and how each individual can contribute to achieving those goals.

The importance of a sense of purpose for salespeople also has a significant impact on a company's long-term success. Companies that are able to create a work environment that supports the development of a sense of purpose among their sales force will be better able to maintain a competitive advantage, retain customers, and achieve sustainable business growth. The overall results of this study underscore that a sense of purpose is not just an add-on or optional thing for salespeople, but is a key element in achieving optimal performance, strengthening customer relationships, and driving overall business success. Therefore, companies need to pay attention to and recognize the importance of a sense of purpose in human resource management strategies and employee development in order to achieve the desired business goals.

1. Higher Motivation

Motivation is the force that drives a person to act, achieve goals, and fulfill needs. In the context of the sales force, motivation plays a very important role in determining individual performance and overall organizational success. Higher motivation, especially that which arises from understanding a sense of purpose, can be a powerful driver for salespeople to achieve extraordinary results. This discussion will explore the psychological foundations of higher motivation, its benefits for salespeople, and strategies that companies can use to build and maintain high motivation among their salespeople.

To understand higher motivation, we need to understand several motivation theories that are relevant in the sales force context. One of the most famous motivation theories is Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory. This theory states that humans have a hierarchy of needs consisting of five levels, starting from physical and security needs to the need for recognition, esteem and self-actualization (Tarim, 2020). In the context of salespeople, higher motivation is often related to the need for recognition, rewards, and personal achievement, which are part of the levels of self-actualization in Maslow's hierarchy. Apart from Maslow's theory, another relevant motivation theory is goal setting theory. This theory emphasizes the importance of setting specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound (SMART) goals in increasing motivation and performance. In the context of the sales force, clear, measurable goals can provide clear direction for the sales force and help maintain high motivation.

QSelf-determination theory of motivation also provides valuable insight into higher motivation. This theory emphasizes the importance of intrinsic motivation, namely motivation that arises from within the individual, rather than extrinsic motivation that arises from external factors such as rewards or punishment. In the context of salespeople, intrinsic motivation, which arises from a deep sense of purpose and understanding of company values, is often more effective in maintaining high levels of motivation over the long term.

Higher motivation has a variety of significant benefits for salespeople. First of all, high motivation can increase the productivity and performance of sales personnel. When someone feels

inspired and driven by a clear sense of purpose, they tend to work harder and smarter to achieve the goals they have set. This can be reflected in an increase in the number of sales, an increase in transaction value and the acquisition of new customers. Apart from improving performance, high motivation can also increase job satisfaction and mental well-being of salespeople. When someone feels connected to a purpose that is greater than just financial gain, they tend to feel more satisfied with their work and more eager to face any challenges they may face. This can reduce stress levels and mental fatigue, as well as increase levels of happiness and satisfaction in daily work.

High motivation can also strengthen relationships with customers. Salespeople who feel inspired and driven by a deep sense of purpose tend to be more caring and empathetic to customer needs. They not only sell products or services, but also act as caring and reliable partners to their customers. This can create closer, more meaningful and more sustainable relationships with customers, which in turn can increase customer retention and brand loyalty. Building and maintaining high motivation among the sales force requires a comprehensive and sustainable approach from the company. First of all, companies need to ensure that the goals set for salespeople are clear, measurable and meaningful. These goals must be in accordance with the company's vision and mission and provide clear direction for the sales force in achieving the targets that have been set.

Companies also need to provide sufficient support for salespeople in achieving their goals. This can take the form of training and skills development, access to effective sales tools and resources, and support from management and colleagues. This support not only helps improve sales rep performance, but also increases their sense of connectedness and engagement with the company. Companies also need to recognize and strengthen salespeople's intrinsic motivation. This can be done through recognizing their accomplishments, providing opportunities for development and growth, and creating a supportive work environment that strengthens a deep sense of purpose among salespeople (Good et al., 2022). Too much pressure or excessive workload can reduce their motivation and mental well-being. Therefore, companies need to ensure that salespeople have a healthy balance between their work and personal lives, as well as provide the necessary support if they experience stress or pressure.

