

## Implications of Sales Force Recruitment and Selection for Successful Operations of Sales Force Structures in Industrial Marketing: A Study of Innoson Vehicle Manufacturing Company Nigeria Limited

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**Abstract:** The research was aimed at investigating sales force recruitment and selection for successful operation of sales force structures in industrial marketing: a study of Innoson Vehicle Manufacturing Company Nigeria Limited. Sales managers, human resources managers, marketing directors and other top management personnel are puzzled over the kind of sales personnel to recruit. The specific objectives of the study were to probe the extent of the relationship between salesperson's previous selling experience and successful operations of sales force structure in industrial marketing, to investigate the extent salesperson's persuasive ability influence successful operations of sales force structure in industrial marketing. And to assess the extent salesperson's technical expertise affect successful operations of sales force structure in industrial marketing. The population of the study is 630; representing unit managers, the supervisors, and administrative officers of Innoson Motors Manufacturing Company Ltd Nnewi. The sample size is 244 using Taro Yamani sample size determination method, where 220 was correctly filled and returned. For the validity of the instrument, the questionnaire was examined by reaearch experts based on face validity in relation to the subject matter, the objective of the study, coverage of the content areas, appropriateness of language usage and clarity of purpose. The value of the test of reliability is 0.930, which was conducted using Cronbach's Alpha. Primary data was adopted for the study and data was analyzed using Pearson's Product Moment correlation coefficient and simple linear regression. Findings revealed that there is a significant relationship between salesperson's previous selling experience and successful operation of sales force structure ( $r = 0.939$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). Secondly, it was also revealed that salesperson's persuasive ability has a significant influence on successful operation of sales force structure ( $r = 0.888$ ;  $t = 28.554$ ;  $F = 815.348$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ). And finally, it was revealed that salesperson's technical expertise has a significant effect on successful operation of sales force structure ( $r = 0.906$ ;  $t = 31.549$ ;  $F = 995.34$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ). The researcher recommends that potential salespersons with previous selling experience, persuasive ability and technical knowledge must be recruited.

**Keywords:** Sales force recruitment, Sales force selection, Sales Force Structure, Industrial Marketing, Industrial Products, Personal Selling Process, Team Selling, Missionary Selling, and System Selling.

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### I. Introduction

Marketing has got highly sophisticated and competition among firms has so heightened and tightened that it is evident that firms that are customer-centric oriented, and who have shielded itself with relationship marketing paraphernalia are beginning to suffocate and swallow those of them that are still daydreaming with the ideology of conducting business the way it suits them. Ayozie (2012) asserts that relationship marketing is all about handling with care and respect ones relationships with customers. That is in contrast to the so-called "business as usual companies". Apparently, selling task has taken a new trajectory in this millennium. There is really a paradigm shift from the status quo.

"The once popular "good old boy" sales style – getting chummy with customers, buying them meal or drink, giving the standard sales presentation, applying pressure, and expecting to get the sale on that basis is rapidly going the way of the dinosaur. Selling is far different today than in its early years. Far from the fast talking, joke telling, back slapping caricatures in some novels and comic strips; today's salesperson is highly trained. Sales professionalism has been aptly defined as "customer oriented approach that employs truthful,

non-manipulative tactics to satisfy the long-term needs of both the customer and the selling firm (Uduji and Nnabuko, 2008).”

Companies that wish to survive in the marketing battle field this millennium must be highly endowed with the rudiments of recruiting and selecting better exposed sales force. Gone are the days when nepotism plays a major role in employing those who are going to the battle field or the so-called ‘marketing jungle’ to portray the image of a corporate entity. Most successful companies had always got it right as they apply diligence, integrity, wisdom, knowledge and ad nauseam professionalism in the course of the recruitment of sales personnel.

Meanwhile, a lot of qualities do guide sales and human resources manager during recruitment and selection of sales force. Some of the qualities include empathy, ego drive, intelligence, determination, personality, experience, integrity, communication skill, persuasiveness, confidence, educational background, business acumen, self-discipline, etc (Jobber and Lancaster, 2009).

Recruiting the right sales force is aimed at satisfying the innumerable needs of the industrial customer. And to establish this level of interdependence with the customer, marketing communications can no longer go solo in delivering superior benefits to customers. What then should marketers strive to deliver in real sense to customers? The answer is so simple. Marketing managers should imbibe the spirit of altruism in the course of business. They must carry their customer on the same pedestal with them and establish a win-win situation whereby both the company benefit as well as the customers too. The time of parasitism is now violently and drastically being replaced with mutualism, symbiosis and or even commensalism. Businesses now discover that it pays off to engage their customers again and again and again. That is because the crux of every successful business is the ability to attract, nurture, retain or sustain customers (Okolo, Agu, Obikeze and Ugonna, 2015).

