# Revolution in Sales: The Impact of Social Media and Related Technology on the Selling Environment

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**Abstract**

Over the years several articles have tracked the impact of technology on various aspects of the

sales domain. However, the advent of social media and technologies related to it has gone largely

unnoticed in the literature. This article first briefly identifies the general evolution of technology

in sales and then describes a qualitative approach (focus groups) that was used to identify key

themes in sales organizations related to these topics. Analysis of the data, collected in the U.S.

and the U.K, reveals six major themes, some of which are backed up by subthemes: (1)

connectivity (including daily routine and no place to hide); (2) relationships (including

socialness, personal contact, and buyer preference); (3) selling tools (including social media and

related technology and seven steps of selling); (4) generational; (5) global; and (6)

sales/marketing interface. Results provide evidence of a revolution in the buyer-seller

relationship that includes some unanticipated consequences both on sales organization

performance and needed future research contributions.

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Picture the situation: it's Thanksgiving (or any holiday of your preference) 2012, a retired sales director of 70 is sharing "war stories" around a roaring fire with his 22-year-old granddaughter, who has just taken her first post-college job in sales for a large B2B firm. As the senior waxes nostalgic about desperately driving around trying to find a payphone to make a call back to the office to let them know of a late change in customer specifications, the junior shares her shock at the invasiveness of the call she received the other night at 10:30 p.m. from a customer halfway across the globe, demanding point-of-sale material be created in their home language. Would either really believe the other? Depending on what era you have experienced field sales in, would you?

Of course, change is a constant in business, and even as early as the 1960s authors were discussing the rapid changes the sales function was undergoing (Kahn and Schuchman, 1961). As such, in the last two decades there have been multiple studies describing the changing environment salespeople are facing, with each tending to focus on a different key characteristic of the sales environment or role (Lee. 2011). For example, Leigh and Marshall (2001) spend much time discussing the importance of customer orientation in influencing enhanced sales practice, emphasizing the importance of relationships in the modern selling environment. Jones, Brown, Zoltners, and Weitz (2005) focus on how changes in buyer expectations have led to higher cognitive loads on salespeople. Alternatively, Tanner, Fournier, Wise, Hollet, and Poulol (2008) find that sales organizations are most interested in discovering the key characteristics of successful salespeople in the contemporary environment. Over time, myriad other studies have illuminated specific aspects of the modern selling environment, including the rise of technology

usage.

However, little research to-date has explored the implications for the sales force of the rise in what is known as "social media" and the "always-on" communication technology usage patterns associated with it. It would seem that this is a vital gap for sales force research and practice. In particular, social media such as Facebook, Linked-in, and now Google +, and always-on communication technology such as mobile Internet and the smartphone, appear to be more than simple extensions to traditional technology such as static phones, desktops, and even laptops. Today, salespeople often *do not have a choice* as to whether they are contactable or not. The rise of global business exacerbates such a situation, meaning salespeople may feel that they are on-call 24 hours a day, and are expected to respond to communications immediately whatever time they come through from anywhere in the world.

It is by no means certain what the implications of such a situation are. For example, one may expect that the increased ability for customer-salesperson contact may lead to an increase in the importance of relationship-oriented behaviors. However, equally, one could expect that the potential burnout caused by such an always-on environment could lead to just the opposite. The situation could be compounded by the newfound ability for most interactions to be conducted electronically instead of face-to-face, thus thwarting a traditional relational element. Firms looking to save money in tough times could therefore invest in technology rather than people. Further, are there generational differences in the use of these new social media technologies? Such questions are the concern of the present article. We provide a cross-country qualitative investigation into the use, and effects, of social media and related technology on the selling environment. We begin with a brief recap of the evolution of sales technology, and the scholarly research that has investigated it. Following this, the methodology and findings are detailed, and

an in-depth discussion of our at-times surprising results is provided.

## Evolution of Technology in Sales

Today it is amazing to look back and realize that prior to 1980, technology in sales consisted primarily of the telephone and related rudimentary support devices such as pagers. Salespeople on the road stopped at gas stations to use pay phones. Fax machines didn't become commonly affordable available until the late 80s, so prior to that time written correspondence was handled by "snail mail." The young generation of organizational sellers and buyers that comprise an ever increasing portion of B2B relationships today can scarcely imagine what life must have been like doing business with such basic tools.

Over the years a wide array of articles has looked at specific aspects and applications of technology in personal selling. Focal topics have included technology acceptance (e.g. Robinson, Marshall, and Stamps 2005), sales force automation (SFA) (e.g. Rapp, Agnihotri, and Forbes 2008 ), customer relationship management (CRM) and relationship selling (e.g. Ahearne et al. 2008), telemarketing (e.g. Moncrief, Lamb, and Dielman 1986), B2C sales technology usage (e.g. Ahearne and Rapp 2010), and numerous others. Growing interest in technology issues in sales led *JPSSM* in 1984 to create an "experimental new section" of the journal called "Microcomputer Applications in Selling and Sales Management," with its own section editor (Professor Robert Collins) and regular publication of columns and peer-reviewed articles (Collins 1984). This section later was renamed "Sales Technology Applications," ultimately operating for 18 years. A decade ago, Widmier, Jackson, and McCabe made the following observation (2002, p.190):

> *Early academic articles (on sales technology) primarily focused on the adoption*
> *of personal computers (Collins 1984, 1985), whereas later ones have focused on*
> *the application of other technologies such as laptops (Collins 1988), cellular*
> *phones (Swenson and Parrellan 1992), software programs (Chonko, Tanner, and*

*Smith 1991), electronic data interchange (Hill and Swenson 1994), and group support system software (Dishman and Aytes 1996). More recent academic research has focused on the area of successful implementation of SFA systems (Keillor, Bashaw, and Pettijohn [1997]; Parathasarathy and Sohi [1997]; and Rivers and Dart [1999]. However, popular literature suggests a broader role for sales force technology.*

A needed clarification at this point requires addressing the fundamental question "What is technology?" According to the National Science Foundation, technology is the making, usage, and knowledge of tools, techniques, crafts, systems, or methods of organization in order to solve a problem or serve some purpose. Technologies significantly affect humans' ability to *control and adapt to their environments* and may include simple tools, such as a crowbar or wooden spoon, or more complex machines, such as a space station or particle accelerator. Tools and machines need not be material – virtual technology, such as computer software and business methods, also fall under this definition of technology. When combined with another term, such as "medical technology," "space technology," "communication technology," or "sales force technology," it refers to the state of the respective field's knowledge and tools (NSF 2007). The key outcome of technology implementation is control and adaptation to the relevant environment – be it in medicine, space, communication, or (in the case of this article) sales.

The following sections track some of the evolution of technology in sales by decade. Exemplar technologies are discussed that were particularly relevant during each decade. Some of these drop out in use over time; others continued to be used across the decades moving forward.

