

Achieving Market Superiority: An Innovative Approach to Marketing and Sales Strategy in the Bitumen Industry (Case Study: Bitumen Industry)

Masoud. Esfandiar¹, Farzad. Asayesh^{1*}, Alireza. Rousta¹, Seyed Mahmood. Hashemi²

¹ Department of Business Management, Shahr-e-Qods Branch, Islamic Azad University, Tehran, Iran

² Department of Business Management, North Tehran Branch, Islamic Azad University, Tehran, Iran

* Corresponding author email address: farzad.asayesh@gmail.com

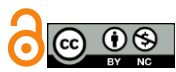
Article Info

Article type:

Original Research

How to cite this article:

Esfandiar, M., Asayesh, F., Rousta, A., & Hashemi, S. M. (2023). Achieving Market Superiority: An Innovative Approach to Marketing and Sales Strategy in the Bitumen Industry (Case Study: Bitumen Industry). *International Journal of Innovation Management and Organizational Behavior*, 3(4), 219-226.
<https://doi.org/10.61838/kman.ijimob.3.4.25>



© 2023 the authors. Published by KMAN Publication Inc. (KMANPUB), Ontario, Canada. This is an open access article under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International (CC BY-NC 4.0) License.

ABSTRACT

Objective: The objective of this study was to develop a marketing and sales model for industrial markets.

Methodology: This research is applied in nature and follows a qualitative approach based on grounded theory. Methodological triangulation was employed in this study, using various data collection methods such as literature review, examination of specialized sources and texts, as well as semi-structured interviews. A purposive sampling technique was used to interview 14 managers and experts from companies active in the bitumen industry in the year 2024. The interviews were coded using ATLAS.TI software. To validate the findings, data were evaluated and analyzed for reliability based on triangulation.

Findings: Based on the grounded theory model designed for marketing and sales in industrial markets, four causal conditions (product quality, pricing, production capabilities, and product innovation), five contextual conditions (economic conditions, regulations, political conditions, technology, and market conditions), four intervening conditions (international relations, cultural factors, climate change, and unexpected events), four strategies (financial strategies, brand management, customer analysis, and product quality improvement), and five outcomes (increased market share, increased customer satisfaction, increased profitability, market differentiation, and optimized marketing performance) were identified.

Conclusion: The marketing and sales model in industrial markets, especially in the bitumen industry, requires specific approaches that differ significantly from other industries. In this industry, emphasis on long-term relationships with customers, extensive networking, and strong connections with key customers is of utmost importance. Companies should focus on establishing strategic relationships with major customers, such as construction contractors and road construction companies, to leverage the long-term benefits of these relationships.

Keywords: *Marketing, Sales Management, Industrial Marketing, Bitumen Marketing.*

1 Introduction

Industrial organizations are under pressure to adapt to changing external conditions to ensure long-term survival and growth (Burka & Kelly, 2018). Those who effectively respond to market turbulence are more likely to gain a competitive advantage over their rivals (Fürst et al., 2023). Macro-environmental forces, including new opportunities, competitive threats, and shifting customer expectations, are all beyond the control of managers, necessitating that organizations swiftly and smoothly adapt to ensure continued prosperity (Rand & Stummer, 2022).

While organizations in the industrial environment are pressured to change, their suppliers are also under pressure to implement necessary market strategies to ensure these changes occur (Rajagopal, 2020). Although these changes may involve relatively small adjustments to the marketing mix, they can play a more significant role in the long term, such as entering a new market, launching a new product, or adopting a new distribution channel. Such actions may be required in response to external changes, but they may also be undertaken internally to improve effectiveness (Hartmann et al., 2020). Rackham and DeVincentis (1999) noted that sales departments must be adaptable and ready to change to respond to both organizational and industrial dynamics (Rackham & DeVincentis, 1999). Marketing dynamics and sales performance form a crucial link between these two forces (Bock et al., 2023).

