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Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences 166 (2015) 116 – 121

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**Procedia**  
Social and Behavioral Sciences

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International Conference on Research Paradigms Transformation in Social Sciences 2014

# Modern model of competences of personal agents as increase factor of clients' subjective well-being

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## Abstract

The model of competences of personal agents is developed in the article. The model allows raising the level of subjective well-being of clients and promotes the growth of main indicators characterizing productivity of personal selling. The author designates a new group of stakeholders with which the company has to develop relationship for realization of a social orientation. Relationship marketing is defined taking into account the priority of its broad treatments and orientation on developing relationships with various groups of people. The concept 'personal agent' is entered into the theory of marketing. This concept reflects the activity of the seller in modern conditions more precisely. The definition of personal selling is given. Novelty of the author's formulation of this definition is that the personal agents have to own skillfully technologies of sales for achieving their purpose. It is proved that the main objective of personal selling in the context of relationship marketing is not sale of goods, but development of relationship between clients and personal agents (company). The author proves the importance of application of psychological theories and offers the method of creation of a psychological portrait of clients on the basis of classification of standard psychological characteristics. The behavioural indicators characterizing demonstration of all main competences of personal agents are revealed and presented.

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Peer-review under responsibility of Tomsk Polytechnic University.

*Keywords:* competence model, relationship marketing, personal selling, personal agent, psychological portrait of clients

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## 1. Introduction

Modern market is characterised by high competition, decrease in efficiency of traditional marketing communications, change of requirements and motives of consumers, increase of the importance of loyal clients, growth of individualization of demand. In this situation a company faces a serious problem. Its decision is connected with personal selling management. Its effectiveness is expressed not so much on sale of goods as in construction, maintenance and development of exclusive relationship with clients. Due to this relationship marketing is becoming a

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really demanded concept in the world, and companies actively exploit its categories. Applications of the concept of marketing of relationship in practice demands change not only in philosophy of market activity of the companies, but also tools of an embodiment of marketing strategy, including personal selling. Despite rather serious researches in the field of personal selling, methodical approaches to their management require improvement caused by change of marketing paradigms. The competence mode, adapted to relationship marketing, is one of the instruments of achieving a positive effect. The role of human factor increases in development of economic processes. One of major factors of receiving profit is the trade personnel. The culture of trade and functions of the trade personnel is changing. These circumstances demand a regulation of education of employees who possess a significant set of competences. It concerns people who are engaged in personal selling – personal agents. The presented model of competences of personal agents is urged to operate personal selling in order to increase main indicators of personal selling productivity and the level of clients' subjective well-being. The subjective well-being represents the integrated psychological phenomenon including assessment and attitude of a person to his life (Diener, E., Lucas, R. E., 1999). Thus, the company and clients receive valuable benefits. The purpose of article is to develop theoretical provisions of personal selling on the basis of relationship marketing and develop the model of competences of personal agents on the basis of the principle of the comprehensive including interests of main participants. For achievement of the purpose it is required to solve some problems: to designate a new group of stakeholders with which the company has to develop relationship and give definition to relationship marketing; to give definition to personal selling, to designate their purpose and role in the context of relationship marketing; to develop model of competences of personal agents; to offer a method of creation of psychological portrait of clients on the basis of classification of standard psychological characteristics of the person; to list the revealed behavioral indicators characterizing demonstration of all competences presented in the model.