However, there are a whole lot of benefits that adore businesses that recognize that perceiving the business of your customers as your own is naturally a move towards sustainability. It is no longer a cliché that a customer who is satisfied maximally will surrender his lifetime value. That is, the customer becomes loyal to that company that delivers a whole package of satisfaction. Even in time of trouble, the customer will stand by the company and speak authoritatively about its reputation. In similar vein, the customer can also perform word-of-mouth evangelism for the company thereby expanding its market share and save it the cost of implementing advertising campaign that might run into millions of dollars. Financially, though this may be rare with Nigerian businesses, industrial customers can support their suppliers with huge finances to bolster production process and capacity. They also provide promotion support for business organization and as well help in gathering marketing intelligence and research to help marketers in delivering the expected satisfaction on their varied customers.

In summary, customer satisfaction is the melting pot of all creative marketing activities. And satisfying customers has become a jigsaw puzzle since the customer is highly equipped with marketing information and marketing intelligence more than the marketers themselves. This has resulted in failure of companies to meet the expectation of their customers as these expectations seem to be too high. Companies must get abreast with the current situation and seek more rational ways of meeting their customers’ requirements better than competitors. Otherwise, they stand to lose their customers to savvy, creative, innovative and wealthy companies whose priority is to identify customer problems and provide lasting solution to them. Sales managers, human resource managers and other functional managers who may at one time or the other be involved with recruitment and selection must take a bold step towards ensuring that the right caliber of sales personnel is employed.

## **II. Problem Statement**

Most sales and human resource managers had been ravaged severally in the past as a result of their shortsightedness concerning recruitment and selection procedure of their salespeople. Recruitment of sales personnel is a herculean task as both sales managers and human resources managers try to investigate what really attract or lure people into the act of selling. It was discovered that there is discrimination in the recruitment of personnel in Innoson Vehicle Manufacturing Company Nigeria Ltd (Chukwuma, 2015). Ordinary intuition will make a sales manager believe that what attracts people to sell is because of the financial benefits but, a study conducted by Galbraith, Kiely and Watkins (Jobber and Lancaster, 2009) prove otherwise and indicate that sales managers who thought that financial reward is the major variable that attracts people to selling are blindly myopic and as well parochial; as working methods and independence topped the list with earnings trailing behind them. Jobber and Lancaster (2009) note relevant facts about sales force selection that sales and human resource managers must bear in mind in the course of soliciting for new recruits.

A huge amount of money is involved in breeding a savvy salesperson. It is not limited to the payment of salary, bonus and commission but also involves the cost of providing a car for the salesperson

that will definitely travel to distant places to meet customer needs. Huge capital outlay is expended in conducting training for the sales force and companies are not ready to waste their resources on salesperson that would not perform optimally as salespeople are very costly. Similarly, the simple truth is that there is a great disparity between an average salesperson and a topnotch salesperson. Although an average salesperson might generate sales of up to 20% in a particular sales territory, a topnotch salesperson will more than double that if given equal opportunity to execute sales in the same territory. Perhaps comparing the top and the worst salespersons will reveal a larger gap of performance.

Further, training and motivation are heavily dependent on the intrinsic qualities of the recruit. Salespeople differ widely depending on which background they come from. That is to say that some salespeople are born with the natural credulity to execute selling tasks. It is obvious that salespeople who are born with natural selling tendency will definitely do better than those who are not. That is, some special selling characteristics and traits are inborn in some salespeople which will give them an advantage over others. Most time, this kind of salespeople possesses inborn motivations such that even without enough financial rewards, they still perform their selling jobs effectively.

In the light of the foregoing, this study intend to extricate the reasons why most companies still find it difficult to satisfy and retain their customer when they send their 'road warriors' (Uduji and Nnabuko) to the war front having apparently conducted their recruitment and selection.

### **III. Objective Of The Study**

- ✓ To probe the extent of the relationship between salesperson's previous selling experience and successful operations of sales force structure in industrial marketing.
- ✓ To investigate the extent salesperson's persuasive ability influences successful operations of sales force structure in industrial marketing.
- ✓ To assess the extent salesperson's technical expertise affects successful operations of sales force structure in industrial marketing.

### **IV. Research Hypotheses**

- ✓ No positive relationship exists between salesperson's previous selling experience and successful operation of sales force structure in industrial marketing.
- ✓ Salesperson's persuasive ability has no significant influences on successful operations of sales force structure in industrial marketing.
- ✓ Salesperson's technical expertise will not significant affect successful operations of sales force structure in industrial marketing.

### **Review of Relevant Literature**

#### **Profile of Innoson Vehicle Manufacturing Company Nigeria Limited**

Innoson Nigeria Limited is an indigenous blue chip company engaged extensively in the importation, assembly and marketing of automotive components, accessories and motorcycles. Incorporated in July, 1987, the company has grown to become one of the major importers, suppliers and assemblers of motorcycle and motorcycle spare parts to outermost part of West African sub-region and beyond.

Innoson Nigeria Limited started in 1986 as a trading outfit by buying Honda motorcycle parts and over a period of time was recognized as the major dealer of Honda motorcycle parts of the time.

As time progressed, Innoson started importing the motorcycle parts and accessories into the country and having had the vast knowledge and experience in the motorcycle business sometime in 1994, entered into a joint venture of assembling motorcycle in Nigeria with a Chinese motorcycle manufacturer. The assembly was in manual form and this usually forced the price of assembled motorcycle up and ended up in little profit.

