

# RETAIL SALES TRAINING: ACTIVITIES AND EFFECTS ON JOB SATISFACTION, ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT, TURNOVER AND CUSTOMER-ORIENTATION

LINDA S. PETTIJOHN, *Missouri State University*  
CHARLES E. PETTIJOHN, *Missouri State University*  
A. J. TAYLOR, *Coastal Carolina University*

---

*Sales training expenditures and activities have long been important issues to sales managers, with some seeming to perceive training as an investment that can yield significant organizational returns and with others who contend that it is an expense that must be controlled. Thus, determining the proper training program and justifying training expenses are difficult managerial tasks. This research provides an empirical assessment of sales training by evaluating both the training program and its effectiveness. The findings indicate that sales training may have significant effects on important performance outcomes such as job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and customer-orientation. The results suggest implications that may be important for sales managers to consider as they develop their training programs and justify their training expenditures.*

---

## INTRODUCTION

Sales Training! Millions of dollars spent are each year by U.S. businesses, and now academics is entering into the picture increasing total spending in this area. But does this spending represent an investment in the future or is it merely an expense? That is a question that continues to be raised by businesses, trainers and academicians. In spite of the continual debate, it seems that most sales managers and their organizations believe that salespeople are not simply *born* into their sales roles (Bragg 1988; Kelley 1993). Evidence of the fact that organizations are devoted to sales training may be found in the investments companies make in sales training. In fact, training is big business in the U.S. In 2004, the average company spent \$820 per employee to train workers. The “best” companies were described as spending over \$2,000 per person training their workers (*Sales and Marketing Management* 2005). Of these training expenditures, research has concluded that sales

training represents the largest portion of total training expenditures in the U.S. (Barksdale, et al. 2003).

According to Harris (2001), sales representatives need “grooming” to succeed and this grooming is an investment that is made by the firm and the manager in the form of training and coaching. It seems that the general sentiment is that if one has “some level of talent,” then sales training can be instrumental in helping convert that talent into positive results (Brewer 1996). However, a contrary view pertaining to sales training seems to exist. Wilson, Strutton and Farris (2002), report that negative perceptions of sales training are held by many (salespeople and sales managers). This viewpoint holds that training is “an unnecessary panacea that only deepens the impact of failure experienced by new salespeople and may even negatively influence experienced salespeople (p. 77).” Some sales managers have even suggested that one learns selling by doing, not by training (Chang 2003). Nevertheless, while managers might hold reservations regarding the efficacy of sales training, it appears that the general sentiment is that training is essential (Kelley 1993). In fact,

research has indicated that most salespeople feel that training has a positive impact on sales performance (Chonko, Tanner and Weeks 1993). Nationwide, corporate returns from training expenditures have been estimated to be as much as 300 percent (Hentkoff 1993). Based on the examples discussed, it seems that the general consensus is that training affects sales performance. Nevertheless, as Johnson and Marshall (2006) state, the effect of training on performance can be mediated by numerous environmental factors.

While training is obviously an important issue for firms, issues concerning the content and effectiveness of training continue to be discussed. Honeycutt, Ford and Rao (1995) state that sales executives regard as their greatest research need the determination of the effectiveness of their sales training programs. Thus, the purpose of this research is to evaluate training at the “introductory level,” the level at which new salespeople begin receiving training. This evaluation is designed to focus on an assessment of the training practices of retail establishments with regard to their salespeople. In addition, the research will assess four important outcomes that may result from sales training: job satisfaction, organizational commitment, sales force turnover, and customer orientation. Previous studies have indicated that firms fail to engage in objective assessments of their training programs (Honeycutt, Ford and Stevenson 1995). Thus, the objective results provided by this research may be useful in facilitating the strategic role of sales training, because it has been suggested that evaluations of sales training effectiveness will assist firms in promoting their strategic visions (Attia, Honeycutt and Leach 2005). This suggestion indicates that the practice of sales training may be enhanced when upper management perceives that sales training is an investment yielding positive returns rather than an expense which is to be controlled and/or reduced.