Sales management plays a fundamental role in both the formation and execution of strategic plans (Bendapudi & Leone, 2002; Lacoste, 2018; Mahlamäki et al., 2020). Through their market connections, they are more aware of new competitive developments and changing customer needs (Järvinen, 2016). This information can be collected and analyzed by the marketing function to develop appropriate strategic responses, which the sales function must then implement. The impact of this action is subsequently observed by sales managers, who close the feedback loop within the industry by reporting the effects of implementing the new plan. Over time, this cycle leads to organizational change (Lacoste, 2018).

Marketing performance cannot be sufficiently useful and effective unless it is adequately connected to what is happening in the market. Homburg, Jensen, and Krohmer (2008) noted that marketing departments sometimes possess a low level of market and product knowledge, and there is insufficient information sharing between sales and marketing (Homburg et al., 2008). Therefore, if sales and

marketing are not adequately integrated, they (and consequently the organization as a whole) cannot gauge and respond appropriately to market changes (Graesch et al., 2021). A high level of integration between marketing and sales can make the organization highly responsive to market dynamics (Ma & Sun, 2020).

Jones et al. (2005), in their review of sales management literature and industrial changes, noted that companies that effectively implement changes in sales and marketing based on market turbulence create a competitive advantage over other competitors. They identified the need to understand the role of sales management in driving organizational change efforts and, in turn, how sales and marketing departments adapt to environmental changes (Flavián et al., 2019).

Market-driven influences, in addition to sales, have also been considered in other departments, but the focus on sales performance and the critical role it plays in both informing and executing marketing strategy has been limited (De Luca et al., 2020). Authors have identified sales performance as a valuable source of market information, but Le Bon and Merunka (2006) noted that few industries fully utilize this potential. Salespeople who have established strong relationships with their customers are in a position to gather information about competitors' products, prices, and projects, as well as new projects, customer behavior, and long-term preferences (Le Bon & Merunka, 2006).

Sales management is a crucial part of the change process as it informs the organization about external opportunities and threats. What seems to have not been fully addressed is the efficiency of how this information is disseminated to the organization: Problems in mobilizing the sales force to participate in market intelligence and appropriately communicating the collected information to the organization have long been reported. This is largely attributed to the sales force. It seems that the question of how much market information is received by the organization (or indeed requested) and only how well it is transmitted by the sales force appears to be appropriate but overlooked (Krishen et al., 2021).

Sales and marketing management can be defined as "the extent to which the activities performed by the two functions support each other" and lead to the achievement of each other's goals and objectives in a coordinated, aligned, or thoughtful manner within the industry (Hoyer et al., 2020). Three approaches in sales and marketing management include: 1- Sales and marketing interaction, where communication exists, and information is exchanged between the two functions. 2- Collaboration, where

resources are shared, and cross-functional teams work towards common goals. 3- Integration, which combines both. True integration of sales and marketing can be distinguished from mere coexistence and simple communication (Haghighi Kafash et al., 2021).

The integration of sales with marketing has recently been an area of academic interest, calling for further research. There is now compelling empirical evidence that the integration of sales and marketing positively impacts business and industry performance (Ancillai et al., 2022). This raises the question of when sales and marketing management is effective with market-based industrial changes (Mero et al., 2020).

This research examines the industrial bitumen market. The bitumen industry in Iran, with more than 80 production units, hundreds of billions of private sector investments, and an annual production of 6 million tons of bitumen across the country, is responsible for supplying the bitumen needed for the country's civil and construction projects. An examination of the developments in the bitumen industry in Iran and the world over the past year shows that Iran's share in the global market has declined for four reasons: the prominent presence of Russia in informal markets, Western sanctions, domestic laws and regulations affecting this sector, and the increased tendency of customers to purchase low-quality bitumen. The latest analyses and statistical data indicate that bitumen production in Iran amounts to approximately 6 million tons annually, with a dollar value equivalent to \$1.5 billion. Given the high domestic consumption of this material and Iran's recognition as one of the leading producers of raw bitumen derived from oil derivatives, supporting innovative projects in this industry is of great importance. Therefore, this research, considering the bitumen industry as a case study, seeks to answer the question of how the marketing and sales model operates in industrial markets.

