

Developing soft skill training for salespersons to increase total sales

A Mardatillah, I Budiman^{*}, U P P Tarigan, A C Sembiring, Hendi

Faculty of Technology and Computer Science, Department of Industrial Engineering,
Universitas Prima Indonesia, Indonesia

E-mail: *irwanb01@gmail.com

Abstract. This research was conducted in the multilevel marketing industry. Unprofessional salespersons behavior and responsibility can ruin the image of the multilevel marketing industry and distrust to the multilevel marketing industry. This leads to decreased company revenue due to lack of public interest in multilevel marketing products. Seeing these conditions, researcher develop training programs to improve the competence of salespersons in making sales. It was done by looking at factors that affect the level of salespersons sales. The research analyzes several factors that influence the salesperson's sales level: presentation skills, questioning ability, adaptability, technical knowledge, self-control, interaction involvement, sales environment, and intrapersonal skills. Through the analysis of these factors with One Sample T-Test and Multiple Linear Regression methods, researchers design a training program for salespersons to increase their sales. The developed training for salespersons is basic training and special training and before training was given, salespersons need to be assessed for the effectivity and efficiency reasons.

1. Introduction

Today, many people in Indonesia feel saturated with a product offered in the market. The saturation customer level of the product in the market is not only due to the marginal utility factor. It is also caused by the influence of salespersons factors in communicating to the customer[1]. Indonesian society is saturated because of the behavior of the salespersons to the customer. In presenting product or prospects, salespersons mostly looks like trying to win arguments with the customer, lack of active communication, offering products aggressively, and so on.[2] This will create a reluctant effect for the customer to the offered products or even switch to rival products. It will also lead to a mindset that company simply looking for profit at the expense of customer money [1, 3].

Some previous research by Bayuaji, Helena, Yanti, and Barton stated that so many variables affect personal selling skill. Usually, researchers only state only soft skill needed by salespersons such as presentation, communication, adaptation, and technical knowledge skill giving positive impact and significant to the sales [3-8]. The current development in multilevel marketing industry plays an important role in building the country's economy. Due to unprofessional salespersons and irresponsible, it makes the image of multilevel marketing industry to be bad that resulted in the community to distrust multilevel marketing industry so that this resulted in decreased company revenue due to Lack of public interest in multilevel marketing products. [2] Seeing these conditions,



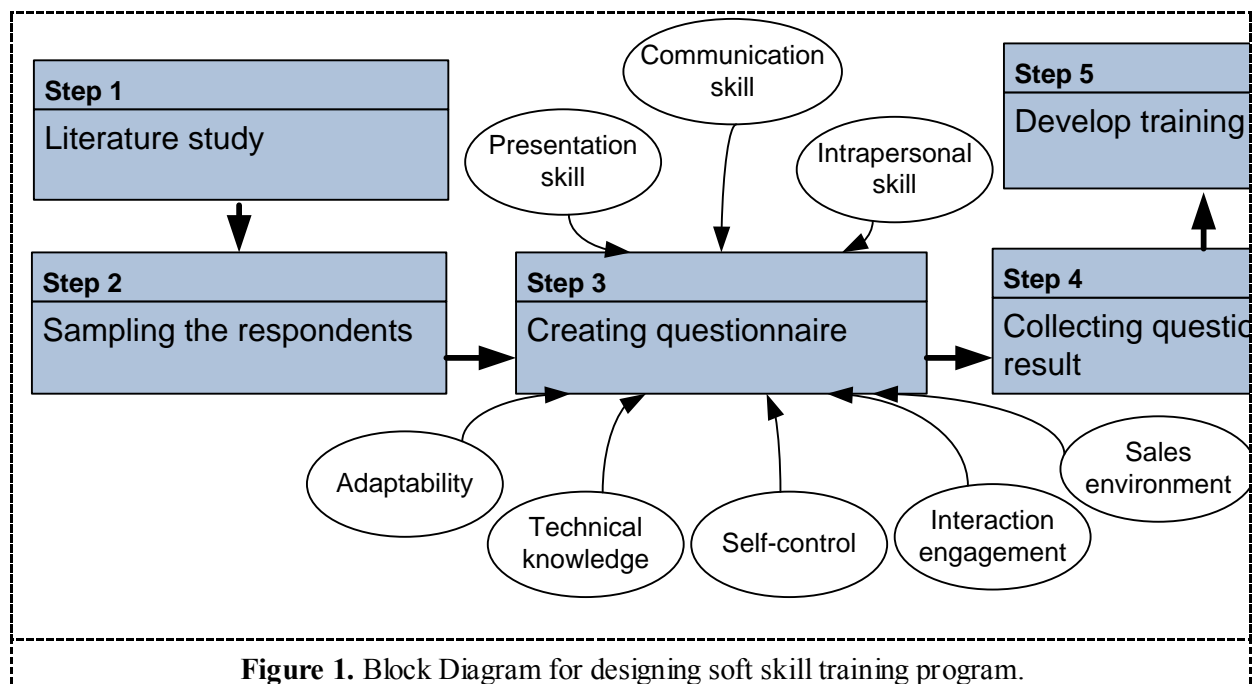
the researchers created a training design to improve the competence of salespersons in making sales by looking at factors that affect the level of salespersons sales.