Innoson Nigeria Limited never relented in their efforts in breaking through their dream in making sure that motorcycles are sold to the masses at affordable prices hence in 1995, they installed a fully automated assembly plant which can produce up to 1,000 units of motorcycle per day and has helped reduce the prices of their different brands of motorcycles. Their dream have actually been realized as their motorcycle prices range from #50,000 - #60,000 per unit as against #55,000 - #75, 000 per unit as before.

Furthermore, Innoson Nigeria Limited also operates other companies such as: Innoson Technical and Industrial Company that produces the best plastic products in the country. They include plastic chairs, jerry cans, drums and motorcycle parts. Another company being floated by Innoson Nigeria Limited is the Innoson Vehicle Manufacturing Company; the first indigenous vehicle manufacturing company in Nigeria. And finally, Innoson General Tyres and Tubes Company Ltd.

### **Sales Force Recruitment & Selection**

The success of any organization depends on the calibre of personnel recruited to perform relevant and vital tasks for the company (Ekwoba, Ikeije and Ufoma, 2015). Besides, sales and human resources managers expend a great deal of their time and energy in ensuring that the right personnel is attracted to their organizations (Martin, Whiting and Jackson, 2010). Recruitment and selection of competent salespeople is catalytic to the survival and successful operation of a company's sales force (Kotler and Armstrong, 2012). Recruitment simply means hiring the service of an individual of group in order to assign or apportion responsibility to them. "It is the process of generating a pool of qualified candidates for a particular job (Uduji and Onwumere, 2013). It requires job specification, identifying the qualifications necessary for effective job performance so as to get the best match between employee and the job. Most firms conduct job analysis in which they systematically gather and organize information about the tasks, duties and responsibilities of various jobs (Uduji and Nnabuko, 2008)." Selection according to the duo is the process of screening in which the most viable candidate is chosen based on education and other natural traits he or she possesses. It is the process whereby organizations take critical decisions over the employment of new recruits that will work for them (Djabatey, 2012). According to him, the process and procedure for recruitment is different and unique depending on the type of organization and the tasks to be performed by each salesman. Ekwoba et al (2015) state that "recruitment is the process of identifying and attracting potential candidates from within and outside an organization to begin evaluating them for future employment, selection begins when the right calibre of candidates are identified." Selling has become a very delicate and subtle task that there is need for special skill acquisition to enhance the performance of sales personnel. A company's sales turnover is significantly influenced by the quality of its sales force (Jobber and Lancaster, 2009). Jobber and Lancaster (2009) describe five stages of recruitment and selection process:

**Preparation Of Job Description And Specification** – The job description has to do with the title of the job as to whether the recruit should be called or designated as a sales representative, sales executive, sales engineer, foot soldier, road warrior (Uduji and Nnabuko, 2008) etc. Secondly, it contains the duties and responsibilities; the role expected of the employee to play such as information gathering, selling, services, relationships etc. The next thing that job description covers is to identify who the recruit should report to. That is the immediate superior of the salesperson. Following that would be to establish the technical requirement of the job. The next in the list of job description would be to access the geographical areas the salesperson is deemed to cover and finally, the degree of independence of the potential salesperson.

Sequel to job description heightened above will be personnel specification which has to do with the calibre of salesperson that would fit or match each job. Most sales managers would normally look for a salesperson that is of certain age, possess selling experience, possess the technical knowledge about the company's products and other qualities that would allow him to perform maximally. Two major qualities were mentioned by Jobber and Lancaster (2009) that a salesperson must possess to be very robust and successful with the art of selling. One of them is empathy, while the other is ego drive. The following were identified by Jobber and Lancaster (2009) to be contained in the personnel specification:

- Physical requirement: e.g. speech, appearance.
- Attainments: e.g. standard of education and qualification, experience and successes.
- Aptitude and qualities: e.g. ability to communicate, self motivation.
- Disposition: e.g. maturity, sense of responsibility.
- Interests: e.g. degree to which interests are social, active, inactive.
- Personal circumstances: e.g. married, single, etc.

### **✚ Identification Of The Sources Of Recruitment And Methods Of Communication –**

The sales manager have many channels to lure his recruits. The sales manager can recruit internally from the company's own staff, recruits can be generated from independent recruitment agencies, recruits can be solicited from educational institutions like the colleges of education, polytechnics and universities. Sales manager could as well generate recruits from competitors. Communicating the recruit is mainly through media advertising and sometimes through the internet, mobile phone and direct mail.

**✚ Designing An Effective Application Form And Preparing A Shortlist** – This will aid in conducting the initial screening test in order to jettison some applicants. There is certain information the applicant is required to fill to ensure his suitability for the job. It is through the information supplied that the sales manager detects some of the shortcomings of some candidates and then removes them from the list. Some the information required are personal data such as the name, sex, age, address and phone

number. Educational qualification, employment history, and other interests such as hobbies and membership of clubs also form part and parcel of the application form.