2 Methods and Materials

This research is applied in nature and qualitative in approach, based on grounded theory as proposed by Strauss and Corbin (1998). Methodological triangulation was employed in this study using various data collection methods, such as literature review and examination of specialized sources and texts, as well as semi-structured interviews. Data triangulation, which involves controlling the consistency of different data sources, was also considered by the researchers, and more than one data source was utilized. Potential participants included all experts,

elites, and managers of active companies in the bitumen industry in 2024. A purposive sampling method was used, and individuals from this group were selected for the qualitative part of the research and participated in the interview process. The selection of samples for this research and the determination of this group of experts were conducted using purposive sampling. In this research, the primary sources of data were interviews, with the initial interviews being exploratory and descriptive. Gradually, after each interview, the coding of interview data was performed using constant comparative methods, and theoretical codes emerged through open coding. Similarly, coding for 14 interviews was completed, leading to the emergence of sub-concepts and main categories. It is important to note that the saturation and condensation of central categories were achieved based on theoretical sampling, meaning that interviews with the research population continued until the concepts of that category were condensed and enriched. For example, with the first 8 interviews, the category of the type of change became condensed, while in other categories, such as results and outcomes, the data were insufficient. Therefore, interviews continued based on theoretical sampling until the desired category reached saturation. It is important to note that theoretical sampling for interviews was conducted not based on the number of interviewees but based on their role in condensing the categories. The interviews reached theoretical saturation after 14 interviews. The duration of the interviews ranged from 30 to 50 minutes. For qualitative data analysis, grounded theory was utilized through ATLAS.TI software. In this study, the stages of analyzing the collected qualitative data were conducted in three stages: open coding, axial coding, and selective coding.

3 Findings and Results

The demographic characteristics of the participants indicate that 57% were male and 43% were female. In terms of education, 71% held a master's degree, while 29% had a doctoral degree or higher. Regarding work experience, 36% had between 15 and 20 years of experience, 50% had between 20 and 25 years, and 14% had more than 25 years of experience. The age distribution was as follows: 43% were between 30 and 40 years old, 43% were between 40 and 50 years old, and 14% were over 50 years old.

For open coding, all interviews were entered into the ATLAS.ti software, thoroughly reviewed, and the relevant codes were extracted. The coding labels were assigned based

on the interviews, and the researcher made efforts to adhere to the respondents' perspectives as much as possible to avoid any potential and unintended bias. Throughout the coding process, the researcher maintained theoretical sensitivity,

which is a principle of grounded theory research, to enhance the richness of the study. Table 1 shows a sample of the coded interviews.

Table 1

Coded Interviews

| Code | Interview |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Concentration and Viscosity | The bitumen concentration must meet specific standards required for various applications. |
| Softening Point | The temperature at which bitumen softens must be within a specified range. |
| Flash Point | The temperature at which bitumen becomes flammable must be safe and acceptable. |
| Durability and Stability | Bitumen's resistance to environmental factors such as heat, moisture, and UV radiation. |
| Asphaltenes and Maltenes Ratio | The ratio of these substances in bitumen should provide appropriate physical and mechanical properties. |
| Additives | Various additives like polymers that can enhance bitumen's properties. |
| Crack Resistance | Bitumen must withstand stress and temperature changes without cracking. |
| Fatigue Resistance | Bitumen should resist dynamic loading cycles. |
| Oxidation Resistance | Bitumen must have sufficient resistance to oxidation processes that can reduce its lifespan. |
| Water and Moisture Resistance | Non-absorption of water and maintaining physical properties in the presence of moisture. |
| Compatibility with Aggregates | Bitumen should adhere well to aggregates to create a homogeneous and stable surface. |
| Additive Compatibility | Ability to mix with various additives without losing desirable properties. |
| ASTM and AASHTO Standards | Compliance with international standards related to bitumen quality and characteristics. |
| Stability During Transport | Bitumen must maintain its quality during transportation and storage. |
| No Special Storage Needs | Bitumen should maintain its stability under normal storage conditions. |

Subsequently, the identified codes were categorized according to the dimensions of the grounded theory model by Strauss and Corbin (1998), as shown in Table 2.