2. Research methods

In this research, survey research was used because the study was conducted with the aim of obtaining facts from the existing symptoms and seek information factually to get the information. The ability of salespersons in presenting products influenced by several factors such as operational variables are Presentation Skill, Ability to Ask, Adaptability, Technical Knowledge, Self-Control, Interaction Engagement, Sales Environment, and Intrapersonal Skill [3-6]. Data were collected through questionnaire from the respondents (salespersons), Central Bureau of Statistics, and from some surveys held previously. This research was conducted in Medan, North Sumatra, Indonesia from various multilevel marketing companies registered in Direct Selling Association of Indonesia. Object observed in this study are salespersons (trainers, marketing, sales, and agents) of each multilevel marketing company that conducts presentations to customers where every single salesperson represents their respective companies.

The sample of this research was collected through Cluster Sampling. This research use 100 respondents as samples. Questionnaire given using the semantic differential scale for the respondent's answer consists of two poles of the left statement and the right statement while the result of respondents states in seven scales [10, 13, 15]. Collected information through questionnaire then analyzed through One-Sample T-Test, Linear Multiple Regression, and Ordinary Least Square to ensure the result is not biased. Through the questionnaire, a researcher can understand in which part of skill that the salespersons need and develop training programs that suitable for many salespersons.

Detail steps of determining the soft skill training program can be seen in Figure 1.



3. Result and Discussion

In this research, the basic assumption is tested to determine how much influence of each independent variable individually to the dependent variable with One-Sample T-Test method. It was done by considering the t value of the critical area in the normal distribution curve. The use of One Sample T-Test method for each respondent who gives answers to the questionnaire comes from one group of the same sample and analysis of regression was done by using Linear Multiple Regression which aims to

determine the linear relationship between two or more independent variables (X_1, X_2, \dots, X_n) with the dependent variable (Y).^[9] After regression analysis, then continued by testing the classical assumption with Ordinary Least Square (OLS) approach as a requirement to form multiple linear regression models. If the model formed does not meet the classical assumptions required, then the modification/ transformation/ healing of data or multiple linear regression models is required.

From the processing result, it is found that the interaction involvement variable with the value of calculated $t(1,283) < t$ table (1,98422) and the intrapersonal skill variable with t value (1,870) $< t$ table (1,98422) is stated not to have influence to salesperson's sales level in offering products or business opportunities. Based on the value of unstandardized coefficients B test results with SPSS, it can be formed multiple linear regression models which can be seen in the equation below.

$$TPD = 20,754 + 1,125SP + 0,946KBt + 0,963KBa + 1,015PT + 0,845PD + 1,401LP + e$$

From ANOVA, it was obtained a value of F calculate (108,968) $> F$ table (2,31) and Sig value. (0.000) $< \alpha$ (0,05) hence reject H_0 and accept H_a which means that independent variables simultaneously have the influence to salesperson's sales level in offering the product or business opportunity. From table summary model of test result with SPSS, obtained value of R equal to 0,936 lies between $0,800 < 0,936 < 1,00$. Based on the interpretation of the value of R , this shows that there is a very strong relationship between independent variables simultaneously to the dependent variable. From the table of coefficients on the collinearity statistics of the test results with SPSS, it is found that the Tolerance value of each independent variable is greater than 0.01 and the VIF of any independent variable is no greater than 10. Based on the classical linear regression assumption with OLS (Ordinary Least Square), then the linear regression model does not occur multicollinearity.

From the scatterplot graph of heteroscedasticity test, it is seen that the dot distribution does not form a certain pattern, so it can be concluded that heteroscedasticity is not happening. The classical assumption about heteroscedasticity in this model is fulfilled, ie free of heteroscedasticity. From the diagram of Cartesian horizontal axis DW count, it is seen that the DW count value of 2.102 is in the area there is no autocorrelation so it can be concluded that in multiple linear regression models there is no autocorrelation.

