



A STUDY OF CALL RELUCTANCE[®] AND SALES PRODUCTIVITY ACROSS MULTIPLE INDUSTRIES AND COUNTRIES

Industry: Various

Number of salespeople: 330

Year: 1999

EXECUTIVE OVERVIEW

1. The results obtained in this study are consistent with the hypothesis that sales call reluctance[®] affects sales production.
2. This study provides further evidence that higher sales call reluctance[®] is linked to lower sales productivity across various industries and countries.
3. In particular, the results indicate a significant increase in sales productivity as Prospecting Brake[™] scores decrease.

TECHNICAL REPORT

Introduction

Sales Call Reluctance[®] refers to the unwillingness or hesitation to initiate contact with prospective clients on a consistent basis. This condition limits the amount of new business generated and financial success achieved. Behavioral scientists Dudley and Goodson, who are credited with developing modern call reluctance[®] theory, have discovered twelve distinct forms of call reluctant behaviors.

SPQ*GOLD[®] is a special purpose diagnostic instrument, designed specifically to measure sales call reluctance[®]. Research conducted with SPQ*GOLD[®] has repeatedly shown an inverse relationship between call reluctance[®] and sales productivity (Dudley & Goodson, 1999).

Purpose

The purpose of this study is to analyze the relationship between sales call reluctance[®] and sales productivity by examining cross-cultural data obtained from four countries (U.S., Australia, Canada, and Italy) and a variety of industries. This study will be based upon a correlational analysis of the relationship between variables.

Method

Participants

The data used in this meta-analytic study were obtained from a total of 18 companies studied between 1993 and 1998. Based on these studies a data set was compiled that consisted of 330 study participants.

Procedure

Based on the distribution of sales production data, participants were grouped as high producers (z score of +1 or greater) or low producers (z score of -1 or less), in accordance to standardized z-score transformations. Descriptive statistics were run on SPQ*GOLD[®] scores and analyzed to determine general profiles of high producers and low producers.

Within company correlations between productivity and SPQ*GOLD[®] scores were computed. These within-company correlations (r) were converted to Fisher z' scores by the relation $z' = .5 \ln[(1 + r)/(1 - r)]$. A weighted average of these individual z' values was then obtained. The z' values for these scale scores were then converted back to r by means of the inverse transformation. The resulting values were then tested for significance ($df = N - 3k$, where $N = 330$ subjects and $k = 18$).

Results

The results of the correlational study are shown in Table 1. According to the results, six SPQ*GOLD[®] scales were statistically significant. In particular, the results indicated a significant increase in sales productivity as the Prospecting Brake[™] scores decreased. This result has particular interest given that Brake scores represent a composite measure of the 12 types of sales call reluctance[®]. Similar results were obtained for Yielder SalesCR[™] and Social-Self Consciousness SalesCR[™] scores, which represent a lack of assertiveness and a hesitancy to call on up-market clientele respectively.

The results also indicated a significant increase in sales productivity as Prospecting Motivation[™] and Prospecting Goal Level[™] scores increased. All significant correlations were in the hypothesized direction, including the Hedging scale (a measure of evasiveness) which was negatively correlated with sales performance.

Conclusion

Very small but significant correlations were obtained between several SPQ*GOLD[®] scales and sales performance. Due to the use of different performance criteria from widely divergent sales settings and industries, correlations between SPQ*GOLD[®] and sales performance were expected to be below the $r = .30$ level.

Although the correlational statistics may be small compared to single company or industry studies, the amount of dollars in sales volume associated with these statistics can be substantive when comparing the difference between high and low producers. Overall these findings are consistent with the hypothesis that sales call reluctance[®]

affects sales production. These results also provide evidence that the SPQ*GOLD[®] questionnaire is valid for measuring sales call reluctance[®].

SPQ*GOLD [®] Scales	r
Prospecting Brake [™]	0.12*
Doomsayer SalesCR [™]	-0.03
Over-Preparer SalesCR [™]	0.05
Hyper-Pro SalesCR [™]	0.02
Stage Fright SalesCR [™]	-0.08
Role Rejection SalesCR [™]	.00
Yielder SalesCR [™]	-0.14*
Social Self-Cons. SalesCR [™]	-0.16*
Separationist SalesCR [™]	0.01
Emot. Unemancipated SalesCR [™]	0.04
Referral Aversion SalesCR [™]	-0.03
Telephobia SalesCR [™]	-0.09
Oppositional Reflex SalesCR [™]	-0.09
Prospecting Motivation [™]	0.17*
Prospecting Goal Level [™]	0.14*
Prospecting Goal Diffusion [™]	0.09
Problem Solving	0.07
Impression Management	-0.09
Hedging	-0.13*
Response Consistency	0.03

* p<.05

Figure 1. SPQ*GOLD[®] Scales and Validity Coefficients