Table 2

Open Coding of Qualitative Data

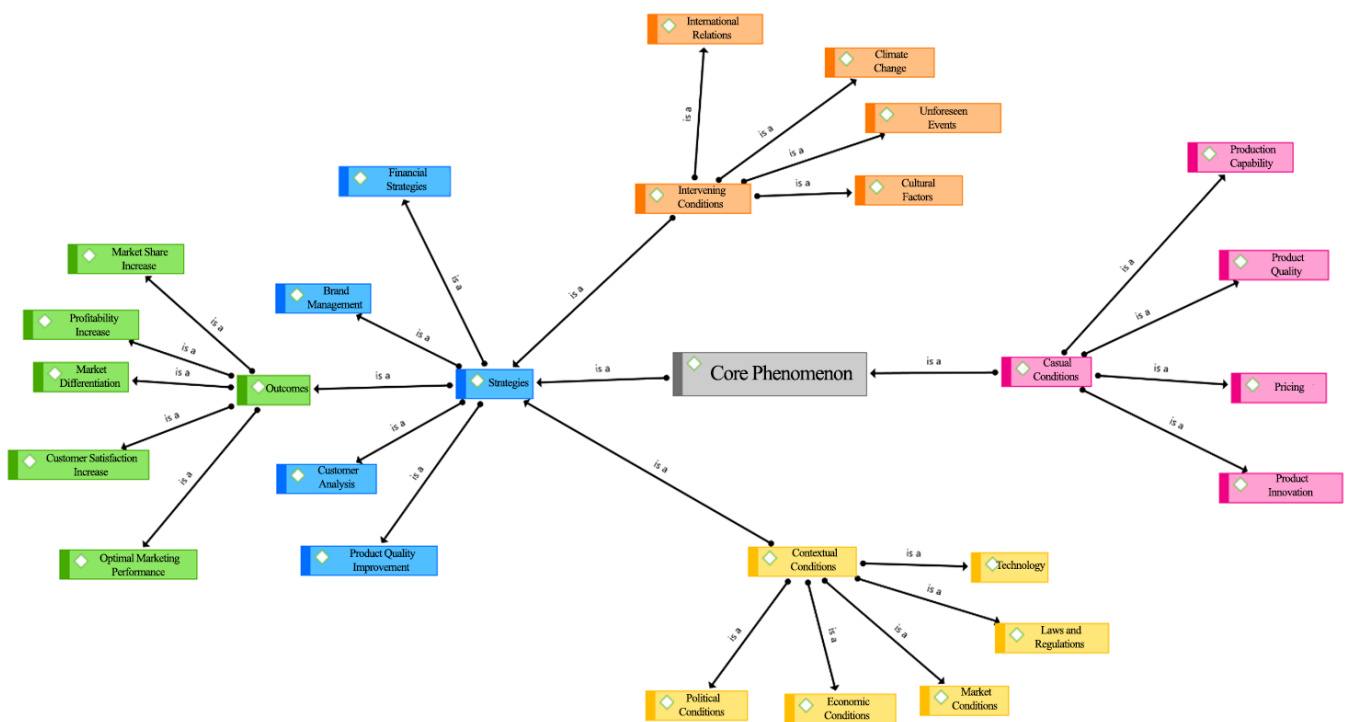
| Selective Codes | Core Codes | Initial Codes |
|-------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Causal Conditions | Product Quality | Quality aligned with customer needs, Standard concentration and viscosity, Standard chemical composition, Appropriate mechanical resistance, Environmental durability and stability, Compatibility with other materials, Compliance with international standards, Transportability and storability |
| | Pricing | Competitive pricing, Cost of raw materials, Production process costs, Storage and transportation costs, Distribution costs, Marketing and sales costs, Value-added considerations, Price aligned with target market |
| | Production Capability | Sustainable production, Specialized production expertise, Capability in maintaining production standards |
| Strategies | Product Innovation | New product offerings, Product alignment with customer needs |
| | Financial Strategies | Profitability estimation, Investment in technology, Cost management, Improving cash flow, Payment terms management, Internal and external financing, Dynamic and competitive pricing, Return on investment estimation |
| | Brand Management | Post-sales services, Intelligent advertising and marketing, Inimitable competitive advantage, Brand reputation, Enhancing business relationships |
| Outcomes | Customer Analysis | Customer Lifetime Value (CLV), Market segmentation, Purchase behavior, Identifying purchasing patterns, Customer preferences, Customer database, Customer behavior data mining |
| | Product Quality Improvement | Process enhancements, Improving quality while reducing costs, Offering innovative products, Research and development, Rigorous implementation of production standards |
| | Market Share Increase | Developing new markets, Attracting new customers, Effective marketing in the target market, Retaining current customers |
| | Customer Satisfaction Increase | Positive word-of-mouth, Customer loyalty, Satisfaction with quality and post-sales services, Developing long-term customer relationships, Establishing trust-based relationships, Customer loyalty programs |
| | Profitability Increase | Cost optimization, Using sustainable resources, Effective pricing, Profit margin increase |
| | Market Differentiation | Product innovation, Corporate social responsibility, Product diversification, Better management of market fluctuations, Strong branding, Market prominence |