## **2. Theoretical bases of personal selling in a context of marketing of relationship**

The concept of relationship marketing is in a stage of formation and demands accurately designated methodological base. The analysis of definitions of relationship marketing presented by S. Kusch allowed to reveal three positions which modern relationship marketing must contain (Kusch, S.P., 2008). Firstly, it is priority of broad treatments of relationship marketing. Secondly, it is a vision of marketing of relationship as marketing paradigms, but not as concepts. Thirdly, it is orientation on creation of relationship not only with consumers, but also with other groups of people. J. Egan (2004) submits the review definitions of groups with which the company has to build relationship. We share the point of view that the company has to build the relations with clients, suppliers, employees and external organizations. Social aspect in the modern concept of relationship marketing is very important. For this reason we suggest to designate the fifth group of stakeholders – 'needy'. This group includes natural and legal entities, for example, orphanages, retirement homes, charitable organizations, environment protection organizations, medical and educational institutions. The purpose of interaction with 'needy' is the solution of important social problems of society. Thereby it is necessary to understand the modern paradigm of marketing as relationship marketing of maintenance and development of high level (long-term, mutually advantageous, confidential) relationship with clients, suppliers, employees, external organizations and 'needy' by means of satisfaction of a wide range of their requirements and requirements of society. We agree with the opinion of K. Möller and A. Halinen (2000) that relationship between the supplier consumers undoubtedly remains the main focus of relationship marketing and all marketing science as a whole. J. Mitchell (2003) states that buyers are eager to see the companies which are guided by relationship. They want to be indulged. The sales guided by relationship inevitably result in high efficiency and high profitability. Efforts of company management and employees have to be directed on satisfaction of high level needs. The more refined needs of clients will be satisfied, the higher subjective well-being level will be.

Transition from traditional marketing to relationship marketing assumes essential change of the view of all classical instruments of integrated marketing communications, including personal selling. Now, the role of personal selling is considerably raising and is becoming the key instrument of integrated marketing communications for creation of relationship with clients. The author defines the relations between clients and personal agents (company)

on the basis of personal contact between two parties, without additional resources of communication concerning sale of goods (services) or other interaction, which efficiency depends on personal agents' possession of modern sales technologies. Novelty of the author's formulation manifests itself in the idea that personal agents must skillfully own modern technologies of sales for achieving their purpose. The purpose of personal selling is construction, maintenance and development of exclusive relationship between clients and personal agents, supported by positive reaction of clients. The specified purpose of personal selling corresponds to the environment of relationship marketing because of accent shift from sales to exclusive relationship. Thus, the role of personal selling is increasing and productivity of personal selling depends on acquisition of modern sales technologies.

### 3. Model of competences of personal agents and behavioral indicators

Application of the psychological approach to personal sales can be carried out through creating the model of competence for personal agents. Competence is defined as basic individual quality that causes effectiveness at work and in other situations. S. Spenser and L. Spenser (1993) give 5 basic qualities underlying the competence: motives, physiological characteristics, I-concept, knowledge and skill.

Further on the model of competences is represented, developed by the authors in the result of research carried out from 2011 to 2014. In the written survey 525 clients, 53 salespeople and 12 top managers took part. Each respondent defined 30 competences. Competences mentioned by 80% respondents in each group were considered basic. The distinctive feature of the represented model is that it is based on the opinions of three groups of stakeholders-clients, salespeople and top managers. 24 basic competences were divided into 7 clusters according to aim of each competence.

Table 1. Model of personal agents' competences

Cluster	Competence
Cluster №1 Development of internal resources	Positive thinking, personal involvement, control, risk acceptance
Cluster №2 Influencing	Clients' impressions management, awareness of clients psychology, political acumen, product knowledge and its presentation
Cluster №3 Interpersonal effectiveness	Focus on satisfaction, trust, involvement, diagnostic understanding
Cluster №4 Personal effectiveness	Stress resistance, self-confidence, exquisite style
Cluster №5 Action and achievement	Focus on result, initiative, information search, efficiency
Cluster №6 Value orientation	Individual approach, loyalty to company, healthy lifestyle
Cluster №7 Innovative approach	Creative potential, focus on relationship

The above represented model is universal and can be used for any kind of product and service. Description of most of the competences could be found in special literature.

It seems reasonable to describe such rare competences as personal involvement, control and risk acceptance. These competences represent viability initiated by S.R. Maddi (1958). Awareness of clients' psychology is of vital importance. In marketing theory there are four basic psychological concepts of marketing strategy. In classic Ph. Kotler's (2003) concept the main role is played by motivation and needs. In J. Trout's (2001) concept general and social psychology prevail. Sensorial marketing concept, developed by M. Lindstrom (2010), is based on psychophysiology of analyzers and psychology of religion. G. Zaltman's (2003) concept of neuromarketing is based on cognitive psychology and neuropsychology. Application of psychological concepts in the research of world leading scientists indicates fruitfulness and availability of psychology in marketing.