The result was then analyzed and giving result in creating training programs. Generally, they were Basic Training Programs and Specialized Training Programs. Basic training programs for salespersons that can be applied by the company as Personal Development System can be seen in Table 1.

Table 1. Basic Training Programs.

No.	Training Program	Program Objectives	Related Variables
1.	Induction Training	Introduce the organization to newly appointed employees. This is a brief and informative training given shortly after joining the organization.	a. Technical Knowledge b. Sales Environment
2.	Job Training	Provide appropriate information and guidance to employees to enable them to perform the work systematically, appropriately, efficiently, and ultimately with confidence.	a. Presentation Skill b. Ability to Ask c. Ability to Adapt d. Self-control e. Sales Environment
3.	Training for Promotion	Allows employees to adjust themselves to higher-level job assignments.	a. Ability to Adapt b. Self-control
4.	Refresher Training	Updating professional skills, information, and experiences of someone who occupies an important executive position.	a. Presentation Skill b. Ability to Ask c. Ability to Adapt d. Technical Knowledge

			e. Self-control f. Sales Environment
5.	Training for Managerial Development	Given to managers to improve their efficiency and thus enable them to accept higher positions.	a. Presentation Skill b. Ability to Ask c. Ability to Adapt d. Technical Knowledge e. Self-control f. Sales Environment

Whether specialized training programs developed for salespersons who are communicating directly with the customer can be seen in Table 2.

Table 2. Specialized training programs.

No.	Training Program	Information	Related Variables
1.	Sales Marketing Training	In the sales marketing training category, the focus of this training is prioritized to employees and employees as well as any elements that interact directly or indirectly with sales activities or sales marketing. In the Sales Marketing Training category we present, there are various types of training that have various goals and benefits tailored to the needs of sales marketing companies or agencies.	a. Presentation Skill b. Ability to Ask c. Ability to Adapt d. Technical Knowledge e. Self-control f. Sales Environment
2.	Personal Development Training	In the self-development training category, the focus of human resource training is prioritized to all elements within a company, from the top to the bottom level. Activity work not only involves physical ability alone, but mental ability and mindset also affect, and that's the main purpose of this self-development training so that every element of the company can continue to improve motivation and self-development.	a. Presentation Skill b. Ability to Adapt c. Self-control d. Sales Environment
3.	Motivation Training	In the motivation training category, the focus of HR training is prioritized to all elements within a company, whether from top to bottom level. Everyone needs motivation in order to achieve the best performance. Similarly, an employee and head of a company would also require motivation to help companies to achieve the desired target. This is because everyone who works continuously would one day feel	a. Presentation Skill b. Ability to Ask c. Ability to Adapt d. Self-control

	saturated and in the end, it can actually decrease work productivity. Therefore motivation training is needed as a refresher media in order not to feel bored working in the office.	
4. NLP & Hypnotherapy Training	In the NLP & Hypnotherapy training category, the focus of this training is prioritized to every person who wants to get things better and more from within himself so as to have a broad impact on his life. Because through NLP & Hypnotherapy Training we can understand more about the subconscious mind that is actually a tool to facilitate humans in living his life.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Presentation Skill b. Ability to Ask c. Ability to Adapt d. Technical Knowledge e. Self-control f. Sales Environment
5. Outbound Packages	Outbound Package is one of the systematic training methods that is directly implemented to all human resources in the wild. The outbound package is based on modification techniques: Mind (Cognition), Feelings (affection) and Behavior (behavior) with based on ethics, love, and Spirituality. These components are packed in a choice of Outbound Packages that are implemented in a short time. The outbound package is done in the wild through management games that will lead participants into the experience Experience Experience fun, memorable, and applicative in personal life and organization.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Presentation Skill b. Ability to Ask c. Ability to Adapt d. Technical Knowledge e. Self-control f. Sales Environment
6. HRD Training	In the HRD training category, the focus of HRD training is addressed to every element involved in Human Resources Development, but HRD training can also be followed by leaders and those who need more knowledge and skills in employee development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Presentation Skill b. Ability to Ask c. Ability to Adapt d. Technical Knowledge e. Self-control f. Sales Environment
7. Leadership Training	In this leadership training category, the focus of this training is how to shape and develop and hone and improve one's leadership skills. Leadership is one of the keys to personal and business success. Careers of someone with strong leadership skills will be more brilliant. Similarly, employees with superior leadership business spirit will bring the company to reach the peak of glory. Various management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Presentation Skill b. Ability to Ask c. Ability to Adapt d. Technical Knowledge e. Self-control f. Sales Environment

studies have proven that leadership is an important key to organizational success.