| | | |
|------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| | Optimal Marketing Performance | Effective data-driven analysis, Digital marketing, Maximizing audience engagement |
| Contextual Conditions | Economic Conditions | National economic status, Inflation, Exchange rates, Regional economic status |
| | Laws and Regulations | Government regulations, Environmental regulations related to production and use of bitumen |
| | Political Conditions | Political stability, Government policies related to exports and imports |
| | Technology | Technological advances in bitumen production and use, Technological strategies in bitumen supply, Localized artificial intelligence, Internet of Things (IoT), Energy of Things (EoT) |
| Intervening Conditions | Market Conditions | Bitumen industry status, Supply and demand analysis, Competitive landscape, Current market situation |
| | International Relations | Economic sanctions, Issues in international relations, Misalignment of trade laws with other countries |
| | Cultural Factors | Cultural differences, Customer cultural preferences |
| | Climate Change | Weather changes for bitumen transportation, Temperature fluctuations, Increased rainfall and flooding |
| | Unforeseen Events | Economic crises, War, Unpredictable natural disasters |

After completing the analysis and evaluation of the various data, the final model of the research was presented as follows:

Figure 1

Grounded Theory Model for Designing Marketing and Sales Strategy in Industrial Markets



In the marketing and sales model for industrial markets based on the grounded theory model, the causal conditions include product quality, pricing, production capability, and product innovation. Product quality is of significant importance, as customers in industrial markets seek durable and high-performance products. Pricing also plays a crucial role in attracting and retaining customers and should align with the value offered. Production capability refers to the ability to produce quality products on time, which is of

particular importance. Product innovation can help a company gain a competitive advantage by offering new and up-to-date products.

The contextual conditions that influence the marketing and sales model include economic conditions, laws and regulations, political conditions, technology, and market conditions. Economic and political conditions can directly impact the demand and supply of industrial products. Laws and regulations must also be considered, as they can create

either constraints or opportunities. Technology plays a vital role in the development and improvement of products and production processes. Market conditions include competition, market demand, and consumer trends, which can impact marketing strategies.

Intervening conditions include international relations, cultural factors, climate change, and unforeseen events, which can suddenly and unpredictably affect the market. International relations can create new opportunities or threats, and cultural factors can influence customer preferences and buying behaviors. Climate change may lead to changes in the supply chain or market needs. Unforeseen events, such as economic crises or natural disasters, can also have significant impacts.

Key strategies include financial strategies, brand management, customer analysis, and product quality improvement. Financial strategies involve cost and investment management to achieve high profitability. Brand management aims to create and maintain a strong and positive image of the company and its products in the minds of customers. Customer analysis is essential for understanding customer needs and preferences and establishing effective communications with them. Product quality improvement is intended to increase customer satisfaction and strengthen competitive advantage.