It is expedient to offer a modern method of creation of a psychological portrait of the client on the basis of classification of standard personal psychological characteristics. Four main directions of segmentation based on four theories are allocated: the theory of socionics, the theory of temperament, the theory of types of thinking and the

theory of the accentuation of character. From the strategic point of view personal agents must: carry out segmentation in the four designated directions by means of visual diagnostics, add results into the clients' database and show the desirable model of behavior during personal contact with clients.

During the second stage of the research 12 groups of personal agents discussed the behavioral indicators which correspond to revealed competences. Behavioral indicators are necessary for personal agents' knowledge of model of ideal behavior and of competences assessment. The results of the research are represented in the following tables.

Table 2. Behavioral indicators of the cluster 'Development of internal resources'

Competence	Behavioral indicators
1. Positive thinking	Personal agent demonstrates optimistic view and confidence in positive problem solution. He is in the mood for luck and success. He looks satisfied with life. He finds positive features in difficult situation, has positive impact on the work of other team members, in most cases, takes the position: "I + " you + ", offers solutions.
2. Personal involvement	Personal agent gives the impression of a person who is in his workplace, tries to be aware of everything happening around, shows the satisfaction of communicating with people and believes that life is very interesting in itself. Clients and colleagues listen carefully to his opinion. He has positive attitude towards innovation, attends corporate events, works with pleasure, and demonstrates the desire for further training.
3. Control	Personal agent shows confidence in business and control of the situation at work. He sets difficult goals and attains them; often shows determination when there are problems at work and recognizes them as solvable; stays confident in conflict situations.
4. Risk acceptance	Personal agent does not experience fear with new clients; has no regrets for mistakes; evaluates the experience as an important element and tries not to make the same mistakes; makes risky; works in different outlets.

Table 3. Behavioral indicators of the cluster 'Influencing'

Competence	Behavioral indicators
5. Impressions management	Personal agent cares about of customers' benefit and profit of the company tries to have beneficial influence on clients. He correctly identifies the motives and needs of customers, solves customer's problems; uses simple and complex methods of persuasion; gives effective presentations and answer questions confidently; demonstrates sophisticated style; identifies priority of clients; uses an individual approach to customers; conducts customer segmentation and adjusts his behaviour.
6. Awareness of clients' psychology	Personal agent successfully implements customer segmentation on the psychological basis; models his behaviour; uses recommendations for working with clients of different psychological types.
7. Political acumen	Personal agent successfully determines the hierarchy in the group of customers; focuses on the members of the group of customers who make a purchase decision; keeps knowledge about the psychology of the customer; predicts the impact of events or situations on customers; shows flexibility in communication; has an impact on people's behaviour; causes positive emotions.
8. Product knowledge and its presentation	Personal agent knows the range of goods; shows flexibility; has good presentation skills; changes the content of the speech according to the distinctive features of the audience; has the skills of self-presentation; influences customer opinions.

Table 4. Behavioral indicators of the cluster 'Interpersonal effectiveness'

Competence	Behavioral indicators
9. Focus on satisfaction	Personal agent offers goods (services) of high quality; solves customer problems; creates comfortable communication; meets the requirements and wishes of customers; identifies the customer's needs and satisfies them; cares about the safety of the client's resources.
10. Trust	Personal agent fulfils all obligations; gives accurate information; remembers names of regular customers. He has knowledge about how to build trust; assesses the level of confidence on the part of the client; shows decency.
11. Involvement	Personal agent shows friendliness and openness in communication; makes calls at a convenient time for the customer; tells about actions undertaken by the company; knows how to involve the client in the process of communication, shows different behaviour with different groups of buyers.
12. Diagnostic understanding	Personal agent understands the reasons of the client's behaviour; correctly defines the mood, feelings and emotions of the client; listens attentively to the client; understands economic and psychological needs of the client and tries to satisfy them; Influences human behaviour; conducts customer segmentation on psychological grounds.