**1980s**

By beginning the dialogue in the 1980s, we do not mean to imply that anything before then was "prehistoric" in terms of sales technology. Particularly in light of the formal definition of technology provided above, one can certainly argue that keeping track of sales via pen and paper and then mailing results to a home office monthly is, in fact, a use of technology. Our

point in beginning with the 1980s is that it was the decade that provided much of the base on which the subsequent proliferation of more advanced sales technologies have grown.

The advent in 1984 of the *JPSSM* special section on technology represented an important affirmation that rapidly advancing technology was changing the world of sales. Its early focus specifically on "microcomputer applications" makes sense, since the availability of increasingly more affordable personal computing began to take hold in the early 1980s. Soon, many salespeople were tracking figures on spreadsheets and crafting correspondence on DOS-based programs like Lotus 1-2-3 and WordPerfect 5.1 (if you are over 40 you no doubt used one of these). Figure 1 illustrates one of the classic early day PCs, the Tandy TRS-80 Model III.

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Sales technology advances of the 1980s provide the basis for moving away from simple paper or phone based reporting and communication. Early-day affordable answering machines – the precursor of today's voicemail –for the first time enabled easy remote retrieval of client messages by phone, freeing up salespeople to better serve customers while on the road. Facsimile (FAX) machines hit the broad market, providing a breakthrough in quickly sharing information between vendor and customer. These and other developments in the 1980s greatly increased the efficiency of personal selling.

**1990s**

Sales technology that emerged in the 1990s accelerated the pace of mobility, productivity, and efficiency of professional salespeople. Computers of choice by sales organizations evolved from desktops to laptops, and the software applications from DOS to Windows. Basic cellular phones became ubiquitous, and voicemail replaced clunky answering machines. Email began its march

toward providing a communication medium that, although less personal than traditional modes of salesperson/client communication, adds a level of convenience that transcends old concepts of "office hours." But it quickly became apparent that for all its advantages, email communication also carries downsides – for salespeople in particular, the inability to read body or auditory voice language in order to form a complete understanding of the client's communication. And, with email, the salesperson essentially was open for business 24/7.

Widespread accessibility of the Internet that developed by the end of the 1990s may be the single biggest technological contribution to selling from this decade. Many early websites seemed to feature novelty over content (you can search on Google for "archived old websites" and find various ways to locate early-day examples) and early B2C "e-marketing" or "e-commerce" did not live up to its initial promise (many first generation e-firms went out of business in the dot-com bust). Little did we know at the turn of the century how much the Internet would ultimately contribute to the ready availability and easy access of information in the B2B space. Information has become ubiquitous – some would say a commodity – and the commoditization of information has had a profound effect on the buyer/seller relationship, salesperson role, and sales organization strategy. This issue will be developed further in the discussion of the results of the present study.

**2000s**

In the mid-to-late 1990s, two major popular press books flagged the coming relationship focus in sales (Bosworth 1994; Rackham and DeVincentis 1999). Consultative selling, solution selling, relationship selling, and other similar terms were coined to describe an approach driven by newly emerging systematic processes for managing customer and market information – Customer Relationship Management (CRM). CRM began largely as a software development of Siebel

Systems (now part of Oracle) but it quickly morphed into more of a broad-based business philosophy. CRM essentially is an application or initiative designed to help firms *optimize interactions with customers*, suppliers, or prospects through all relevant customer "touchpoints" – including salespeople – to acquire, retain, or cross-sell customers.

Originally CRM was sold by Siebel as very expensive organization-wide applications. Many firms struggled to realize meaningful ROI from early-day investments in CRM, not because the software didn't work but because of management and leadership problems within the organizations who bought it. By the mid-2000s, CRM had evolved to become available much more economically (even for small firms) in web-based applications through providers such as salesforce.com, becoming a must-have element for successful relationship selling. CRM and database marketing combine to facilitate enhanced customization of both sales and marketing approaches with clients.

CRM requires a customer-centric business philosophy and culture to support effective marketing, sales, and service processes. Relationship selling, as enabled by CRM, has the central goal of securing, building, and maintaining long-term relationships with profitable customers. Concurrently, relationship selling is oriented toward the long term. The salesperson seeks to keep his or her customers so loyal to the product, the selling firm, and the salesperson's own level of client service that they will not switch to other sources for the same products (Johnston and Marshall 2010).

The tragic events of 9-11-2001 drastically reduced business travel and led to a search for other options for conducting business long distance. Internet telephony (using voice-over-internet-protocol (VOIP) services such as Skype) is one example of a technology that can serve

as a substitute for in-person communication but still maintain a capability to convey real time visual imagery of each speaker.

**2010s and Beyond**

To address the future, the aim of the present study is to identify and describe the potential impact of the cumulative effect of the above evolutionary sales technologies, but more particularly to gain new knowledge on the recent promulgation of social media and related technology on the selling environment. Toward this end, we take a qualitative approach methodologically that is described in the next section.

## Methodology

At the close of the 20th Century, Marshall, Moncrief, and Lassk (1999) examined sales force activities and documented the fact that technology was emerging as a substantially more important component of the sales job. They derived a list of new salesperson activities based on a series of focus groups. The present study has a different purpose but utilizes a very similar same data collection method to that of Marshall, Moncrief, and Lassk (1999). They conducted focus groups to obtain new data until a point of diminishing returns was reached in terms of new information, at which time they ceased the focus group process (in their case, at six focus groups). In his original sales activity study, Moncrief (1986) implemented a similar approach to data collection and conducted four focus groups, at which point he reported diminishing returns. The present study implemented four focus groups, two in the United States and two in the United Kingdom. Because in 2011 sales truly has become a global enterprise, we believed it prudent to conduct two of the focus groups outside the United States. The UK was chosen because of its lead in sales research within the European sphere of influence and because English is the primary language.

To ensure maximum consistency, each focus group was led by a moderator and also contained an observer, both from the author team. The focus groups were taped and transcribed. One of the authors (the same individual) was present at all four focus groups to enhance continuity of process. A basic set of questions was prepared and asked. After each question, the ensuing discussion was allowed to free float with the moderator encouraging participative dialogue. As technology questions were asked each respondent was encouraged to talk about: (1) *if* that technology is being used within their organization and (2) *in what capacity* it is deployed. Each session lasted from 90 to 120 minutes. After the completion of the fourth focus group the authors reviewed the transcripts and determined that no new substantive information was being elicited. Thus, the focus group process ceased – the diminishing return criterion.

Participants in the four focus groups were carefully selected to include salespeople representing a diverse set of industries and product/service offerings. The number of participants in the two US focus groups was 9 and 15 and the UK focus group members numbered 6 and 5. Diversity of participant age and experience was reasonably attained. Complete demographics are provided in Table 2. The age and experience issue is particularly important in this research because of the exploration of social media as a topic and the assumption that its emergence and acceptance has had a more dynamic trajectory among the younger generation. Sixteen B2B product industries and ten B2B service industries are represented. There were twenty-seven male and eight female participants – not surprising given the industry array. Five of the participants were 30 or younger and four were over 50. Seventeen of the thirty-five participants had 10 or fewer years of sales experience – a balanced split.