## RELATED RESEARCH

In terms of training content, it appears that the majority of sales training efforts focus on the “basics.” Wilson, Strutton and Farris (2002) suggest that salespeople should first learn the “fundamentals” of sales prior to learning product knowledge details. This suggestion is made based on the proposition that salespeople who are confident in their sales skills are more likely to employ product knowledge. Other research has found that the focal point of training should also be on the basics (Harris 2001; Kelley 1993). Research has indicated that the most important sales training topics for industrial sales representatives consisted of the presentation, product knowledge, negotiating, communications, closing, follow-up and time management (cf. Chonko, Tanner and Weeks 1993; Hawes, Rich and Widmier 2004; Parker, Pettijohn and Luke 1996).

Some research has expanded the “basic” topic list to suggest that a firm’s sales training programs should teach salespeople how to uncover, identify, and understand the customer’s needs and requirements (Garver and Mentzer 2000). In a study of failure, it was determined that salespeople fail primarily due to inadequacies that are described as being amenable to correction through training efforts. These inadequacies include the salesperson’s failure to determine needs, failure to listen, poor presentation planning, and inadequate levels of product/service knowledge (Ingram, Schwegker and Hutson 1992). Cron, et al. (2005) state that three separate sets of training topics may be included in training programs. The specific choice of topics is largely dependent on the goals of the program and on the salespersons’ needs and career stages. The three topic categories include: task-related knowledge, skills and attitudes (KSAs); growth-related KSAs; and meta-related KSAs. Beginning salespeople are most likely to focus on the task-related KSAs and experienced salespeople on the meta-related KSAs.

Determining the proper training program has been described as being a critical issue.

According to Barksdale, et al. (2003, p. 134), “. . . the training program provided for new hires must be effective and clearly linked to the tasks necessary to becoming a top performing salesperson.” Thus, based on this research, the initial research objectives focus on three questions: First, is training conducted? Second, if training is conducted, what is included in the training? Third, assuming selling skills are included in the training, what specific skills are included in the training? These questions are significant ones because research indicates a strong relationship between initial training and many desirable outcomes (Barksdale, et al. 2003; Jolson, Dubinsky and Anderson 1987).

Organizations which invest in sales training are seeking to determine whether these training investments are helping them attain their objectives. Accordingly, the effectiveness of sales training may be measured by its impact on sales person abilities, by the impact on trainees, and by its impact on the firm (Attia, Honeycutt and Leach 2005). With regard to the impact of training on the firm, it has been suggested that the benefits of training depend upon factors such as employee retention, training duration, and performance aspects (Honeycutt, et al. 2001). Based on this perspective, the next segment of the literature is designed to evaluate the relationships existing between training activities and salesperson job satisfaction, organizational commitment, salesperson turnover, and customer-orientation. Researchers have suggested that sales training activities require evaluation. Leach and Liu (2003), in a study of 445 life insurance salespeople, suggest that four methods exist to evaluate training programs: participants’ reactions; changes in attitudes, knowledge or skills; changes in behaviors; and changes in desirable outcomes. They suggest that while organizations are extremely desirous of training effectiveness assessments based on organizational outcomes, in reality this is the “least used” method of evaluation. As is the case in many instances, the least used method may be the “ideal” method of assessment. While the basic objective of training is to

improve performance (Wilson, Strutton and Farris 2002) other desirable outcomes can be derived from training. Most research identifies three primary outcomes that are sought from sales training programs, including increased levels of performance and organizational commitment, and reduced levels of turnover as three of the most desirable training outcomes (Leach and Liu 2003). According to Leach and Liu’s (2003) findings, as the salesperson’s ability to transfer his/her learning from the training to the workplace increased, so did the salesperson’s organizational commitment, sales effectiveness, and customer relations. Other research has argued that the socialization and training processes affect the new salesperson’s levels of job satisfaction, performance, and organizational commitment (Barksdale, et al. 2003). Additionally, research contends that training is imperative because, “Salespeople who leave a firm before the costs of their training are recovered negatively affect the firm’s profits. There are clear benefits to be gained from improving the procedures used to train and socialize new salespeople (Barksdale, et al. 2003, page 125).”

Based on this segment of the literature, the second research objective involves an evaluation of the relationships existing between sales training and four desirable training outcomes: job satisfaction, organizational commitment, lower levels of turnover intentions, and customer-orientation. Thus, these variables will be evaluated by comparing these “performance” outcomes with alternative training activities and levels.