Higher motivation, especially that which arises from understanding a sense of purpose, is a key factor in determining sales force performance and success. By having high motivation, salespeople tend to be more productive, more satisfied with their work, and more effective in building relationships with customers. Therefore, it is important for companies to build and maintain high motivation among their sales force through a comprehensive and sustainable approach, which includes setting clear goals, providing sufficient support, recognizing intrinsic motivation, and creating a supportive and inclusive work environment. In doing so, companies can improve the performance and success of their business, while ensuring the well-being and satisfaction of their sales force.

2. Stronger Customer Relationships

Strong customer relationships are not just interactions between sellers and buyers, but are also the foundation of long-term business success. In the context of the sales force, strong relationships with customers have far-reaching implications for individual performance, customer satisfaction, and overall company success. This discussion will explore the importance of stronger customer relationships in the context of salespeople, the factors that influence those relationships, as well as strategies that salespeople can use to strengthen relationships with their customers (Pappas et al., 2023).

Stronger customer relationships have significant implications in the sales force context. First of all, strong relationships with customers can increase customer loyalty. When customers feel emotionally

connected to their salespeople, they tend to be more loyal to the brand or company. This can reduce customer churn rates and increase customer retention in the long term. Apart from increasing customer loyalty, strong relationships can also increase customer satisfaction. When salespeople understand customer needs and preferences well, they can provide solutions that better suit those customers' needs. This can increase customer satisfaction and create a positive experience, which in turn can strengthen customer relationships and increase the likelihood of repeat sales.

Strong relationships with customers can also open up opportunities for collaboration and further business growth. When salespeople build good relationships with customers, they can more easily identify new opportunities, offer additional products or services, and expand their customer base. This can help companies to increase revenue and grow their business in the long term. Several factors influence the strength of the relationship between salespeople and customers. First of all, effective communication plays a key role in building strong relationships. Salespeople need to have good communication skills to be able to interact with customers effectively, listen carefully to their needs and concerns, and provide adequate responses (Good et al., 2021).

Trust is also an important factor in building strong relationships with customers. Customers need to feel that they can trust their salespeople to provide solutions that suit their needs and provide quality service. Therefore, salespeople need to build a solid and consistent reputation for professionalism, integrity and reliability. Personalization can also impact the strength of the relationship between salespeople and customers. When salespeople can get to know their customers well, including their preferences, purchasing habits, and special needs, they can provide more customized and relevant service. This can increase customer satisfaction and strengthen their relationships with salespeople.

Cultivating stronger customer relationships requires a comprehensive and integrated approach from the sales force. First of all, salespeople need to focus on building personal relationships with their customers. This can be done through more frequent interactions, open communication, and showing genuine concern for customer needs. Additionally, salespeople also need to focus on providing solutions tailored to customer needs. This involves a deep understanding of the products or services they sell, as well as the ability to identify solutions that best suit customer needs and preferences. By providing relevant and useful solutions, salespeople can strengthen their relationships with customers. It is important for salespeople to ensure that they provide high-quality customer service. This includes being responsive to customer questions or concerns, handling complaints quickly and efficiently, and ensuring that customers feel valued and respected in every interaction. Good customer service can help strengthen relationships with customers and create a positive experience.

Strong customer relationships have significant implications in the sales force context. Building strong relationships with customers can increase customer loyalty, increase customer satisfaction, and open up opportunities for further business growth. Therefore, it is important for salespeople to strengthen their relationships with customers through effective communication, building trust, personalizing service, and providing high-quality customer service. In this way, salespeople can create strong, sustainable, and mutually beneficial relationships with their customers.