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## Results

In order to identify key themes from the data, the researchers reviewed the transcriptions and began to categorize each theme based on similarity of focus. The goal of this process was to ultimately reduce the transcription content into a manageable set of thematic categories that capture as discretely as possible the impact of social media and related technologies on the sales environment. Toward this end, the researchers first systematically evaluated the raw data (transcription) with an eye toward developing broad categories. This process resulted in 17 initial categories, with some comments crossing categories.

Toward greater parsimony, detailed analysis of the initial 17 revealed areas of overlap that allowed for a reduction to seven over-arching categories of thematic comments from the data (portrayed in Figure 2), which are as follows: Connectivity, Relationships, Selling Tools, Generational, Global, and Sales/Marketing Interface. Several sub-themes were apparent some of the categorical main themes. The following sections provide evidentiary details in support of each theme/sub-theme, each section beginning with our summarizing remarks derived from analysis of respondent comments within that category. Then, we present representative respondent comments with each bullet denoting a different comment. Later, in the Discussion and Implications section, we provide more extensive commentary by-theme.

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### Theme One: Connectivity

Connectivity is the level to which salespeople are connected or available, to their employers and their clients. The focus groups highlight the fact that demands for connectivity are increasing both from employers and from clients and participants' sense that technology fuels this trend.

However, there was some inconsistency in the ways in which the impact of technology was described by the participants. Some of the participants have embraced technology and use it as a matter of course in their daily routine. Others however, see technology as a negative influence on their ability to plan their daily activities, genuinely feeling that there is now "no place to hide."

Information, or a thirst for information, underpins the increased connectivity whether for management and control purposes by the sales organization or for product- and service-based purposes by buyers. The results suggest that sales relationships are now driven by a need for immediate and open access to all relevant information and that it is quite acceptable for this information to arrive in an electronic format, with no face-to-face contact. Two sub-themes emerged within the Connectivity category: Daily Routine and No Place to Hide.

*Daily Routine*
- The first thing I do every morning is log into my computer to check sales.

- I jump on the computer on a nightly basis to a develop regular routine and analyze numbers to get ahead in planning for the next day

- I do my planning at night and also spend at least 45 minutes on the computer prior to leaving the house in the morning

- My job has changed because of the technology aspect of it. I can remember when I was out on the road and I couldn't have a mobile phone or a Blackberry and it was great because you could plan your day, you could plan your week and you could organize your time. My success was dependent on organizing myself effectively to a large extent. Now, my success is largely dependent on how quickly I can put fires out because there are constant demands and constant interruptions! There's no such thing as a "typical day" because I have a plan for what I'm going to do and I can guarantee by 11 o'clock in the morning it'll be out of the window.

- I think technology gives all of us an excuse to run around and look very, very busy sometimes without necessarily being that productive.

*No Place to Hide*
- In a normal day I spend 80 percent of my time on my smartphone or computer multitasking, planning travel, and prospecting (10 minutes of free time is a luxury).

- Now something comes through on email, somebody will have phoned me up, and there will

be voicemails left because we now have a business culture where everybody's always available, always responsive, and the expectation is that whatever happens, you drop everything. I'm not actually convinced that productivity is getting any greater. I think we're just allowing ourselves to get distracted because these tools are all high tech and glossy and they have nice graphics on them, so you think, "Oh, this must be important." But it's not, I'm not organized, I'm actually less focused and therefore doing less quality work than I used to.

- I feel a need to be "plugged in" and constantly going all day. I can't turn the phone off because there's an expectation for total access.

- Reflective practice is absolutely crucial to effectiveness and you [reflect] by switching these bloody things off. But nobody ever does. So we're not having that time for reflection, we're not sitting there and really understanding what's working and what isn't and how do we improve it. We're constantly reacting and I think ultimately there's a significant efficiency loss that comes out as a result.

- You can be a slave to technology and just work for the technology. Sometimes you have to say - "Enough! Technology doesn't control me." There has to be time when you actually are thinking. Otherwise, we are bombarded all the time. It's almost an invasion of privacy. At one point email was like that; then text messaging came along. So what is the next step?

- A salesperson actually has a disadvantage because of technology (rarely have "me" time). Much more is asked *of the salesperson now.*

- So much information is thrown at both us and the customer – there's no time to meet face-to-face.

**Theme Two: Relationships**

From the focus group data "Relationships" are defined as function of a) *socialness*, or the degree to which social networking is utilized in business situations, b) *personal contact*, or the amount of face-to-face contact in sales networks, and c) *buyer preference*, or the degree to which a buyer utilizes technology in their relationship with sellers.

Face-to-face contact is being used less often by salespeople to build and maintain client relationships. Although some of the responses suggest that "younger" salespeople are more comfortable building relationships through *virtual* means, it is clear that buyers are also driving this mode of working in an attempt to function more effectively and streamline the number of

face-to-face meetings with sellers. An interesting finding is that few of the participants discussed the reduction in face time with clients as having a negative impact on particular aspects of their relationship. The wider societal issues of reducing face-to-face interactions and growing virtual networks were highlighted but not dealt with in a sales context per se. Indeed, the participants felt that for younger generations virtual relationships may be actually be preferred and may lead to higher performance as face-to-face skills and techniques will be largely redundant. The majority of the comments used virtual relationships as a proxy for more efficient and effective working.

Three sub-themes are evident in the Relationships category: Socialness, Personal Contact, and Buyer Contact, with exemplar quotes as follows.

*Socialness*
- I think that the whole term "social" (as in social media) is kind of strange. I'm not really trying to be social. Social media forms are really a means to an end. I have a deliverable to my customer. There's no value in hanging out with you online. It's almost like you're taking a tool that was designed for socialness and you're trying to find a business application and that's where the trouble is.

- It's about relationships and the thing is all of these people have tens of millions of MySpace friends in inverted commas, but do they really have a relationship?

*Personal Contact*
- People do not want personal contact anymore (they rely on technology). Postmodern thinkers are not thinking logically anymore.

- I think there will be a generation of people who have lost the ability to interact face-to-face because they never do it. There are people who will never travel anywhere or go and see people. They'll live in their little pods in their high rise development and if they want a night out they will Skype each other. There'll be a virtual Cyberspace. We're getting so wrapped up in responding to the technology, rather than sitting back and saying "How can we actually use it effectively to work for us?"

- It is becoming more difficult to get face-to-face (easier to say "no"). I find that I have to push younger folks to not just rely on email to get business.

- Younger people are more comfortable and fall back on the computer, when they really need

to be face-to-face to build relationships.

- Sometimes I just haven't got the time to see somebody in person to establish a relationship, so how can I use technology to build that relationship without physically driving down the [freeway]?  How can I give this guy enough confidence in me through the Internet?