In summary, the research questions to be addressed in this study include:

1. Is retail sales training conducted?
2. If retail training is conducted, what is included in the training?
3. Does training affect the salesperson’s levels of job satisfaction, organizational commitment, turnover intentions, and customer-orientation?
4. Are there differential training factors (content, amount, relative focus) that affect the salesperson’s levels of job satisfaction,

organizational commitment, turnover intentions, and customer-orientation?

### METHODOLOGY

The first step in the process of accomplishing the research objectives required the development of a data collection instrument. The survey was developed using both prior studies as a guide and using the input of the participating managers. Since the primary objective of the research involved the assessment of sales training, sales training questions were divided into five sections. Section one asked the respondents if they had received introductory sales training. Introductory training was the focus of the research because of the importance ascribed to introductory training as a predictor of salesperson success. Research has indicated that introductory training may affect the salesperson's levels of job satisfaction, organizational commitment, performance, and turnover intentions (Barksdale, et al. 2003). Further, it may be argued that "experienced" salespeople benefit less from training (Attia, Honeycutt and Leach 2005). Assuming they had received introductory training, in section two respondents were then asked to indicate the type of introductory training provided and the proportion of time devoted to each of the types. The types of introductory training provided included: sales skills, customer satisfaction, product knowledge, customer knowledge, and company/industry knowledge.

Because sales skills were the focal point of the analysis, the third portion of the survey asked respondents to identify the specific sales skills included in the introductory training program. These skills included: approach tactics; questioning methods; prospecting; qualifying; need identification; presentation methods; demonstration techniques; dealing with objections; closing; negotiating; and follow-up activities. This portion of the survey was deemed important because no prior research reviewed had addressed issues relating to the relationships existing between training content

and organizational results, and between the amount of training and organizational results.

The second segment of the research was developed to determine the effect sales training had on the sales representatives' employers. Honeycutt, Howe and Ingram (1993) identified the goals of sales training programs. Based on this research, the present research is developed to assess the effect of sales training on two of these goals: customer relations and turnover, and its correlates. Thus, the first portion of this section involved the assessment of the respondents' levels of customer orientation. The salespersons' customer-orientation levels were evaluated because the salespersons' behaviors have been described as being critical determinants of the customers' satisfaction with retailers. Stanforth and Lennon's (1997, p. 115) statement exemplifies the important role of the salesperson in delivering customer satisfaction, "As retailers strive to develop customer-oriented environments, the delivery of quality and value to the customer through improved customer service has been identified as a potential competitive advantage."

The scale used in this evaluation is the short-form of the SOCO scale originally developed by Saxe and Weitz (1982). The SOCO scale has been found to be a valid and reliable measure of salesperson selling/customer-orientation levels (Michaels and Day 1985; Williams and Attaway 1996). Thomas, Soutar and Ryan (2001) developed a condensed and more parsimonious version of the original SOCO scale. Their scale was determined to be a valid and reliable measure of salesperson and selling/customer-orientation levels. The condensed scale used five items to assess customer-orientation and five items to assess selling-orientation. The validity of the condensed scale has been evaluated and the conclusion is that "reducing the SOCO scale sacrificed little information" (Periatt, LeMay and Chakrabarty 2004). Periatt, LeMay and Chakrabarty's (2004) research also concluded that prior research, in which a modified version of the SOCO was used, indicated that the modified version seemed to provide effective

use in spite of the changes. The current research uses a slightly revised version of the Thomas, Soutar and Ryan (2001) scale. The customer-orientation portion used the five items identified by Thomas, Soutar and Ryan (2001) and the selling-orientation portion of the scale was reduced from five to three items (2 items that seemed redundant were eliminated). Thus, the respondents' customer orientation levels were evaluated using the eight questions included on this scale and responses were provided using a seven-point Likert-type scale (7 = strongly agree and 1 = strongly disagree).

The third segment of the questionnaire was designed to measure the participants' levels of job satisfaction, organizational commitment and intent-to-leave the organization. Each of these variables has also been measured in prior studies. Respondent job satisfaction was assessed using nine items drawn from the fifteen item scale developed by Wood, Chonko and Hunt (1986). The scale size was reduced to increase the parsimony of the survey instrument and to reduce the duplicative nature of the questions. Organizational commitment was measured using a fifteen-item scale developed by Mowdy, Porter and Steers (1982). The respondents' intentions of leaving were used as a surrogate measure of turnover. This scale was a four-item scale developed by O'Reilly, Chapman and Caldwell (1991). Each of these scales used a seven-point Likert-type scale (7 = strongly agree and 1 = strongly disagree) to assess the degree of respondent agreement with a series of statements.

