

Study historic and  
contemporary sales  
methods and  
attitudes marketing  
essay



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The evolution of selling changed the way salespeople, companies and organisations adapt to their customers' requirements using different sales techniques and methods. The greatest changes evolved post the 2nd World War, however the real changes happened in the 19th century and the Industrial Revolution. As the biggest changes happened after the 2nd World War, companies and salespeople just started to realise that different methods and attitudes had to be used when selling to customers. Also as the customers themselves, started becoming more sophisticated, closing sales took more effort and time. Therefore the salespeople had to be trained differently and have more knowledge about the products/services they were offering. From the 19th century until present, a lot more techniques and methods of sales and selling developed further. This was when salespeople realised that by only providing a product/service's features was no longer enough information for the customer, to make a sale. Salespeople had to gather market research about the customers, especially their needs and wants. Therefore the benefit of the product/service to the customer was essential information to be explained.

However, the real changes evolved in the 19th century. This was when modern corporate selling began to take shape. In the 1950s, psychology and methodology were the two forces that combined together to change sales and selling forever. It was basically a method of five steps which helped sell in short sales cycle environments. AIDCA was the name given to this method, by Dale Carnegie. ' This methodology works best in commodity, retail and direct consumer selling but fails to address complexity and strategy' (Hughes T., RSVPSelling, 2005). AIDCA stands for: Attention,

Interest, Desire, Conviction and Action; but at a later stage was changed to AIDC where C stands for Close. It explains the way the consumer is attracted by the product/service they're being offered, where at first, it grabs the consumer's attention, then it interest them with it's features, then they start realising that they need it for it's benefits, then the consumer might find some faults in the product/service, and finally the salesperson succeeding and closing the deal.

In the 1960s and 1970s, more sophisticated psychology techniques were needed and then introduced. FAB was one of those (Features/Functions, Advantages, Benefits). To sell, salespeople started really needing to get to know the product very well and know about every single little detail of it, to make sure that it appeals to the customers they are trying to sell to. Therefore mainly features and benefits were crucial to the customer. By looking at the business to business sales, ' the recommenders and influencers were the main audience for a salesperson, rather than the real decision maker' (Hughes T., RSVPselling, 2005, a) which would of made it harder to sell because the sales were indirect.

Further more, during the 1980s more and more companies and corporations realised that they needed clever and charismatic salespeople, to boost sales. ' Sales techniques that worked in the past increasingly became barriers to success, especially in more complex environments' (Hughes T., RSVPselling, 2005, b). Moreover during the 1980s several trends started beginning which resulted in a more complex selling environment. Such trends included ' increased global competition, broader and more diverse product lines, more decision makers involved in major sales, and greater demand for specific, <https://assignbuster.com/study-historic-and-contemporary-sales-methods-and-attitudes-marketing-essay/>

custom made solutions' (Manning G. L. et al, 2010, p. 11). Thereafter in the late 1980s and 1990s more and more sales methodologies matured, which then were highly used and even remain relevant today. In fact the most professional salespeople realised that time is precious, and therefore they started valuing their own time as well as the time of others, so they wouldn't waste the important resources and energy trying to convince someone to buy something they actually do not need. Despite that, they would choose the right people, the right questions to ask and just be precise in what they are offering. In other words they didn't want to spoil their own professional integrity. Professional buyers became more clever and sophisticated and started to lose interest and take no notice of any manipulative selling behaviours. As a result, aggression from the salesperson definitely started to get noticed by the buyer and created defensiveness with the customer, in which case he/she would no longer be interested in participating in dealing with the salesperson. This was when the NLP (Neuro-Linguistic Programming) was introduced to the sales industry. ' Although not invented by Anthony Robbins, he popularised NLP and applied the principles of the sales training industry' (Hughes T., RSVPSelling, 2005, c). 1990s was when this psychological practice mostly matured and when businesses and corporations started to realise that building trust and creating relationships with the consumers would help the sales. At that time Neil Rackham, conducted a research measuring the behaviours of the salespeople and which of those were successful towards the professional buyers. It focused on problems, implications and specific business benefits which revolutionised professional selling further.

Moreover, by looking at 2000s, the present, the sales and selling approach is mainly based on values, which means that trust, understanding and integrity are the main factors salespeople are and should be aiming for towards the consumer. They need to have a genuine interest in the consumer, be concerned of their problems and opportunities, really value their needs and implications, identify specific benefits as well as priorities and know how to apply their knowledge for a good negotiation. The values-based selling, differs from previous time period methods such as AIDC and FAB by saying that the role of the salesperson is to 'fully understand the customer's requirements and conditions for complete satisfaction' (Hughes T., RSVPSelling, 2005, d) which means that it is a customer-centric method, based on solving problems and helping people solve their buying issues (e.g. helping them to make a right decision instead of just trying to force sell the product/service). Also strategic planning became very important because it meant that 'better time allocation, more precise problem solving and a greater chance that there will be a good match between the product and the customer needs' (Manning G. L. et al, 2010, p. 12, a) could be achieved by the salesperson when negotiating in a sale.