*Buyer Preference*
- I have a lot of clients that prefer to do business via email. But it is extremely hard to start a relationship through email. Although I must say that I do have one client and we have never met but have great relationship via email and phone.

- I think customers have almost perfect information now. Customers are so much better informed and so much more aware of what's going on out there today. So, I guess in a way, the power has shifted a little bit and maybe that's a good thing. The power has shifted to the customer in terms of the way that the relationship is managed and therefore, it becomes much more about trust than persuasion.

**Theme Three: Selling Tools**

Selling tools are largely defined here as the technology-based techniques used by sellers in creating, building, and maintaining relationships. However, there were two distinct but associated sub-themes in this category – Social Media and Related Technology and the Seven Steps of Selling, or traditional sales process model. The latter was quite interesting to uncover, as clearly the former is impacting and reforming its execution.

There was a large amount of discussion regarding the seemingly omnipresent use of social media in the context of selling tools. The well-known social media sites of Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter were frequent sources of comment, as were facilitation tools such as Skype, Blogs, Webinars, and Smartphones. Again it was clear that, although not all participants had embraced these sales tools, respondents certainly were aware of them and appreciated the revolutionary impact these modalities are having on selling approaches and buyer/seller relationships. Strong confirmation emerged that social media is being actively used to create, build, and maintain sales relationships. Some of this is driven by perceived efficiency gains from both buyer and seller organizations, but the common factor across the majority of comments

about selling tools is the *availability and utilization of information through technology.* Interestingly this trend seemingly leads to a more transaction-based sales relationship (the antithesis of Rackham and DeVincentis' 1999 prediction of the trend toward the salesperson his-/herself as a key purveyor of value-added).

If information is ubiquitous, though, it's not a difficult next step to return to a more price-based, transactional relationship. And clearly, in some industries information truly is becoming commoditized to a large degree. This has the potential to fundamentally change the sales process in affected industries and also to have a strong influence on academic theory development in the sales field. Importantly, we question whether the paradigm that "good" sellers always build trust through face-to-face meetings that lead to long-term relationships is likely to be inapplicable in many contemporary sales settings. If this does represent a paradigmatic revolution in sales, then the need for a new over-arching sales/relationship model is suggested by our findings. More on this thought will be developed in the Implications section. For now, here are representative quotes for the two Selling Tools sub-themes: Social Media and Related Technology and Seven Steps of Selling.

### Social Media and Related Technology

- I think we're getting totally wrapped up in *responding* to the technology rather than sitting back and saying "How can we actually use it effectively to work for us?" Instead, *we're serving it* more and more at the moment.

- I think one of the problems may be too much availability. Once you are on Facebook and LinkedIn people just feel they can contact you but they waste a lot of your time.

- It just seems like such an intuitively good idea to get professional people to keep in touch, share interests, and point each other in the direction of useful websites and interesting articles. I haven't quite been able to get my head around how I can do that yet.

- We use social media as part of the sales process whenever we talk to anybody. We went to see a woman who was marketing director for a large, about 190-person strong bathroom retailer in the UK. We'd never met her before, so we looked her up on LinkedIn, found a picture of her, found her previous roles, found out that she'd been in purchasing at Tesco

and she'd been at Carphone Warehouse, and that's she very, very sharp and astute with a retail, marketing, and purchasing background. That information changed our whole selling approach.

- A financial advisor for a big firm here in town that I worked closely with decided it was time to go out on his own. He's had unbelievable success using social media through the contacts he made on Facebook and LinkedIn. He's actually been able to build a significant portion of his book of business through LinkedIn such that a potential client can see other people who trust him and then connect with them and ask about their experience with him. It really adds a lot of credibility.

- I work with a girl who's younger than me and she's kind of got us all LinkedIn. I think we've got a Facebook page. I get a couple of emails from the latest discussion in my area, but I find it a bit trivial. I don't think it adds a huge amount of value to my day.

- All the members of our executive team are on LinkedIn and I don't know why. The middle managers group, in which I would fall, is not really on LinkedIn. I don't see the value of it to me yet. Maybe somewhere down the line, when it becomes more popular with managers and commercial people generally, maybe we will all join in but at the moment, no,

- I am a big proponent of LinkedIn – it is helpful in building a network, gaining access to customers, and making background checks.

- I use LinkedIn to research when meeting with a client. It is a great conversation starter - another way to relationship-build. I use Facebook for prospecting clients. My observation has been that if someone is under 35 years old they use Facebook for social purposes. If older than 35 years, they use it for business.

- One of my associates in Paris regaled me with how she thought LinkedIn was the most fantastic, brilliant thing ever. She always makes a point whenever she goes to a conference to ask everybody, "Are you on LinkedIn?" She adds them to her network. She's got all this network of people all over Europe and she thinks it's fabulous. And that kind of energized me for about fifteen minutes and then I thought "OK, she's got this enormous network, has she actually done anything with it?" I just think the whole thing is far too trivial, strange, and slightly creepy for it to work at a business level.

- I set up Facebook to "ping" me when it's a client's birthday. We tweet on Twitter for company events, and I take a USB drive with me instead of a laptop on calls (some clients won't allow us to use our own PC in their offices any more).

- We've just launched an around-the-world internal social network. Everyone who works at McCann's has to go on and list about twenty interests. Management puts you in the center of this circle and then puts all these pins to different people to actually help you connect with people with like-minded interests professionally and socially.

- I would say that social media is a tool. I have developed a real relationship with some of the

people we sell to and they look for you on Facebook – just you – and so I've had to delete certain pictures on my personal page and take away a lot of the content that was on there. Two years ago, I wouldn't have done that, but because the world has gotten so much smaller and everybody is on Facebook I've done it now.

- I have a personal blog, but don't use it for business. I also belong to other industry groups and blogs. I use them to keep an "eye" on and track competitors. It is easier to keep up with new products in the tech industry (new developments daily). I also subscribe to RSS (to track competitor blogs).

- Blogs are 100 percent acceptance of a complete stranger's perception of a customer's experience versus the company's viewpoint. It seems like nobody will trust the branding and messaging from the company anymore, but they will trust somebody that they've never met who maybe had a negative experience and now says on some blog that maybe I shouldn't purchase that product.

- So we did an iPhone with apps. You press the app and up come the PowerPoint slides providing the detail. And these guys about fell over when we took it to them and said "Look, this is our presentation." "Okay, where is it?" "It's there, it's on your iPhone – all you need is to press a button." And they said "Wow!"

- I would say we're using our phones – smartphones. We're using our phone as our computer.

- People now have Skype meetings and I think they are quite effective if you're located all over the place. You can have a conference call with somebody or with a number of people. With Skype you can physically see the customer or colleague and thus you can see the body language, the intimation - it comes across a lot better.

- I link to industry sites/trade publications online.