The final portion of the survey involved the identification of the salesperson's demographic characteristics. Demographic factors included age, gender, education, type of sales job and experience in their current jobs. The questions contained in the survey instrument were pre-tested by using a small sample of retail salespeople as respondents to determine the appropriateness of each question and the clarity of the questions. After considering the input provided by these individuals, the final survey form was developed.

The next step in the research required the development of a sample. One could argue that certain sales training subjects might be more or less important in different types of sales roles. Based on this proposition, sample homogeneity was identified as being a desirable trait. Therefore, the sample was specified to be one made up of retail salespeople engaged in the sale of "shopping goods." Retail salespeople are described as being an important component of the retailer's promotional mix, comprising one-third of the retailer's operating expenses, providing the retailer with a differential advantage, and creating an image of the customer's perception of the retailer. Further, it has been stated that when "good selling practices are implemented," customer satisfaction, sales and profits increase (Chonko, Caballero and Lumpkin 1990).

Fifteen businesses engaged in the sale of shopping goods (Pride and Ferrell 2006) were identified and personally contacted by one of the primary researchers. Each of these businesses sold products primarily to end users. Products sold by these firms included higher-end clothing and jewelry, electronics, appliances and fitness equipment. Nine of these businesses agreed to participate and made each of their salespeople available as potential respondents. Each of the participating firms employed between 15 and 30 different salespeople for a total of 210 salespeople and provided access to these individuals via a drop-off method of questionnaire distribution. The drop-off method involved having the researchers provide the participating businesses with an adequate number of surveys to distribute to their sales forces. The survey packets included instructions for completing the survey and a return envelope addressed to one of the researchers' institutions. The return envelope was used to ensure that responses were both voluntary and anonymous. It was felt that while this return technique might reduce response rates, the method would result in more accurate responses than would requesting employers to require responses and then collecting responses from their employees. A total of 148 responses were returned, of

these, 141 were deemed to provide usable responses, for a response rate of 67 percent. The potential for nonresponse bias was assessed by comparing the results obtained from the first 20 percent of the respondents with the results obtained from the final 20 percent of the respondents (Armstrong and Overton 1977). This comparison indicated that no significant differences existed in the responses obtained from the two groups, so nonresponse bias was not regarded as a significant factor.

The respondents' demographic characteristics revealed that approximately 52 percent of the respondents were older than 36 years of age. In addition, the majority of the respondents were male, with high school diplomas and had been employed with their firms for at least one year. The scales, scale means, and coefficient alphas are shown in Table 1 (Cronbach 1960). The scales have been used in previous research and have been found to be valid and reliable measures of job satisfaction, organizational commitment, intent-to-leave the organization and customer orientation. As shown in Table 1, the coefficient alpha values for these scales ranged from .72 to .87; each of the scales exceeds the .70 alpha value recommended by Nunnally (1978).

## RESULTS

As stated earlier, one of the primary purposes of this research is to discuss retail sales training practices. In addition to this objective, the research is also designed to assess relationships in training practices that may exist between sales training activities and desirable outcomes,

including job satisfaction, organizational commitment, turnover intentions, and customer orientation. The results shown in Table 2 address the broad objective pertaining to the "general state-of-affairs" with regard to sales training. This table indicates that approximately 61 percent of the respondents received introductory sales training. Thus, it should be noted that 39 percent of the respondents were not provided with introductory sales training. The mean number of hours of introductory training was 29.5.

The table also shows that with regard to the inclusion of training subjects (those not receiving sales training were eliminated from this segment of the research), the majority of new salespeople received training in the area of *sales skills*. In order of popularity, the second and third most popular training topics were *customer satisfaction* and *product knowledge*. The least popular topics, in terms of their inclusion in introductory retail sales training programs were, *company/industry knowledge* (76 percent) and *customer knowledge* (83 percent).