By looking at the present and the way companies tend to manage their salespeople and sales in general, is very different compared to how it was done before. A lot of companies nowadays are trying to measure their salespeople on the basis of the achievement of customer satisfaction. 'As Richard Harrison, a senior sales manager at IBM, states: 'our sales team is compensated based on how quickly and how efficiently they achieve customer satisfaction' (Jobber, D. et al, 2009, p. 502). This was never the

case back in the 19th century, because salespeople weren't paid bonuses for customer satisfaction, but on how many units of sales they make in a certain period of time. This therefore made the salespeople to just push hard sales as quick as possible, in order to sell more.

Nevertheless, the past methods of selling are still used in some corporations at present. From a study by Jobber, Hooley and Shipley which investigated the use of qualitative evaluative measure only by industrial companies, it was found that managers of small firms tend to hold qualitative opinions 'in the head', whereas managers of large firms tend to produce more formal assessments, e. g. an evaluation report. This shows two different techniques used, where the larger company's method is more open towards salespeople, which means that salespeople know exactly what needs to be achieved during a sale, whereas in small firms the technique used by managers wouldn't communicate the idea across to their salespeople of what standard they should be aiming for when selling.

As the sales and sales management were becoming more professional, the salespeople started to get properly trained and skilled in a range of managerial techniques, these are like how to motivate and inspire others, either to buy or sell. As 'companies have moved from being production orientated, through being sales orientated to being market orientated' (Jobber, D. et al, 2009, p. 40, a) the development of the market concept is probably one of the most important developments to take place in modern business thinking and practice. Some professional salespeople at present are trained to have a win/win mindset. This approach 'tends to result in more

robust and lasting agreements' (Hazeldine, S., 2006, p. 11). Therefore this approach is the one mostly favoured by exceptional negotiators.

Moreover, considering the current and past methods of selling, one still occurs in many occasions. Bribery is still happening nowadays as well as it did in the past. Even though it is illegal in some cases and some countries, in most it is still acceptable, however wrong from an ethical point of view.

Therefore even where it is illegal, bribery occasionally takes place when it shouldn't. For example one of the biggest commercial corruption cases in the U. S. history was the Honda Scandal. ' Over a 15-year period, Honda officials received more than \$50 million in cash and gifts from dealers eager to obtain fast-selling Honda cars and profitable franchises' (Manning G. L. et al, 2010, p. 103, b). This shows how even the largest corporations are involved in such unethical methods of selling and sales. Therefore as bribery does exist, a salesperson needs to be well aware of it, and be prepared to cope with it.

Furthermore, looking at present, the industrial markets are often highly concentrated, for example the UK textile industry, centred in Lancashire and Yorkshire. At present an industrial salesperson, who sells into one industry, may only deal with barely a few customers in a restricted geographical area, which makes it easier for the salesperson to research and find out more about his/hers customer, their needs and wants and etc. Despite that, salespeople selling in a combination of different types of production in the industrial sales have to adopt a different approach for each. In addition, at times selling of technically complicated products is performed by ' a sales team, with each member working with their opposite number in the buying

team, e. g. a sales engineer works with engineers in the buying company' (Jobber, D. et al, 2009, p. 124, b).

Historic methods and attitudes towards selling differ from contemporary methods and attitudes in many ways. In the 1950s, after recovering from the 2nd World War, organisations began to concentrate on the needs and wants of their target markets more than ever before, and started realising that the salesperson is the key to gather information about the buyers, to deliver the desired satisfaction. The historic evolution of selling continued throughout the 1960s, 70s, 80s and 90s, until present where all the methods and attitudes came together to create one which was recognised as the most appropriate method of selling. Individual customers were the priority of all professional salespeople, where long-term and high-quality relationships were essential to increase sales. In addition, to create customer value companies started to greatly focus on their strategies and adaptive selling. The 2000s and present developed the sales methods further by prioritising the salesperson's value in the business. The salesperson filled in an important role, because he/she were the one who collected the information about the customer, and the target market overall. A salesperson now, had to mainly focus on the customer's needs and how to respond to them appropriately. It became very important for a salesperson to present to the right person, at the right time and in such manner, which would most definitely achieve positive results. Therefore at present, the old techniques of selling should not be used because they are outdated and most of the time, do not work.