- I used to subscribe to trade publications, but now they are online.

- *Seven Steps of Selling*
- We still follow the basic selling steps, but it's more condensed now from the traditional "7 steps" to maybe 2 or 3 basic steps.

- My firm's "steps" of selling went from 10 to about 3.

- Our sales steps went to 3 steps; 1) find needs/solutions, 2) negotiate price/time/closing, 3) close that day or sometimes maybe a year or longer later depending on the client.

- I know someone that uses dating websites to prospect for new customers.

- We give customers Wikis and chat rooms that they can use for follow up learning.

- I send text messages to about 10 percent of my clients as follow-up.

- We do some traditional follow-up in terms of customer visits, but it's mainly if it's a technical problem. I very rarely speak to anybody. I very rarely visit anybody anymore. It costs so much money.

- Customers are now gathering information and not asking for explanation/interpretation from the seller. Customers are forming their own opinions.

- The biggest change I've seen is that customers are more knowledgeable. In that sense, they have higher expectations. Like for my business, clients do a lot of research online, so they come in knowing what they want.

- When you talk about customers, they are knowledgeable. The knowledge they have at their fingertips. They can do in a matter of hours what would take weeks to do in the past. They research through Google and all sorts of other sources on the Internet. It's just amazing how critical customers are now, how quickly they can criticize, and how far the reach.

**Theme Four: Generational**

Generational differences in the use of technology are clear in the data collected. There is a perception from the participants that younger people are more likely to use, and feel more comfortable using, social media. The comments collected suggest that younger buyers and sellers are likely to prefer virtual, technology-based relationships, as opposed to the face-to-face relationships favored by their older colleagues. Older participants suggested that this trend works to the detriment of relationships in general; however it is clear from the data collected that are were situations where positive outcomes had occurred through removing the face-to-face element. Whether this is a result of the buyer or seller being more favorably disposed to the use of technology, or instead through practice the buyer or seller had developed effective communication skills vis-à-vis social media and related technology, was not identified. Representative quotes from the Generational theme follow.

- I have found that a majority of younger people tend to shy away from personal contact and prefer email contact. This is a lousy way to communicate and detrimental to business.

- It's harder to get face-to-face in general. I find that I have to push younger folks to not just rely on email to get business.

- Younger people are more comfortable with virtual and fall back on the computer. What they really need is to be more face-to-face to build relationships.

- It's almost as if members of the younger generation have just naturally taken what they do outside work via technology and brought it into work.

- I can see that this generation communicates differently (my kids are 16 and 14). They communicate on Facebook, etc. When they are 26 and 24 that is the way they will run their business lives. So there is a bit of a generational gap.

- Etiquette when using technology is important. You don't check Blackberry when you're with someone. When you use email use proper grammar/spelling. You need to use manners (people tend to forget to use "please" and "thank you" in email or text messages).

- One of the things I've seen change drastically over the last 4 or 5 years is that customer loyalty is not there like it used to be. Now the younger customers come out with no loyalty whatsoever. Today you can have their business and tomorrow they're with somebody else.

**Theme Five: Global**

The increasingly global nature of sales has created significant opportunities for increased revenues and also presented proportionately larger problems. The positives stem from access to new markets and subsequent incremental revenue streams. The negatives center on managing relationships across time zones, in an age where instant responses are the norm. Hence the notion of one person developing deep trust-based relationships with buyers is called into focus across different time zone boundaries, especially if the time differences are significant. One human cannot be to be constantly available 24 hours a day, a situation that is not only unfeasible but also undesirable in a technology-driven sales model. Thus, there is a direct link between this theme and Theme One (connectivity). Here are several supporting quotes for the Global theme.

- This morning, first thing I straight away just looked at my Blackberry and the first email that comes in is an order from Columbia that's from a guy who is out in the mines somewhere asking me to ship it into Florida by DHL. And then, I get another one coming in from China for an order that's just got be shipped to Hong Kong.

- I found myself in the pub on Friday night answering emails from America because of, obviously, the time lag. The connectivity has its ups and downs but I've probably saved a considerable amount of business this way over the past four years.

- Business is more global than past, offering more compensation but at a cost to personal life (expected to work longer hours).

- If you're managed across global boundaries and your manager happens to be in another time zone then you may start out in your morning time zone thinking this is what my day is going to look like, but your manager is the other time zone says "I want this report by 9 a.m. your time," and bang goes your plan for the day.

**Theme Six: Sales/Marketing Interface**

Marketing, rather than sales, has tended to be a focus of social media deployment strategies within most organizations. The age-old mantra that dissatisfied customers tell eight to sixteen other customers is no longer relevant. Through social media they are much more likely to tell a few hundred or a few hundred thousand (depending on how many "friends" they have). This presents significant problems for selling firms (and hence, salespeople), who are likely to have to overcome an escalating number of customer objections based on word-of mouth/buzz. Buyers

have more information about the products and services that are being offered and are likely to use this as leverage in any subsequent negotiations. Below are representative quotes related to sales/marketing interface.

- Social media is 100 percent acceptance of a complete stranger's perception of an experience versus the company's view of it. Nobody will trust the branding from the company, but they will trust somebody that they've never met who maybe had a negative experience and now says on some blog, "Well maybe I shouldn't purchase that product."

- I actually manage the social media for our company and we use Twitter to push our offers and promotions to get guests to come in and stay. But there's kind of a differentiation for our Twitter page – the majority of the followers are bloggers, convention and visitors bureaus, and big resorts. Our Facebook page is where many of guests who actually stay at our resort are.

- I know that Twitter with us is just about putting out content for people to follow on us, but our Facebook page is really where we have our ads, let people know we're having a promotion, and push out information. We are just now linking our website with our Facebook page with "like" buttons by each product so you can "check" liking this box of product. Now, when people visit the page they can see what everyone is buying.

- Social media has huge limitations in business because most businesses block social media access internally.

- Our marketing is managed at the national brand level. We've got people that sit on Twitter and Facebook all the time and at the national brand level the monitoring is constant.

- We are finding that we are actually doing more strategic selling as opposed to having a separate specific marketing function. For us, it's a traditional marketing responsibility that is really now a sales responsibility. It's trying to understand what's going on in the market, feeding it back into the business.

### Discussion and Implications

Taken in sum, the evidence generated by this research reveals a revolutionary change in the way contemporary selling is conducted. The implications for theory development and practice in this area are widespread and game-changing. In this decade, the increasing pervasiveness of social media and related technology are fundamentally altering the methods by which, and through which, buyers and sellers interact. Ironically, on many occasions there seems to be a tendency to move away from relationship selling and back to a more transactional approach in many

organizational settings. This is antithetical to the predictions of Rackham and DeVincentis (1999) and is predicated on the ubiquitous availability and resulting commoditization of information from all conceivable sources. Each of the six key themes from our research is debriefed below in the context of relevant theoretical and managerial implications.