Table 5. Behavioral indicators of the cluster 'Personal effectiveness'

Competence	Behavioral indicators
13. Stress resistance	Personal agent listens attentively to the client and watches his behaviour; influences human behaviour; applies the method of creating a psychological portrait of the client.
14. Self-confidence	Personal agent demonstrates a confident course of action when dealing with clients and colleagues; easily establishes the primary contact with customers; exhibits proactive work; makes independent decisions; works without assistance and supervision; defends and proves his opinion; has the internal resources to manage the customer's impressions.
15. Exquisite style	Personal agent always has a neat appearance; uses the services of a stylist; demonstrates care of clothing and accessories; demonstrates well-groomed hair and nails; has an exquisite makeup, well-groomed skin, alluring scent.

Table 6. Behavioral indicators of the cluster 'Action and achievement'

Competence	Behavioral indicators
16. Focus on result	Personal agent seeks challenging assignments and is not afraid of taking responsibility; strives for perfection; uses time efficiently; always gets minimum sales amount; applies new sales technologies; actively attends training courses; likes to participate in competitions
17. Initiative	Personal agent performs additional tasks; takes effective actions to build, maintain and develop privileged relationships with customers; serves a large number of clients; consults and makes more presentations than other employees; offers new ideas; evaluates the result of their actions in the long term.
18. Information search	Personal agent knows how to use a variety of means to collect secondary data; demonstrates ability to collect primary information; consult other people, able to find hardly accessible information; adds information to clients' database.
19. Efficiency	Personal agent does the job quickly, intensely and with great efficiency; demonstrates the ability to work for a long time; fulfils several functions simultaneously; holds a large number of meetings with clients. He is always hardworking and concentrated.

Table 7. Behavioral indicators of the cluster 'Value orientation'

Competence	Behavioral indicators
20. Individual approach	Personal agent understands the importance of individual approach; conducts customer segmentation on different grounds; knows how to behave with the different psychological types; shows different behaviour when working with clients; treats goods, price, promotion and place flexibly; collects customer information diligently .
21. loyalty to company	Personal agent brings the mission of the company to customers and other partners; shares the values of the organization; appreciate the workplace; participates in various activities of kinds; has good relationship with the manager and colleagues; contributes to the development of the company.
22. Healthy lifestyle	Personal agent lives a healthy lifestyle; has a good appearance; adheres to proper nutrition; excludes from everyday life bad habits; participates in sports events; takes care of health.

Table 8. Behavioural indicators of the cluster 'Innovative approach'

Competence	Behavioural indicators
23. Creative potential	Personal agent patterns behaviour on nonstandard situations; can find new solutions to the problem situation; demonstrates the ability to offer a new technologies of personal sales; has an unconventional way of thinking; gains new knowledge.
24. Focus on relationship	Personal agent shows the ability to build, maintain and develop long-term, mutually beneficial, trusting relationships with partners; has a developed skill retain customers; contributes to the increase of meaningful indicators of effective personal sales (satisfaction, trust, engagement, loyalty, profits, etc.); has positive influence on the level of subjective well-being of clients.

#### 4. Conclusion

Thus, the model of competences of personal agents which is urged to operate personal selling in the context of relationship marketing is developed. Application of the model of competences provides a benefit of benefit companies and clients. It is rational to use the developed model of competences to raise the level of subjective well-being of clients. The model of competences contributes to the growth of main indicators characterizing the productivity of personal selling. The key indicators of productivity of the personal selling, which are carried out in modern market environment, are: satisfaction, trust, involvement, complex loyalty and profit. Application of the theoretical and practical findings the represented, by the author, allows to operate personal selling in the context of relationship marketing.

## **Acknowledgements**

The research for this paper was financially supported by National Research Tomsk Polytechnic University. In developing the ideas presented here, we received helpful input from Vasilii V. Eremin. We also thank all the respondents who took part in the survey.

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