✚ **The Interview** – Interviews may be conducted by the sales manager alone in a few cases. Majorly, the human resources manager does interview all by himself. And also the human resources manager conducts alongside the sales manager especially the final interview. Regarding taking decision, the human resources manager and the sales manager make the final decision on who to be recruited. However, in rare cases, marketing directors and other top management personnel may be involved. Most decision is based on the content of the personnel specification.

✚ **Supplementary Selection Aids** – This has to do with engaging the potential salespersons in psychological tests as well as exposing them to role playing exercise. This aids in excavating their natural and innate credulity to selling. Psychological tests according to Thomas and Scroggins (2006) aids in selecting a more viable candidate.

Salespeople need to be recruited based on experience and skill acquisition rather than being discriminated as a result of age (Wilson, Parker and Kan, 2007). Oforbruku and Iheabunike (2013) support this idea as they argue that the hospitality industry needs to employ competent, qualified and experienced personnel.

“Work experience and qualifications are measures of competence in relation to an applicant’s technical skills, whereas the concept of communication skills appears to be a generic term incorporating many different specific skills. Indeed, communication in the workplace encompasses team skills; leadership skills; an ability to negotiate with or persuade others; problem solving skills; organizational skills; crisis management skills; and presentation skills. Other communication competencies include cultural adaptation, social competence and language proficiency. An applicant’s success with job seeking is related to their ability to describe their experiences, skills and knowledge through a range of media. Thus, effective communication is an essential competency required by all job applicants (Djabatey, 2012).”

“High training costs, recruitment costs, loss of goodwill or reputation, increased labour turnover and loss of profitability will likely result”, when recruits are wrongly selected (Chidi, 2013).

### **Streamlining Sales Force Structure and Strategy**

It is a strategic death warrant for companies who choose not to design effective and efficient sales force structures. Coming up with a blueprint on how to manage a particular sales force structure is a priority to the attainment of the sales cum organizational objectives of any company that want to record a success in the course of finding a lasting solution to the various needs of their numerous customers. Kotler and Armstrong (2012) discuss the major sales force structures:

✚ **Territorial Sales Force Structure** – This is the type of sales force structure in which a salesperson is allocated a particular geographic area and meant to sell exclusively full line of a company’s products and services to all the company’s customers located in that area. By so doing, the organization would have the opportunity to conduct adequate checks on the territory to understand if sales is appreciating or depreciating in that territory having known who mans such a territory at a particular point in time. It also helps the salesperson to develop a value-laden relationship with the customers in the territory thereby making selling very easy and effective. Also, travel expenses are reduced to the barest minimum as each salesperson does not have to travel to all sales territory operated by the company. Zoltners and Lorimer (2000) underscore the above statement when they stated that “good sales territory enhance customer coverage, increase sales, foster fair performance evaluation and reward systems, and lowers travel costs.” Researchers discover that sales territory potentials have a significant relationship with territory sales (Sinha and Zoltners, 2001).

✚ **Product Sales Force Structure** – The emphasis here is on the product. This is the sales force structure that salesperson sells a limited line of the company’s product to its customers. This normally happens when a company has many lines of product to distribute to their customers. For example, a company might divide its sales force in such a way that while some specialize in distributing textile materials, other will specialize in appliances, pharmaceuticals, groceries, computers, cosmetics, furniture and fitting, etc. The challenge the company might face is that some of their salespeople might visit a particular customer the same day to supply different product lines and this will surely waste a lot of resources for the company if they should wait in line to serve the same customer.

- ✦ **Customer Sales Force Structure** – In this type of sales force structure, salespeople man their major customers and ensures that all solution to the customer’s problems are catered for. Each customer requires a separate sales force to supply every of their needs (Ripsam, Kapoor and Dubey, 2010; Zoltners, Sinha and Lorima, 2006). The customer is highly acquainted with the sales force while also the sales force knows the customer’s needs. A long term superior relationship is established as the salesperson knows every need of the customer and confronts every of those needs head-on. This makes the salespeople to be more customer-focused as they can sell a packaged solution to a particular customer. This ensures that the customer does not lack any product he needs. Using different sales force to sell different product to the same customer poses relationship threats. Perhaps the numerous faces a customer sees causes confusion as such a customer wouldn’t know who he is dealing with at a particular point in time. Companies prefer seeing a common face that can be reachable to finding a lasting solution to their problems.
- ✦ **Complex Sales Force Structure** - This is simply the combination of either of territorial and product sales force structure, territorial and customer sales force structure, product and customer sales force structure or a combination of territorial, product and customer sales force structure for effective and efficient sales force performance. It is a synergetic approach in that the company is capable of blending the strategies because of the numerous lines of product at its disposal and numerous customers scattered over diverse geographical areas. Embarking on any of the above combination must consider the budget necessary for running such selling operation.

In order to execute the selling act diligently, salespeople must have to be adequately trained in the art of the following types of selling:

#### **V. Different Types Of Selling**

**System Selling** -This involves selling a packaged solution of a problem to the buyer or customer. Salespeople not only sell a single product rather, they sell the services that go along with the product. For instance, sales engineers who sell laptops sell the laptop alongside installation of the needed software package. In the industrial marketing, system sellers not only sell heavy production plants as a single product but equally install the plant for their large customers. This is because customers no longer want to purchase a plant from one seller and then hire another person to do the installation.