**Theme One: Connectivity**

Our results suggest that salespeople are using social media and related technology more and more to demonstrate connectivity to both their host organization and clients. Evidence is strong that this is largely driven by a hunger for increased levels of information, more often and at a faster rate than was previously the norm.

Organizational demands are greater due to the unceasing use of email and mobile communication technology. A perception exists that salespeople are no longer able to effectively engage in daily, let along long-term, planning due to constant real-time interruptions. Salespeople that previously were viewed as remote now are actually incredibly connected 24/7. Anyone in the host organization as well as any client can make a request for information at any time during and outside the working day, in many cases when working across multiple time zones. And, the expectation is that a response will be made very quickly, as the recipient is presumed to be working within a similar paradigm – one that settles for nothing less than an immediate answer. Hence salespeople feel pressured to conform to a culture of immediacy.

Sales managers are also able to exert greater levels of control and accountability over their sales teams, although whether this actually is good idea will be discussed later in this section. At any given moment the precise activities of salespeople can be identified and scrutinized, in many instances remotely and virtually. A real sense of "big brother" is prevalent in the focus group discussions and this appeared to enhance levels of frustration and stress in

participants. Clients also expect total access to information from their designated salesperson. They too are not prepared to wait and expect prompt responses to any queries, at any time.

The results suggest that variance does exist in the use and the uptake of social media and related technology by salespeople. For some, its increasing use and higher perceived levels of scrutiny are seen as a negative and threatening notion, in essence something to be avoided at all costs. However, others clearly embrace technology and use it to serve them and help them achieve their objectives. Some of these folks spoke of using the technology to help them plan, also highlighting an ability to "turn it off." Although no data was collected on the relative effectiveness of the two perspectives, it is likely that those embracing technology were more effective. This at the very least has some intuitive appeal.

Sales practitioners are presented with a central challenge based on the issue of connectivity – how do I best utilize social media and related technology to enhance selling and sales productivity? From a client perspective, creative solutions exist that can ease the fulfillment of expected prompt responses to queries, even those outside "normal" working hours. Options might involve third parties, or automatically re-routing certain queries during non-contact hours. The core of the issue here is *expectations management,* and it is essential that expectations be set jointly with the client. Certain response parameters can be agreed on and, if necessary, written into a contract. The same is true for salespersons' host firms, with the responsibility squarely on management to not exploit salespeople through technology.

What is unsustainable is a 24/7 – or nearly so – response from a single salesperson to both clients and their host organization. This mode of operation will lead to burnout, stress, increased turnover, and an ultimately a significant drop in productivity. Then, customers will be negatively impacted and lost. It is clear that while technology can indeed enhance sales

productivity, sales managers must have a strategy to deal with the implications of technology. It is not enough to merely possess the technology and be aware of its existence. Effectiveness and efficiency will flow from those taking a thoughtful, strategic view of the implications of implementation.

**Theme Two: Relationships**

Face-to-face creation and maintenance of salesperson/client relationships, and subsequent trust-building, are central tenets in the sales literature (Crosby, Evans, and Cowles 1990). Social media and related technology appear to be impacting traditional approaches to these central characteristics of the sales role to the point that in certain instances salespeople are having completely virtual relationships with clients – sometimes at a client's insistence. The focus group evidence suggests that two main factors are responsible for this trend. First, society at large is increasingly using social networks and this practice is migrating into use in organizational and especially salesperson/client relationships (although it is noteworthy that not a small number of our respondents expressed doubt and confusion about the efficacy of this trend for sales organizations). Second, with significant levels of turbulence in most economic markets globally, efficiency and effectiveness agendas are being pursued as a top priority by sales organizations. This has led to an overall reduction in salesperson travel budgets. Also, there is a corresponding need for buyers and their own firms to be more defensive and aggressive in pursuit of cost reductions. It is clear from the comments made that if the conditions of the contract are being met, and the parties are receiving the information they require in the right format at the right time, many contemporary organizational buyers are more than happy to have a purely virtual relationship with their sellers. Are the days of traditional face-to-face sales calls rapidly coming to an end? Not entirely, of course, but as more organizational buyers from younger generations

populate their positions, the likelihood that the face-to-face relationship will continue to predominate diminishes.

For sales practitioners this prompts a fundamental re-think in what a "good" relationship is likely to look like. Previously, the literature has predominantly suggested that salespeople for whom buyers have positive affect (liking) have been more likely to be successful (Nicholson, Compeau, and Sethi 2001; Leigh and Summers 2002). However, positive affect is unlikely to account for proportionately as much variance in salesperson success within a virtual environment in which buyers have the advantage of ubiquitous information. Thus, quality and timeliness of information flows that may or may not be generated by a designated contact (i.e., the salesperson) becomes more of a key success factor. Indeed, sales organizations may have to develop virtual sales teams that fuel clients' demands for information, possibly across time zones when working globally.

 **Theme Three: Selling Tools**

Our results suggest that through social media and related technology, sellers and buyer are much better informed about the dimensions of their relationships than ever before. A sea change is occurring in the nature and symmetry of the relationship between buyers and sellers, and as such organizations that persist in the tried-and-true Seven Steps of Selling approach are likely to find themselves quickly left behind competitively.

We saw strong evidence of a social media impact across the traditional Seven Steps of Selling, and respondents see the steps as changing and condensing. For example, sellers are using social media when prospecting for clients, with a significant amount of informal pre-qualifying of key decision makers occurring online and prior to any initial sales approach. Additionally, gathering of detailed background data on potential clients is occurring through

social media sites like Facebook and LinkedIn – the traditional pre-approach step. This can involve research on client-sponsored social network sites as well as on less formal, mass-subscribed social networks, with results potentially uncovering problems/opportunities in a prospect's business directly from the "horse's mouth." The astute salesperson can use the findings from these searches to customize a sales presentation, setting up the client's real problem as something that can be rectified (magically and very specifically) only by working with the salesperson's organization. The ethics of these practices may on the surface seem somewhat questionable, but they are now widely used and actively encouraged in many organizations.

Buyers today are better informed than ever about the markets in which they operate. Information about market conditions, their competitors, potential suppliers, and new innovations and developments in their markets are literally at a buyer's fingertips. The previous asymmetry that existed between buyer and seller is no more, and the time of the seller being the expert in their field has largely passed in many markets. Indeed, our results suggest that clients may know more than the seller in certain circumstances about the selling firm's own products – a potentially embarrassing situation with hefty repercussions on hiring and training of a salespeople.

The implications for selling practice are clear. Now, more than ever before, sellers have to work very hard to sell on *value*. The value sold has to be very real and readily discernible by buyers. Most certainly it cannot be the kind of value that in reality is also delivered by every other organization in a particular market – that is, no strategic differentiation. The commoditization of information ensures that a buyer is likely to identify true value-added very quickly. Sellers have to know their clients' businesses intimately and deploy social media and

related technology effectively to convey how they can add this real, discernible value to clients.