The next stage of the analysis was focused on an evaluation of the relationship between the inclusion of training and the number of hours devoted to training and four important outcome variables: job satisfaction, organizational commitment, intent-to-leave the organization and customer-orientation levels. To facilitate the analysis, those receiving training were divided into three approximately equal groups based on the number of hours of introductory training received. Those receiving less than 16

**TABLE 1**  
**Scale Means and Alpha Coefficients**

Scale	Mean (sd)	Alpha Coefficient
Organizational Commitment	76.2 (11.9)	.79
Job Satisfaction	48.2 ( 9.8)	.87
Intent-to-leave	12.5 ( 6.1)	.74
Customer Orientation	44.5 ( 6.3)	.72

**TABLE 2**  
**Training Provided and Type of Training Provided**

<b>Topic:</b>	<b>Included % (n)</b>	<b>Not % (n)</b>
Introductory Training	61 (88)	39 (57)
*Sales Skills	95 (83)	5 (4)
*Customer Satisfaction	92 (79)	8 (7)
*Product Knowledge	91 (80)	9 (8)
*Customer Knowledge	83 (72)	17 (15)
*Company/ Industry Knowledge	76 (67)	24 (21)

Mean (sd) hours of introductory training: 29.5 (21.7)

hours were placed in the group identified as *low* training; those receiving between 16 and 35 hours of introductory training were placed in group identified as *moderate* training; and those receiving more than 35 hours were placed in group identified as *high* training. Table 3 provides the results of t-tests (training included versus not included) and analysis of variance (low, moderate, and high amounts of sales training) examining the relationships between the training variables and salesperson job satisfaction, organizational commitment, intent-to-leave, and customer orientation. As indicated in Table 3, no significant ( $p < .05$ ) relationships were found between the inclusion or exclusion of introductory sales training and the outcome variables identified.

When the amount of training provided was evaluated using an analysis of variance, a relationship was discovered between the amount of training given and the job satisfaction levels of the trainees. As shown in the table, levels of job satisfaction increased as the amounts of training increased. Further, differences were significant in the levels of job satisfaction of those receiving the “most” training and those receiving the “least” training, indicating that a threshold level may exist between the amount of training and the impact on salesperson job satisfaction levels.

Table 4 provides the results pertaining to the amount of emphasis on “general training topics.” As indicated in the table, the amount of time devoted to a particular training subject was generally related to its popularity in terms of inclusion in training programs. The most popular topic, *sales skills*, was also the topic most emphasized in the majority of sales training programs. However, the second most emphasized topic, *product knowledge*, was only the fourth most popular topic for inclusion in training programs. However, with this single aberration, the other topics were generally emphasized in a manner that closely approximated their relative rankings in training program inclusion.

Table 4 also shows the relationships existing between the relative amounts of emphasis on a general training topic and the outcome variables analyzed using univariate regression analysis. As shown in the table, as the percent of training time devoted to sales skills was increased, these increases were accompanied by significant increases in salesperson organizational commitment and customer orientation, and a desirable decrease in salesperson turnover intentions. In addition, as training increased in the area of “company/industry” knowledge, organizational commitment also increased. The findings also indicate that increases in training programs’ emphases on “customer knowledge”

**TABLE 3**  
**Relationships Between Training, Customer Orientation, Job Satisfaction,**  
**Organizational Commitment and Turnover Intentions**

Inclusion of Sales Training:

Training Amounts:

Characteristic	Training Included	Training not Included	Low Levels	Moderate Levels	High Levels
Customer Orientation	44.2	45.0	43.6	43.0	45.9
Job Satisfaction	48.1	48.2	45.7 <sub>x</sub>	46.9 <sub>yx</sub>	52.0 <sub>yC</sub>
Organizational Commitment	77.3	74.6	79.7	77.5	81.4
Turnover Intentions	12.4	12.6	12.8	13.1	10.7

x/y = means with different letters are significantly different @ p &lt; .05

C = equation significant @ p &lt; .05

**TABLE 4**  
**Relation Between Proportions of Training Allocations and Outcome Variables**

Training Topic	Percent of Time Devoted	Job Satisfaction	Organizational Commitment	Turnover Intentions	Customer Orientation
		F (p)	F (p)	F (p)	F (p)
Sales Skills	27.3	.4 (.46)	4.0 (.05) <sub>c</sub>	4.6 (.04) <sub>c</sub>	5.9 (.02) <sub>c</sub>
Product Knowledge	23.0	1.9 (.17)	.1 (.78)	.1 (.74)	.0 (.96)
Customer Satisfaction	20.7	.7 (.42)	.3 (.58)	.1 (.79)	.8 (.38)
Company/ Industry Knowledge	16.8	1.1 (.29)	3.2 (.08) <sub>d</sub>	.2 (.64)	.9 (.36)
Customer Knowledge	16.3	.2 (.65)	1.8 (.18)	7.1 (.01) <sub>a</sub>	5.7 (.02) <sub>c</sub>

a: p &lt; .001

b: p &lt; .01

c: p &lt; .05

d: p &lt; .10

were accompanied by significant reductions in turnover intentions and by significant increases in customer orientation levels.