**Team Selling** – This is the type of selling that involves a group of selling professionals who possess specific selling skills and specialize in selling a particular product line. These professional come from different field such as marketing, engineering, sales, finance, support services, research and development. This style of selling is adopted by companies that deal in complex and highly technical products that require extensive clarification from their clients in a bid to uncover their marketing cum sales problems.

**Consultative Selling** – Consultative selling has changed the old way of selling as it focuses on identifying and finding solution to the various needs of customers. This is a special kind of selling that the salesperson involves the contribution and opinion of the customer to expedite action towards supplying and solving the problem of an identified need of the customer. It means displaying empathy as well as carrying the customer along in some of the decision required to improve a healthier exchange relationship.

**Relationship Selling** – The era of one-short selling approach had gone. Achison (2000; Onyeke, 2009) state that industrial marketing involves interdependence and interrelationship between the industrial marketer and industrial customer. Establishing a robust relationship between a seller and a buyer is the mantra of most 21st century businesses. That is the reason why salespeople are well equipped through training on how to establish, nurture and sustain value-laden relationship with their myriad of customers.

**Missionary Selling** – While most salespeople are meant to sell physical products, very few of them just convey messages through educating professionals to recommend certain desired products to consumers. The salespeople’s job in the pharmaceutical industry is not to close sales directly but rather to educate professionals like the medical doctors to specify drugs to their patients.

#### **Personal Selling Process**

Completing the sales of an industrial product may not be an easy task for sales management. The process taken to sell a unit of product to a final and ultimate consumer or user is quite different from selling several hundred, thousands and even millions of products to an industrial customer. An industrial customer processes, transforms, manufactures raw materials and semi-finished product into finished products, resells

to other channel members or sells directly to the final consumer. For a salesperson to achieve a high degree of professionalism in sales, adequate knowledge of each of the seven stages of the selling process becomes imperative. The following are the distinct stages of the selling process that an industrial marketer adopts to sell a quantity of industrial products (Kotler and Armstrong, 2012; Eriksson, 2013).

**Prospecting and Qualifying** - This is an avenue to search or scout for potential customers whom an organization wishes to serve (Moncrief and Marshall, 2004). The search can be through soliciting referral from current customers, suppliers, dealers, through the internet, as well as through online company directories. They can also source for prospects through uninvited visits or cold call to solicit for patronage. After accumulating general information on the prospects, the salesperson selects or qualifies those who are deemed to be more profitable by gauging their corporate reputation, volume of purchase, location and other superior services they may require. Those prospects that may not be profitable are screened out as well. Salespeople must consider a potential customers financial capability and volume of business (Long, Tellefsen and Lichtenhal, 2006).

**Preapproach** – Salespeople try to dig deeper to discover the pressing needs of the organization it wants to serve. It tries to identify the make up the buying center and evaluates the buyer characteristics in terms of buying habits and style. It is a form of spadeworking to get a kind of acquaintanceship with the potential customers' requirements before the initial face to face business encounter. The main objective of this is to ensure that all objection variables are conquered. At this stage, the salesperson must determine whether the first contact with the prospect should be through phone call, email or personal visit.

**Approach** – This is the first meeting between the salesperson and the industrial customer. The salesperson must be intelligent and experienced enough to handle the opening remarks well. Here, a lot of comportsment and courtesy is required to project a good image of the company. The salesperson must put up an attractive appearance and should introduce and present himself as well as his company in positive light before the customer. Above all, the salesperson must be a good listener to be able to provide the customer with better solutions than the competitors.

**Presentation and Demonstration** – This is the stage of convincing the customer that the company can offer genuine solution to their problem. So, having identified the needs of the customer the salesperson must match the product's features with the benefits that the customer needs to derive. "The danger of selling features rather than benefits is particularly acute in industrial selling because of the highly technical nature of many industrial products, and the tendency to employ sales engineers rather than salespeople (Jobber and Lancaster, 2009). Convincing a customer to switch from his current supplier is very difficult as a result of the perceived risks involved. But industrial marketers can reduce some of the risk factors by offering demonstration, guarantee, reference selling and trial order. Salespeople offer virtual or physical demonstration of their products to ensure the customer that the products meet their expectation. For example, an automobile salesperson can allow customer to test drive the car to value the performance and reliability.

**Handling Objections** – Customers are difficult to persuade and convince. That is why they may easily object to place order at will. Their objection could be rational or psychological. Some customer may not really offer cogent objections so, it requires a trained salesperson's cognition to dig out buried objections from the customer. Savvy salespeople know how to handle objection by referring potential customers to current user of his products. Some salesperson have good knowledge of their competitor's product weaknesses or defects and can spin a customer by comparing or placing his product side by side the competing product. He may demonstrate the product further if the customer remains undaunted.