Of course, Marketing 101 holds that if value can be added then an incremental price can be levied. If not, and instead all offerings in a market are broadly similar, then commoditization, price wars, and reduced margins are a fait accompli. This outcome is ultimately a zero-sum game strategically, but given the ubiquitous nature of information today in most markets and the largely undifferentiated offerings therein, it may very well be a reality. Thus, we conclude that a shift from relationships back to transactions in professional selling is increasingly likely going forward.

**Theme Four: Generational**

Our results identify that younger salespeople are using social media and technology in every aspect of their life – bringing their non-work world into the workplace. Participants agree that this demographic segment is adept at identifying and embracing new technology. However, the older participants regard social media as a gimmick and not something that they feel particularly comfortable in dealing with at all. In many instances the massive increase in the use of technology appears to be viewed in a very negative way by the older generation. Clearly, what we see here is a not unexpected resistance to change by the older salespeople to the new paradigm of social media and related technology as drivers of selling, a finding consistent with prior work on sales force technology acceptance (Robinson, Marshall, and Stamps 2005).

The challenge for sales-based organizations is to better identify and strategically manage the technological match-up between specific salesperson and specific buyer. More precisely, if a sales team has an older age profile then it is to be expected that some resistance to the use and deployment of technology will be experienced. It is likely that if the latest technology is deployed, or made available, it will not be embraced without a structured and on-going training

package. Additionally, it is likely that the age demographic of a buyer will dictate the degree to which social media and related technology should be used. This will be manifest in the degree to which new data is actively gathered about products and services in their industry, but also in the nature of the relationship required in order to be perceived as being an effective supplier. More specifically, a more transactional and virtual relationship may be required or preferred by a younger demographic of buyer, limiting the opportunities on the part of sales organizations for value-added differentiation and traditional in-person relationship selling.

**Theme Five: Global**

The results suggest that organizations are increasingly likely to pursue sales opportunities outside traditional (national) boundaries. Although participants acknowledged the organizational benefits of such strategies, a great deal of negative sentiment was expressed regarding the role of salespeople within this trend.

Participants were very much aware of the competitive challenges posed by the current economic climate and viewed the need to investigate and exploit new market opportunities for the long-term success of their own organizations in a generally positive light. However, most felt that the link between the strategic imperative and operational implementation was weak. It was expressed that senior managers tend to focus on the identification of new market opportunities and the incumbent revenue streams, with less time devoted to strategic discussions regarding issues of implementation. Participants suggested that organizations tend to simply replicate existing business models in new markets, rather than discuss and agree on a new and adapted organizational form customized to the needs of the new market. Within this context, issues regarding expectations and deadline-setting across time zones were discussed.

Organizations entering new markets and attempting to compete effectively must be

flexible. While there may be no need to adapt existing administrative processes and management procedures, an examination and discussion of such is imperative to identify possible areas of competitive weakness. Organizations that refuse to do this end up placing too much reliance on those individuals primarily tasked with achieving the additional revenue streams – salespeople. In a similar way to the discussion on "connectivity," this can lead to increased levels of stress, burnout, and employee churn within the sales teams, thus vastly reducing the net benefits sought.

**Theme Six: Sales/Marketing Interface**

Our results show the growing importance of social media at strategic and tactical levels in organizations and the implications for combined sales and marketing practice are many. We suggest that the driver of much participant discussion regarding the sales and marketing interface and the notion of social media was variance in a) the policy and practice of the host organization and b) the degree to which social media is used by clients, customers, and competitors in a particular market.

Thus, and importantly, no "one-size-fits-all" approach exists for this complex issue. What is clear is that organizations must examine their specific competitive situation and decide whether their level of engagement with social media and related technology places them at an advantage or disadvantage to the competition. Where advantage is available, organizations must decide on the appropriate responsible split for the collection and dissemination of this information – sales or marketing. What is of primary importance is that the information is collected in a systematic and appropriate way and that it is discussed and disseminated effectively for firm use in strategy development and execution. If not, then there is a danger that social media engagement goes down the unfortunate path of many underutilized and ill deployed customer relationship management (CRM) initiatives and the strategic imperative is lost.

Of note was that in the organizations where social media had been banned, participants suggested that they were still using it to inform decisions about clients and key contacts. In a number of instances, salespeople had cited information gained through social media as verbatim client feedback in order to improve product and service offerings. This is quite impressive.

It is likely that at this point, organizations refusing to engage with social media and the informational opportunities thereof are strategically *product focused*. As such there is likely to be a great emphasis on sales to perform and that the role of marketing in these organizations will be largely tactical (this is what we make so please buy it). In such firms the role of sales is often extremely pressurized and much attention is focused on issues of price. Strategically, this means in these cases cost (and therefore price) leadership is, or indeed should be, central to all decisions. Whether this is sustainable approach will be decided by the relevant market and the available customers therein. This outcome seems like a return to a more transaction-based selling model, a reversal of the predicted inexorable trend toward relationship selling (Rackham and DeVincentis 1999).

## Future Research Opportunities and Limitations

Our findings provide the impetus for several opportunities for further research. We divide these opportunities into two broad areas: relationship selling and maximizing the new technology in sales.

First, the relationship-based future for selling and sales management theory and practice that has been envisioned by many researchers as a *fate accompli* may be less clear. Further work is required to identify and delineate the factors impacting the relative effectiveness of relationship selling versus a more transactional paradigm, given the presence of different and previously unimagined information flows (see our discussion of the commoditization of

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information above). Our results suggest that technology-facilitated information flows within competitive situations likely are increasingly tempering the impact of trust (and, in fact, the meaning of trust). Broader, the degree to which competitive advantage is based on relational drivers may be unclear going forward. If, as some of our participants intimated, value-added for organizational buyers is shifting to expediency over relationship, the implications for the development of sales and marketing theory in this area are potentially quite important. Ultimately, what is the nature of a relationship within the rubric of social media and related technology?

Second, the increasingly important role of social media and related technology in selling and sales management is clear from our results, as is the role of context. However future research is required in order to provide practical advice and develop theory on several issues:

a) *What is the precise role and impact of social media and related technology in efficient and effective selling and sales management?*

Our results provide some evidence to suggest that social media and related technology can enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of salespeople. However, the impact cited by some sellers as positive was not echoed by all participants hence, where in the sales process does social media and related technology have the most potential impact (positive or negative) and what is the precise nature of this impact?

b) What types of social media and related technology produce more efficient and effective results for sales people and sales managers?