### DISCUSSION AND MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

The primary purposes of this study were first to determine the sales training activities of retailers, second to evaluate the topics that were considered most important by retailers and third to identify the relationships that exist between

training activities and desirable outcomes such as job satisfaction, organizational commitment, lower turnover, and customer orientation. The results of this study may be valuable to researchers and practitioners as they engage in the process of assessing the effectiveness of sales training and as they begin to develop methods that can be used to enhance the effectiveness of sales training.

The first discovery, that only 61 percent of the respondents received introductory sales training

is somewhat discouraging. It would suggest that retailers are failing to appreciate the importance of the salesperson's role in influencing both sales volume and customer satisfaction. One could argue that retailers should begin engaging in more training for their primary customer-contact personnel. However, a more negative implication might also be suggested. This suggestion may be based on the concept that perhaps selling, at the retail level, is being "de-emphasized." Perhaps retailers are conceding that good salespeople are difficult to train and hire, so they are becoming more self-service in their promotional orientations. While such an implication might be difficult to accept, it could be argued that it deserves consideration when the sellers of shopping goods fail to provide their salespeople with basic introductory sales training. On the other hand, the majority of retailers continue to recognize that sales training is important and offer their salespeople introductory training. Of those retailers offering introductory training, the majority focus on the "traditional" training topics. This result supports Wilson, Strutton and Farris' (2002) conclusion that in order for the trainee to absorb product knowledge, the trainee needs to first be comfortable with their sales skills. Thus, new salespeople should receive training in sales skills, customer satisfaction, and product knowledge. The focus on developing customer satisfaction is also encouraging, especially when one considers the importance of the salesperson in building customer satisfaction.

The findings also indicate that providing introductory training may not be adequate. Instead, the findings show that some minimum threshold level of sales training may exist which must be reached before sales training can have a significant impact on desirable outcome variables. This conclusion is based on the fact that the results show that the mere inclusion of training has little effect on job satisfaction, organizational commitment, turnover-intentions, or customer-orientation. However, as training amounts increase, the results show that job satisfaction increases.

The findings also show that the proportion of training efforts allocated to particular training topics also relates to desirable outcomes. This finding implies that managers providing training might be well-advised to focus on areas providing the greatest yield for the training time invested. The results show that sales managers might concentrate their efforts on sales skills, as a focus on these skills tends to build organizational commitment and customer orientation and tends to reduce turnover intentions. Similarly, an emphasis on company/industry knowledge leads to increases in organizational commitment. Finally, emphasizing knowledge pertaining to customers tends to reduce turnover intentions and leads to increases in customer-orientation. Therefore, managers should consider the relative impact various training subjects have on desired outcomes.

#### **LIMITATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH**

This study has limitations that should be noted and these limitations point to suggestions for further research. First, as noted previously, the sample consists of retail salespeople. The retail salesperson's role in the sales process may vary in terms of its relative importance. Thus, specific factors may be more or less important in alternative situations. The same could hold true for various other sales roles. One of the advantages of using retail salespeople as the sampling frame entails the fact that many of their job-related tasks might be more similar across alternative jobs than would be the case in different aspects of business-to-business sales. Nevertheless, the sample may not be representative of other groups of salespeople and this limitation should be noted.

Second, the study did not determine the amount of time devoted to training in the specific sales skills areas. Knowledge of the time allocations might have provided considerable insight into the alternative importance of specific skill areas. While the study did evaluate the total time allocations to "general" training subjects, an analysis of the specific sales skills was

outside the purview of this study. In addition, the study did not analyze the impact of on-going training that might effect the outcomes as well.

