

Solutions Salesperson's Problem Solving Approaches: An Exploration from the Customer's Perspective: An Abstract



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Abstract Business-to-business customers are increasingly demanding total solutions in response to suppliers who are increasingly seeking to grow their revenues by focusing on providing customers with end-to-end solutions. Given that the solution sales process in business markets is inherently complex and significantly different from the traditional sales process, there is evidence that many salespeople are unable or unwilling to meet the requirements of solution selling. Although researchers have begun focusing on business-to-business customer solutions, the very nature of business-to-business solutions suggests that there are problems to be solved, and research exploring business-to-business solution provision at the intersection of problem solving and sales is extremely limited. In this research, we focus on the customers' perspective of salesperson's problem solving approaches. Specifically, we provide a brief overview of problem solving literature in the context of personal selling and sales management. Second, from the perspective of B2B customers, we develop a model with the consequences of the creative and deliberate problem solving routines of business-to-business salespeople and their direct and curvilinear effects on customer outcomes. Third, we provide details of our data collection efforts. Specifically, data collection was accomplished through an online survey of purchasing managers (respondents had purchasing manager, buyer, procurement manager, or similar titles) from a panel managed by a reputed research company. Respondents were (i) screened to verify that their purchasing

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role required them to interact frequently and extensively with salespeople of different vendors and (ii) asked to think of one of their important vendors and complete the survey with respect to that vendor's salespeople. Here, we also screened the respondent for interaction and knowledgeability. Fourth, we discuss the method and analyses corresponding to the testing of our framework. Finally, we conclude with a discussion of our research's implications for research and practice. Indeed, the results of the curvilinear effects found in this research provide significant implications for firms in managing the role of salespeople in solution provision.

Keywords Solution selling · Salespeople · Solution salesperson · Deliberative problem solving routines · Creative problem solving routines · Business-to-business marketing · Customer solutions

References Available Upon Request