3. Mental Resilience and Wellbeing

Resilience and mental well-being are two important aspects that influence the performance and success of salespeople. In a stressful and competitive context like a sales job, having strong resilience and good mental wellbeing are key factors for achieving long-term success. In this discussion, we will explore the meaning and importance of mental resilience and well-being in the work of salespeople, the

factors that influence both, and strategies that can be used to strengthen salespeople's mental resilience and well-being. Mental resilience refers to a person's ability to withstand and recover from stress, pressure, and challenges in everyday life. In the context of salespeople, mental resilience is key to dealing with the excessive pressure, failure, and rejection that often occur in their work. Strong resilience allows salespeople to stay focused, adapt, and persevere in the face of difficult situations, thereby increasing the likelihood of long-term success (Dugan et al., 2023).

Meanwhile, mental well-being refers to a person's psychological and emotional condition which includes happiness, life satisfaction, and the ability to manage stress and emotions effectively. Good mental wellbeing is an important aspect in ensuring the health and optimal performance of salespeople. When salespeople feel good mentally, they tend to be more enthusiastic, productive, and better able to face challenges. There are several factors that influence the level of mental resilience and well-being of salespeople. One of them is high work pressure. A salesperson's job is often filled with pressure to achieve sales targets, handle difficult clients, and compete with competitors in the marketplace. This pressure can lead to stress, burnout, and anxiety which can impact a sales rep's mental well-being.

A lack of social support and support from superiors and coworkers can also impact a salesperson's resilience and mental well-being. When salespeople feel isolated or unsupported by their team or management, they tend to feel more stressed and less motivated to perform well. Personal factors can also play a role in salespeople's resilience and mental well-being. For example, family conflicts, financial problems, or personal health problems can affect a person's mental well-being and ability to work effectively.

Strengthening the resilience and mental well-being of salespeople requires a holistic and integrated approach. One key strategy is to promote a healthy work-life balance. Companies can provide flexibility in work schedules, support for balanced leave, and health and wellness programs to help salespeople maintain a balance between their work and personal lives. Additionally, it is important to provide training and education on stress management and coping skills. This can help salespeople develop strategies to deal with stress and manage emotions more effectively in difficult situations.

Companies also need to create a supportive and inclusive work environment that prioritizes employee mental well-being. This can involve mental health programs, support resources and services, and a work culture that values work-life balance and celebrates employee achievements. Next, it is important for salespeople to pay attention and care for themselves personally. This includes maintaining a healthy lifestyle, prioritizing rest and recreation time, and seeking support from friends and family when needed (ScholarWorks et al., 2021).

Resilience and mental well-being are important aspects of the psychological health and performance of salespeople. Maintaining strong resilience and good mental wellbeing allows salespeople to deal with pressure, maintain productivity, and achieve long-term success in their careers. Therefore, it is important for companies to prioritize employees' mental well-being by providing support, training and a supportive work environment, as well as for salespeople to take good care of themselves personally. In this way, they can achieve a healthy balance between their work and personal lives and achieve sustainable success in their careers.

CLOSING

In closing it is important to summarize the importance of a sense of purpose for salespeople, which goes far beyond just the financial aspect. A sense of purpose is the key driver that motivates them

to achieve extraordinary results and build solid relationships with customers. When salespeople have a deep understanding of the company's goals and their role in achieving those goals, they become more enthusiastic, more focused, and more motivated to give their best in their work. Additionally, a sense of purpose also impacts salespeople's mental well-being, helping them survive and thrive amidst the stress and challenges that often occur in sales jobs. By having a strong sense of purpose, salespeople can feel more fulfilled and connected to their work, which in turn increases overall happiness and satisfaction.

Moreover a sense of purpose plays a key role in strengthening relationships with customers. When salespeople have a deep sense of purpose, they tend to be more caring and empathetic to customer needs, creating closer, more meaningful and more sustainable relationships. This not only has a positive impact on customer satisfaction, but also helps strengthen customer loyalty and increase retention. Thus, it is important for companies to recognize and facilitate the development of a sense of purpose among their sales force. This can be done through training programs, coaching, and a supportive work environment, which helps salespeople to identify and connect their tasks to the company's goals and values. In doing so, the company not only strengthens the performance of its sales force, but also builds a strong foundation for the long-term success of the company as a whole.

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