Basic training and specialized training programs are the programs given to salespersons to develop their soft skill in communicating with the customer. However, this soft skill must be re-assess biennial to assure that salespersons have the required skill before communicating directly with the customer. For the efficiency reason in running the programs, some programs with a small number of participants are recommended for the third party running. They are Leadership training, NLP & Hypnotherapy training, Training for Promotion and Training for Managerial skills.

4. Conclusions

The result of this research in developing soft skill training in multilevel marketing industry can be concluded as:

1. The most significant factors in making sales simultaneously are presentation skill, communication skill, ability to adapt, technical knowledge, self-control, and sales environment.
2. Before training programs were given, it is recommended to do an assessment to ensure the effectivity and efficiency.
3. The basic training developed for new salespersons is Induction Training, Job Training, Training for Promotion, Refresher Training, and Training for Managerial Development (Training for Managerial Development). While specialized training is given to experienced salespersons, they are Sales Marketing Training, Self Development Training, Motivation Training, NLP & Hypnotherapy Training, Outbound Packages, HRD Training, and Leadership Training.
4. Training recommended being run by the third party were: Leadership training, NLP & Hypnotherapy training, Training for Promotion and Training for Managerial skills.
5. Through specialized training, salespersons can contribute more to increase total sales.

References

- [1] Ahmad and Eva 2013 *Evaluasi Pelatihan Selling Skill Karyawan Bagian Sales Promotion Girl PT. Guna Layan Kuasa Jakarta Pusat*(Universitas Indonesia: Jurnal Ilmu Sosial)
- [2] Albertus 2010 *Pelaksanaan Personal Selling dalam Pengaruhnya Terhadap Keputusan Pembelian Konsumen Sepeda Motor Honda Pada CV. Aceh Honda Motor Bandung*(Bandung: Jurnal Manajemen)
- [3] Bayuaji 2007 *Analisis Faktor-Faktor yang Mempengaruhi Selling Skill Terhadap Kinerja Tenaga Penjualan* (Semarang: Tesis Magister Manajemen)
- [4] Endiwanto and M Parnawa 2015 *Faktor-Faktor Sukses Dalam Proses Personal Selling*(Yogyakarta: Jurnal Ekonomi, Vol. 2)
- [5] Helena, Laurence, and Wisang 2012 *Pengaruh Softskill (Intrapersonal Skills) terhadap Kinerja Penjualan Pemasar Properti* (Tangerang: Jurnal Teknik Industri, Vol. 12)
- [6] Kaswan 2011 *Pelatihan dan Pengembangan untuk Meningkatkan Kinerja SDM* (Bandung: Alfabeta)
- [7] Yanti 2006 *Analisis Faktor-Faktor yang Mempengaruhi Adaptif dalam Meningkatkan Kinerja Tenaga Penjual* (Semarang: Tesis Magister Manajemen)
- [8] Barton A Weitz 2009 *Personal Selling and Sales Management: A Relationship Marketing Perspective* (Spring: Academy of Marketing Science Journal, Vol. 2)
- [9] John Z Sonmez 2015 *Soft Skill: Special Sales Department* (Shelter Island New York: Manning Publications Co)
- [10] Morissan 2012 *Metodologi Penelitian Survei* (Jakarta: Kencana)
- [11] Sri and Ana 2005 *Membangun Kepercayaan Konsumen dengan Strategi Softskill dan Motivasi Tenaga Penjual* (Semarang: Jurnal Management Dynamics Conference, Vol. 1)
- [12] Sudjana 1992 *Teknik Analisis Regresi dan Korelasi Bagi Para Peneliti* (Bandung: Tarsito)

- [13] Sukaria Sinulingga 2011 *Metode Penelitian* (Medan: USU Press)
- [14] Syafaruddin Siregar 2005 *Statistik Terapan untuk Penelitian* (Jakarta: PT. Grasindo)
- [15] William G Cochran 1991 *Teknik Penarikan Sampel* (Jakarta: UI-Press)

Acknowledgement

In this research, the authors would like to thank profusely to the industry which has been willing to be a place of research for the writing of this paper and highly support researcher for a better result. Authors also want to thank Universitas Prima Indonesia that gives chances to publish and develop author in the process.

Reproduced with permission of copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.