These limitations suggest that future research should consider additional salesperson categories. Results might be different if the focus were on inside sales representatives or on business-to-business field salespeople. Further research might evaluate the allocations of time given to specific sales skills. This might provide more concise and direct leadership to managers attempting to determine their allocations of their training resources. Finally, it may be suggested that future research examine the effect of ongoing training programs. Such an effort might help delineate the "ideal" timing for specific types and topics of training.

Regardless of the directions of future research, this study indicates that training might provide important and significant outcomes for the organization providing the training. The findings indicate that managers may discover significant gains in important outcomes by providing sales training. In conclusion, the findings in this study indicate that sales training may enhance job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and customer-orientation levels while simultaneously reducing turnover intentions. However, this conclusion is based on two important caveats: "assuming the training is focused in the *right amounts* with the *right emphasis*." These caveats indicate a significant need for further research of this critical sales issue.

#### REFERENCES

- Armstrong, J. Scott and Terry S. Overton (1977) "Estimating Nonresponse Bias in Mail Surveys," *Journal of Marketing Research*, Vol. 14 (Number 3), pp. 396-402.
- Attia, Ashraf M., Earl D. Honeycutt, Jr. and Mark P. Leach (2005), "A Three-Stage Model for Assessing and Improving Sales Force Training and Development," *Journal of Personal Selling and Sales Management*, Vol. 25 (Spring), pp. 253-268.
- Barksdale Jr., Hiram C., Danny N. Bellenger, James S. Boles and Thomas G. Brashear (2003), "The Impact of Realistic Job Previews and Perceptions of Training on Sales Force Performance and Continuance Commitment: A Longitudinal Test," *Journal of Personal Selling and Sales Management*, Vol. 23 (Spring), pp. 125-138.
- Bragg, Arthur (1988), "Are Good Salespeople Born or Made?" *Sales and Marketing Management*, (September), pp. 74-78.
- Brewer, Geoffrey (1996), "Can You Teach People to Sell?" *Sales and Marketing Management*, (May), pp. 20, 22, and 24.
- Chang, Julia (2003), "Born to Sell," *Sales and Marketing Management*, (July), pp. 34-38.
- Chonko, Lawrence B., Marjorie J. Caballero and James R. Lumpkin (1990), "Do Retail Salespeople Use Selling Skills?" *Review of Business and Economic Research*, (Spring) pp. 36-46.
- Chonko, Lawrence B., John F. Tanner and William A. Weeks (1993), "Sales Training: Status and Needs," *Journal of Personal Selling and Sales Management*, Vol. 13 (Fall), pp. 81-86.
- Cron, William L., Greg W. Marshall, Jagdip Singh, Rosann L. Spiro and Harish Sujana (2005), "Salesperson Selection, Training, and Development: Trends, Implications, and Research Opportunities," *Journal of Personal Selling and Sales Management*, Vol. 25 (Spring), pp. 123-136.
- Cronbach, L.J. (1960). *Essentials of Psychological Testing* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). New York: Harper & Row.
- Garver, Michael S. and John T. Mentzer (2000), "Salesperson Logistics Expertise: A Proposed Contingency Framework," *Journal of Business Logistics*, Vol. 21 (Number 2), pp. 113-132.
- Harris, Elana (2001), "Stars in the Making," *Sales and Marketing Management*, (March), pp. 58-61.