Can salespeople use a portfolio approach whereby certain combinations of social media and related technology provide disproportionately better results than others? In this way

salespeople and sales managers might invest their scarce resources in the most efficient and effective way possible.

c) *Do experience, generational effects, and related learning preferences impact on the propensity of sales people to engage with and benefit from social media and related technology?*

We found some evidence to suggest a generational effect on engagement with and attitude toward social media and related technology. Research highlighting specific differences by age and related learning preferences would be invaluable to sales organizations and could help to highlight training and development needs in these areas.

d) *Do issues of organizational-level technology strategy (specifically implementation) impact on salesperson effectiveness and efficiency?*

Our results suggest that much is left to the individual with regards to developing knowledge on issues of social media and related technology. It is likely that organizations that have a clear, market-facing rationale and policy for their approach to social media and related technology will be more effective and efficient in its use.

In terms of limitations of the present work, the nature of qualitative research tends to lend itself to small numbers of participants when compared with standard survey approaches that predominate in the sales literature. However, our approach was based on solid grounding and benchmarking off prior studies with similar approaches in related domains. The number of participants is adequate for the purpose of this research, and we would argue that the depth and richness of the data collected through this method could not have been duplicated through a survey approach nor would such an approach have been consistent with our aims.

**Figure 1**
**Tandy TRS-80 Computer Circa 1980**



The Tandy TRS-80 was originally introduced in 1977 and used cassette tapes to store data. Sold through Radio Shack stores, the first model racked up sales of 10,000 in the first month at $600 each. Pictured above is the TRS-80 Model III, which was introduced in 1980 and employed two 8 inch floppy disk drives (touted at the time as a revolutionary breakthrough) – one for the program files and one for storage. There was no hard drive.

**Figure 2**
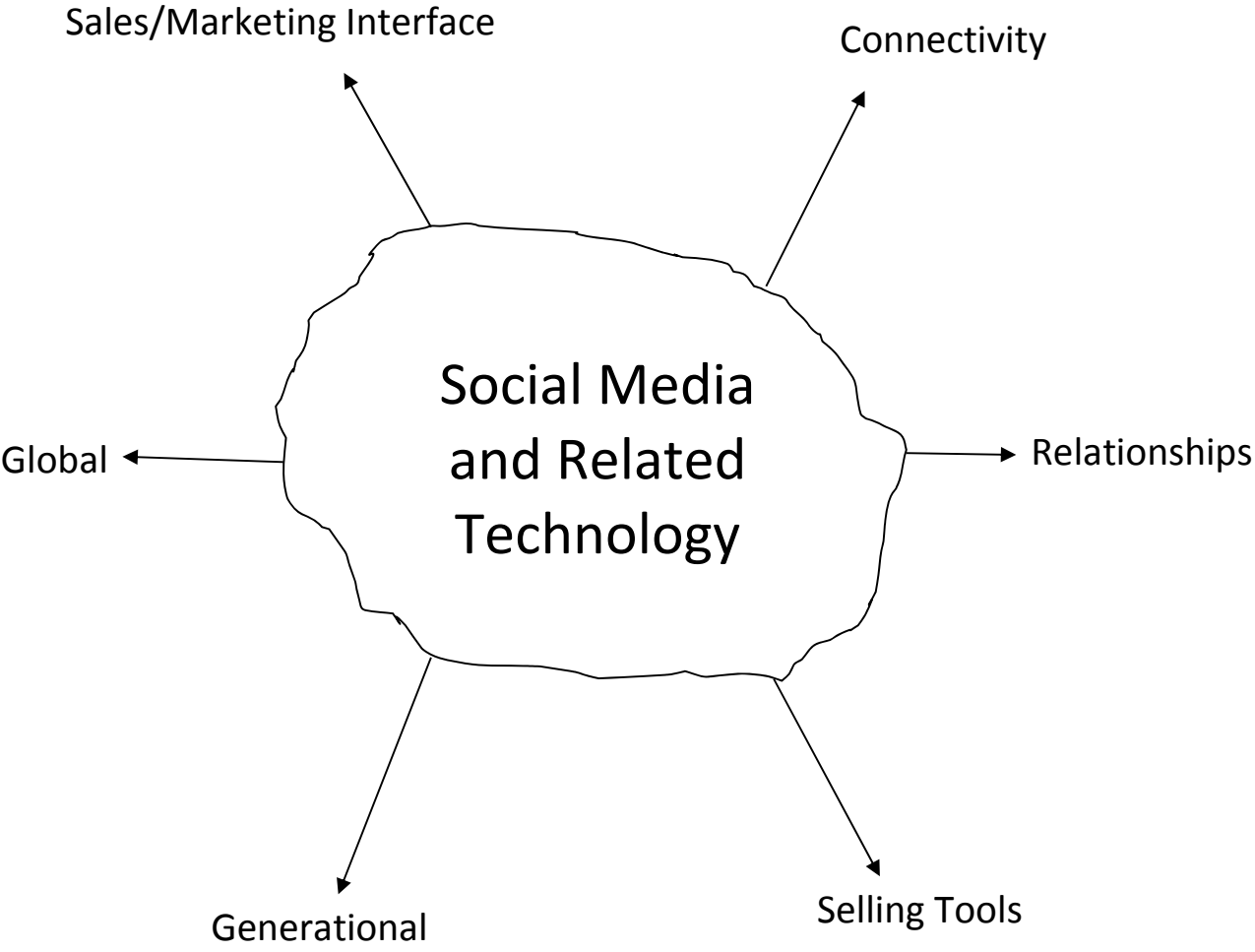**Impact of Social Media and Related Technology on**
**the Selling Environment**

Sales/Marketing Interface

Connectivity

Social Media and Related Technology

Global

Relationships

Generational

Selling Tools

**Table 1**
**Demographics of Participants and**
**Their Industries**

| PRODUCTS (18) | | SERVICES (17) | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Building Supplies (1) | | Financial (3) | |
| Pharmaceuticals (2) | | Railroad (1) | |
| Promotional Products (1) | | Advertising (2) | |
| Industrial Carpet (1) | | Shipping (2) | |
| Paper (1) | | Healthcare/Medical (3) | |
| Acoustics (1) | | Education (1) | |
| Beverage (2) | | Consulting (1) | |
| Rubber Rings (1) | | Hospitality (2) | |
| Machinery (1) | | Real Estate (1) | |
| Capital Equipment (1) | | Security (1) | |
| Software (1) | | | |
| Plastics (1) | | | |
| Air Conditioning (1) | | | |
| Automotive (1) | | | |
| Defense (1) | | | |
| Medical (1) | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| AGE (years) | | EXPERIENCE (years) | |
| | | | |
| 21 - 25 | (3) | 1 – 5 | (4) |
| 26 – 30 | (2) | 6 – 10 | (13) |
| 31 – 35 | (9) | 11 – 15 | (7) |
| 36 – 40 | (7) | 16 – 20 | (2) |
| 41 – 45 | (7) | 21 – 25 | (6) |
| 46 – 50 | (3) | 26 – 30 | (1) |
| 51 – 55 | (3) | Over 30 | (2) |
| Older than 55 | (1) | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| GENDER | | | |
| | | | |
| Male | | (27) | |
| Female | | (8) | |
| | | | |

Frequencies are in brackets.

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