**Closing Sales** – Professional salespeople must be properly trained in the science and art of closing sales. Salespeople must know when a customer's buying signal is very high. It might be during demonstration when the customer discovers the product's capability. The customer can demonstrate believability in the product through positive comments and other body languages. At such period of peak instead of trough, the salesperson should close sales. Sometimes, a salesperson needs to either take order or reserve his energy for another day. That is, a salesperson must not do business with every potential customer. Some customers may not just want to place order the same day as they may want to digest their discussions with the salesperson properly before placing order.



**Follow-Up** – The transaction between a salesperson and a customer in industrial marketing is powerful exchange relationship that involves millions of dollars and not one-shot sales in which the customer disappears the next day. Note that the customer here, wants to establish a win-win situation between his company and the customer's company and therefore needs to establish a heartwarming, superior and long-lasting relationship that will grow both businesses. Sequel to this, the salesperson must always lubricate the relationship by either making telephone calls to know how the customer is faring with the product or sometimes visit the customer location to help with some clarifications, offer some installation, repairs and maintenance services, all in a bid to make the customer delighted. That is, the salesperson must present himself as a partner in progress to his customer at all time.

## **VI. Industrial Marketing**

Industrial marketing is simply the marketing of industrial products to industrial customers. It is concerned with the marketing of goods and services that are required for the manufacture of furtherance of the production of other products (Kuada, 2002). It is the process of planning and executing the conception, pricing, promoting and distributing of industrial ideas, goods and services through equitable exchange that benefit both industrial buyer and seller. "It is the performance of marketing tasks and the furnishing of marketing perspective within the area of business and industry for business purpose (Onyeke, 2009)." The same principles and concepts of marketing are obtainable to both consumer and industrial market. The difference between the two is the nature and marketing application that may be involved in satisfying an industrial customer and a final consumer in consumer market. These differences can be seen in the characteristics of industrial market.

One of the major characteristics of industrial market is that it has derived demand. The demand of industrial product is a function of the demand of consumer products. It means that if final consumers don't make demand for finished products, no industrial marketer will exist in the first place. That is equally related to the volatility or fluctuating nature of demand which is a typical demand characteristic of industrial products. In other words, the price and quantity demanded of industrial products may directly affects the price and quantity demanded of consumer products. Price of industrial products is volatile (Reza, Nastran, Saeede, & Reza 2013). Also, the products demanded by industrial marketers are a means to an end (raw materials and semi-finished products). They are needed to foster the processing, modification, transformation and production of finished products that is needed by the final consumer. The industrial customers are fewer in number and are geographically located and concentrated. That is why there are few industrial production factories located at specific part in Nigeria such as Lagos, Port Harcourt, Aba, Ota industrial Estate, Kano etc. Industrial customers are very large in size meaning that their volume of transaction runs into millions of dollars. Moreover, the buying process and behavior is more technical, rational, complex and might requires a sequence of stages from participants in the buying centre (Gunay, 1999). This perspective means that decision making is very critical and crucial to the economic sustenance of the company. The channel of distribution is more direct as technical products are mainly involved and buyers normally require some major clarifications about product specifications. Finally, personal selling is the major marketing communication tools with minor advertising placed in professional journals and trade magazines.

The three major components of industrial market according to Onyeke (2009) are:

**Manufacturers** – This set of people source raw materials from agriculture and minerals and process and transform them into semi-finished and finished products. The raw materials include cocoa, cotton, lumber, wheat, cassava, coal, Iron ore, crude oil etc. They are responsible for establishing factories, and creating employment opportunities for the teeming youth of a nation.

**Middlemen** – These are those who play midwifery role by building a bridge between the manufacturer and the final consumer or user. They include wholesalers, retailers, agents, broker, dealers, distributors etc. They are members of the distribution channel and play vital role in ensuring that goods and services get to the consumer with the necessary utilities (place, time, form and price).

**Services Providers** – This set of entrepreneurs involve themselves with the provision of intangible and valuable asset to the customer. Some of the service providers include those in the aviation industry, teaching profession, health services, telecommunication, hospitality etc.

### **Types of Industrial Products**

Achison (2000) describes five types of industrial products as follows:



**Raw Materials** – This refer to those industrial goods that automatically forms part of the finished product. They include farm products such as cotton, cocoa, barley, maize, rubber, hides and skin etc. and also natural mineral excavated from the earth such as coal, gold, iron ore, crude oil etc.

**Fabricating Materials and Parts** - They form part and parcel of finished product. They include tires, spark plugs, wheels, seat belt, bearings, wires, battery etc.

**Installations** – These are capital investment and intensive items that are not easily removable. They include warehouse, office building, large plants, blast furnace, elevators, escalators etc.

**Accessory Equipment** – They support production of other materials but never form part of finished products. They help in facilitating production. Examples are typing machine, photocopying machines, computer systems, printers, scanners etc.

**Operating Supplies** – They aid in the production of finished products and include fuel, gum, papers, pins, pens, staplers, tapes etc.