- Hawes, Jon M., Anne K. Rich and Scott M. Widmier (2004) "Assessing the Development of the Sales Profession," *Journal of Personal Selling and Sales Management*, Vol. 24 (Winter), pp. 27-38.
- Henkoff, Ronald (1993), "Companies that Train Best," *Fortune*, (March 22), pp. 62-75.
- Honeycutt Jr., Earl, Kiran Karande, Ashraf Attia and Steven D. Maurer (2001) "An Utility Based Framework for Evaluating the Financial Impact of Sales Force Training Programs," *Journal of Personal Selling & Sales Management*, Vol. 21 (Summer), pp. 229-238.
- Honeycutt, Earl D., Jr., John B. Ford and C.P. Rao (1995), "Sales Training: Executives' Research Needs," *Journal of Personal Selling and Sales Management*, Vol. 15 (Fall), pp. 67-72.
- Honeycutt, Earl D., Jr., John B. Ford and Thomas H. Stevenson (1995), "Is Academic Research In Sales Training Relevant?" *Marketing Education Review*, Summer, 5:2, Summer, 67-75.
- Honeycutt, Earl D., Jr., Vince Howe and Thomas N. Ingram (1993), "Shortcomings of Sales Training Programs," *Industrial Marketing Management*, Vol. 22, (May), pp. 117-123.
- Ingram, Thomas N. Charles H. Schwepker, Jr. and Don Hutson (1992), "Why Salespeople Fail," *Industrial Marketing Management*, Vol. 21, pp. 225-230.
- Johnston, Mark W. and Greg W. Marshall (2006) *Churchill/Ford/Walker's Sales Force Management*. McGraw-Hill/Irwin, New York.
- Jolson, Marvin A., Alan J. Dubinsky and Rolph E. Anderson (1987), "Correlates and Determinants of Sales Force Tenure: An Exploratory Study," *Journal of Personal Selling and Sales Management*, Vol. 7 (November), pp. 262-279.
- Kelley, Bill (1993), "Training: 'Just Plain Lousy' or 'Too Important to Ignore'?" *Sales and Marketing Management*, (March), pp. 66-70.
- Leach, Mark P. and Annie H. Liu (2003), "Investigating Interrelationships Among Sales Training Evaluation Methods," *Journal of Personal Selling and Sales Management*, Vol. 23 (Fall), pp. 327-340.
- Michaels, Ronald E. and Ralph L. Day (1985), "Measuring Customer-Orientedness of Salespeople: A Replication with Industrial Buyers," *Journal of Marketing Research*, Vol. 22 (November), pp. 443-446.
- Mowdy, R., L. Porter and R. Steers (1982), *Employee-Organizational Linkages: The Psychology of Commitment, Absenteeism and Turnover*, New York: Academic Press.
- Nunnally, Jum C. (1978), *Psychometric Theory*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., New York: McGraw Hill.
- O'Reilly III, Charles A., Jennifer Chapman and David F. Caldwell (1991), "People and Organizational Culture: Assessing Person-Organizational Fit," *Academy of Management Journal*, Vol. 34 (Issue 3), pp. 487-517.
- Parker, R. Stephen, Charles E. Pettijohn and Robert H. Luke (1996), "Sales Representatives and Sales Professors: A Comparative Analysis of Sales Training Perceptions, Topics and Pedagogy," *Marketing Education Review*, Vol. 6 (Fall), pp. 41-50.
- Periatt Jeffrey A., Stephan A. LeMay and Subbra Chakrabarty (2004), "The Selling Orientation-Customer Orientation Scale: Cross-Validation of the Revised Version," *Journal of Personal Selling and Sales Management*, Vol. 24 (Winter), pp. 49-54.
- Pride, William M. and O.C. Ferrell (2006), *Marketing Concepts and Strategies*, Houghton Mifflin Company.
- Sales and Marketing Management* (2005) "S&MM Pulse" (August), p. 15.
- Saxe, Robert and Barton Weitz (1982), "The SOCO Scale: A Measure of the Customer-Orientedness of Salespeople," *Journal of Marketing Research*, Vol. 19 (August), pp. 343-351.
- Stanforth, Nancy and Sharron J. Lennon (1997), "The Effects of Customer Expectations and Store Policies on Retail Salesperson Service, Satisfaction, and Patronage," *Clothing and Textiles Research Journal*, Vol. 15 (Number 2), pp. 115-124.

- Thomas, Raymond W., Geoffrey N. Soutar and Maria M. Ryan (2001), "The Selling Orientation-Customer Orientation (S.O.C.O.) Scale: A Proposed Short Form," *Journal of Personal Selling and Sales Management*, Vol. 21 (Winter), pp. 63-69.
- Williams, Michael R. and Jill S. Attaway (1996), "Exploring Salespersons' Customer-Orientation as a Mediator of Organizational Culture's Influence on Buyer-Seller Relationships," *Journal of Personal Selling and Sales Management*, Vol. 16 (Fall), pp. 33-52.
- Wilson, Phillip H., David Strutton and M. Theodore Farris (2002), "Investigating the Perceptual Aspect of Sales Training," (2003), *Journal of Personal Selling and Sales Management*, Vol. 22 (Spring), pp. 77-86.
- Wood, Van R., Lawrence B. Chonko and Shelby Hunt (1986), "Social Responsibility and Personal Success: Are They Incompatible?" *Journal of Business Research*, Vol. 14 (Number 3), pp. 193-212.