### VII. Reseach Methodology

The researcher employed survey method by administering structured questionnaire to gather primary data from the unit managers, the supervisors, and administrative officers of Innoson Nigeria Limited. The scope of the study covered sales force recruitment, selection and operation of sales force structures in Innoson Vehicle Manufacturing Company Nigeria Limited. “The population of the study constitutes all the unit managers, the supervisors, and administrative officers totaling six hundred (600) Nigerians and thirty (30) Non-Nigerians in Innoson motors manufacturing company Ltd Nnewi. Since they are the stakeholders in human resource practices in the establishment, they will give useful information on the human resource recruitment practices in the establishment (Chukwuma, 2015). A sample size of 244 was determined using Taro Yamane’s sample size determination method. Content validity was used to determine the validity of the instrument by giving questionnaire to marketing experts who modified and made the necessary corrections so that the instrument can be justifiable. The value of the test of reliability is 0.962 which was conducted using Cronbach’s Alpha which indicated that there is internal consistency of the instrument. Two hundred and twenty (220) were correctly filled and returned out of the four hundred distributed. Analysis of data was done using Pearson’s Product Moment correlation coefficient and simple linear regression using Statistical Package for Social Sciences.

### VIII. Result And Discussion

The data obtained from the field were presented and analyzed with descriptive statistics to provide answers for the research hypotheses that were tested with Pearson’s Correlation and Linear regression at 0.05 alpha levels.

**Table 1 Coded Responses on the extent of the relationship between salesperson’s experience and successful operation of sales force structure.**

/	Questionnaire items	/Agree	Disagr	Undec	Total
		Freq	/S.Dis	Freq	
1	Salesperson’s experience has direct relationship with successful operation of sales force structure	211	06	03	220
2	Successful operation of sales force structure relates directly with salesperson’s experience	215	04	01	220
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>426</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>04</b>	<b>440</b>

Source: fieldwork 2015

According to table 1 above, aggregate responses 426 indicates agreement, 10 indicates disagreement while 04 indicates undecided. This implies that there is significant relationship between salesperson’s experience and successful operation of sales force structure.

**Hypothesis One**

**Ho: There is no significant relationship between salesperson’s previous selling experience and successful operation of sales force structure.**

**Table 2 Descriptive Statistics**

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Salesperson’s previous selling Experience	1.5091	0.70543	220
Successful Operation	1.5045	0.65164	220

**Table 3 Correlations**

		Experience	Successful Operation
Salesperson’s previous selling Experience	Pearson Correlation	1	0.939**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.000
	N	220	220
Successful Operation	Pearson Correlation	0.939**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	
	N	220	220

**\*\*.** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 2 above shows descriptive statistics of the extent to which salesperson’s previous selling experience is related with successful operation of sales force structure in industrial marketing. The mean value of salesperson’s previous selling experience is 1.5091, while the standard deviation is 0.70543. Also, the mean value of successful operation of sales force structure in industrial marketing is 1.5045 while the standard deviation is 0.65164. By careful observation of standard deviation value, it can be said that there is about the same variability of data points amongst dependent and independent variables. This implies that salesperson’s previous selling experience has a significant relationship with successful operation of sales force structure in industrial marketing.

Also, table 3 above shows Pearson correlation coefficient for salesperson’s experience and successful operation of sales force structure. The correlation value is 0.939. This value indicates that correlation coefficient is significant at 0.05 level (2 tailed) and implies that there is a significant relationship between salesperson’s previous selling experience and successful operation of sales force structure ( $r = 0.939$ ). The computed correlation coefficient is greater than the table value of  $r = 0.195$  with 218 degree of freedom ( $df = n-2$ ) at alpha level or a two tailed test ( $r = 0.939, p < 0.05$ ). We therefore reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternate.

**Table 4 Coded Responses on the extent of the influence of salesperson’s persuasive ability on successful operations of sales force structure.**

	Questionnaire items	S.Agree /Agree	Disagree /S.Disagre	Undecide	
		Freq	Freq	Freq	Total
1	Salesperson’s persuasive ability will influence successful operations of sales force structure.	208	08	04	220
2	successful operations of sales force structure will be influenced by Salesperson’s persuasive ability.	215	04	01	220
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>423</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>05</b>	<b>440</b>

Source: fieldwork 2015

According to table 4 above, aggregate response 423 indicates agreement, 12 indicates disagreement while 05 indicates undecided. This implies that salesperson’s persuasive ability has a significant influence on successful operations of sales force structure

**Hypothesis Two**

**Ho: There is no significant influence of salesperson’s persuasive ability on successful operations of sales force structure in industrial marketing.**

**Table 5 Model Summary<sup>b</sup>**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	F	Sum of Squares	t	Durbin Watson
1	.888 <sup>a</sup>	.789	.788	.34460	815.348	96.822 25.887	28.5 54	0.314

a. Predictors: (Constant), Successful C

b. Persuasive Ability

- R** = 0.888
- R<sup>2</sup>** = 0.789
- F** = 815.348
- T** = 28.554
- DW** = 0.314

**Interpretation**

In table 5 above, the regression sum of squares (96.822) is greater than the residual sum of squares (25.887), which indicates that more of the variation in the dependent variable is not explained by the model. The significance value of the F statistics (0.000) is less than 0.05, which means that the variation explained by the model is due to chance.

R, the correlation coefficient which has a value of 0.888, indicates that there is significant influence of salesperson’s persuasive ability on successful operation of sales force structure in industrial marketing. R square, the coefficient of determination, shows that 78.9% of the variations in salesperson’s persuasive ability is explained by the model.

With the linear regression model, the error of estimate is low, with a value of about 0.34460. The Durbin Watson statistics of 0.314, which is less than 2, indicates there is no autocorrelation.

The successful operation of sales force structure in industrial marketing coefficient of 0.888 indicates that salesperson’s persuasive ability has a significant influence on successful operation of sales force structure in industrial marketing which is statistically significant (with t = 28.554). The null hypothesis was therefore rejected while the alternate was accepted.

**Table 6 Coded Responses on the extent of how salesperson’s technical expertise affect successful operations of sales force structure in industrial marketing.**

	Questionnaire items	Agree	Disagree	Undecided	
		Freq	Freq	Freq	Total
1	Salesperson’s technical expertise will significantly affect on successful operation of sales force structure in industrial marketing.	215	04	01	220
2	Successful operations of sales force structure in industrial marketing will affect Salesperson’s technical expertise significantly.	208	09	03	220
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>423</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>04</b>	<b>440</b>

Source: fieldwork 2015

According to table 6 above, aggregate response 423 indicates agreement, 13 indicates disagreement while 04 indicates undecided. This means that salesperson’s technical expertise has a significant effect on successful operation of sales force structure in industrial marketing.

**Hypothesis Three**

**Ho: There is no significant effect of salesperson’s technical expertise will have a significant effect on successful operation of sales force structure in industrial marketing.**

**Table 5 Model Summary<sup>b</sup>**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	F	Sum of Squares	t	Durbin-Watson
1	.906 <sup>a</sup>	.820	.820	.2677	995.341	71.369	31.549	0.522
						15.631		

a. Predictors: (Constant), Success

b. Technical Expertise

- R = 0.906
- R<sup>2</sup> = 0.820
- F = 995.341
- T = 31.549
- DW = 0.522

**Interpretation**

In table 6 above, the regression sum of squares (71.369) is greater than the residual sum of squares (15.631), which indicates that more of the variation in the dependent variable is not explained by the model. The significance value of the F statistics (0.000) is less than 0.05, which means that the variation explained by the model is due to chance.

R, the correlation coefficient which has a value of 0.906, indicates that there is significant effect of salesperson’s technical expertise on successful operation of sales force structure in industrial marketing. R square, the coefficient of determination, shows that 82% of the variations in sales force training is explained by the model.

With the linear regression model, the error of estimate is low, with a value of about 0.26777. The Durbin Watson statistics of 0.522, which is less than 2, indicates there is no autocorrelation.

The successful operation of sales force structure in industrial marketing coefficient of 0.906 indicates that salesperson's technical expertise has a significant effect on successful operation of sales force structure in industrial marketing which is statistically significant (with  $t = 31.549$ ). The null hypothesis was therefore rejected while the alternate was accepted.

### **IX. Summary Of Findings**

Revelation of hypothesis one is that there is a significant relationship between salesperson's experience and successful operation of sales force structure in industrial marketing ( $r = 0.939$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). This relates directly with the opinion of Djabatay (2012).

It was also revealed that salesperson's persuasive ability (communication skills) significantly influences successful operation of sales force structure in industrial marketing ( $r = 0.888$ ;  $t = 28.554$ ;  $F = 815.348$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ). Djabatay (2012) noted this also.

And finally, it was revealed that salesperson's technical expertise has a significant effect on successful operation of sales force structure in industrial marketing ( $r = 0.906$ ;  $t = 31.549$ ;  $F = 995.34$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ). Salesperson's technical knowledge was equally noted by Djabatay (2012).

### **X. Conclusion**

Salesperson's past or previous selling experience will definitely make enormous contribution to successful operation of any company's products. Any potential salesperson that had worked with any manufacturing company and had been engaged in sales in one way or the other will definitely be perceived a more viable candidate for Innoson Vehicle Manufacturing Company Nigeria Ltd's sales or human resources manager(s), during recruitment. That is because experience counts a lot in any endeavour. In the same vein, a potential salesperson with more communicative tendencies will be more crafty and creative to convince industrial customers to place their orders. Finally, a prospective salesperson who demonstrates technical knowledge concerning automobile will be a better candidate to be recruited because he will make sales presentation and demonstration more practical and real. And will crush many threats related to objections by potential customers.

### **Recommendations**

The researchers recommend that experienced sales personnel must be considered over and above inexperienced salespersons. That is, someone who had sold a company's line of products should be considered over fresh graduates who have never had any selling contact before.

Also, instead of recruiting salespersons that do not have the fluency of the language of selling, it is better not to recruit at all. Otherwise, other competing company's salesperson will ridicule your salespersons and cart away more share of the market from your company.

Finally, most industrial customers would want expert information on the products they purchase. Therefore they require a sales force with an idea of how the entire product works. This is because some industrial products are very complex and technical, and may pose serious challenge to fix. Salespersons with such technical abilities should be employed first.

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