Finally, the outcomes of this model include increased market share, increased customer satisfaction, increased profitability, market differentiation, and optimal marketing performance. Increasing market share means attracting new customers and retaining existing ones. Increased customer satisfaction leads to loyalty and repeat purchases. Increased profitability is achieved through effective cost management and increased sales. Market differentiation is possible through offering unique products and services. Optimal marketing performance is achieved through data analysis and improving marketing and sales processes.

4 Discussion and Conclusion

Based on the grounded theory model designed for marketing and sales strategies in industrial markets, four causal conditions (product quality, pricing, production capability, and product innovation), five contextual conditions (economic conditions, laws and regulations, political conditions, technology, and market conditions), four intervening conditions (international relations, cultural factors, climate change, and unforeseen events), four strategies (financial strategies, brand management, customer

analysis, and product quality improvement), and finally, five outcomes (increased market share, increased customer satisfaction, increased profitability, market differentiation, and optimal marketing performance) were identified.

As a result, the marketing and sales model in industrial markets is significantly influenced by various causal, contextual, and intervening conditions, strategies, and outcomes. Causal conditions such as product quality, pricing, production capability, and product innovation play a vital role in attracting and retaining customers. These factors help companies meet the needs of industrial customers by offering high-quality products at competitive prices, thereby gaining a competitive advantage.

Contextual conditions, including economic conditions, laws and regulations, political conditions, technology, and market conditions, have significant impacts on marketing and sales performance. These conditions can create various opportunities and threats for companies. For instance, new technologies can enhance production and marketing processes, offering new opportunities for innovation and product development. At the same time, laws and regulations may create new constraints or opportunities that companies need to adapt to.

Intervening conditions, such as international relations, cultural factors, climate change, and unforeseen events, can also suddenly and unpredictably affect the market. In this regard, companies must have flexible strategies and quick responses to adapt to sudden changes. Utilizing financial strategies, brand management, customer analysis, and product quality improvement can help companies perform better in the face of these complex and variable conditions. Thus, positive outcomes such as increased market share, increased customer satisfaction, increased profitability, market differentiation, and optimal marketing performance will be achieved, ultimately leading to long-term growth and success for companies in industrial markets.

The marketing and sales model in industrial markets, particularly in the bitumen industry, requires specific approaches that differ significantly from other industries. In this industry, emphasizing long-term relationships with customers, extensive networking, and strong connections with key customers is of great importance. Companies should focus on establishing strategic relationships with major customers, such as construction contractors and road-building companies, to leverage the long-term benefits of these relationships.

In bitumen marketing and sales, product quality and reliability in timely delivery are of particular importance.

Companies should focus on ensuring the quality of their products and providing adequate after-sales services so that customers can trust their products and services. Additionally, differentiation through innovation in producing products with unique features and offering customized solutions for specific customer needs can help attract and retain customers.

Finally, companies active in the bitumen industry must also pay special attention to legal and environmental aspects. Given the environmental impacts of bitumen production and use, adhering to environmental regulations and international standards can help improve brand image and increase customer trust. Furthermore, utilizing digital marketing strategies and actively participating in industry exhibitions and events can help expand the market and increase sales. To improve the marketing and sales model in industrial markets, especially in the bitumen industry, several practical suggestions can be offered:

Strengthening Relationships with Key Customers: Establish and maintain long-term relationships with major customers, including construction contractors, road-building companies, and governments. These relationships can be fostered through regular meetings, providing customized services, and offering technical support. Establishing long-term contracts and ensuring a stable supply of bitumen can help increase trust and collaboration.

Improving Product Quality and After-Sales Services: Ensure the quality of bitumen products and provide effective and efficient after-sales services. This includes offering warranties, technical consulting services, and prompt responses to customer issues and needs. Additionally, innovating in the production of products with specific features, such as high heat resistance or recyclability, can help differentiate from competitors.

Leveraging Digital Technologies: Utilize digital tools and online marketing to reach new customers and maintain connections with existing ones. Create a professional website with comprehensive information about products and services, use social media to connect with customers and provide educational and informative content, and utilize data analytics tools to better understand the market and customer behavior to improve marketing and sales.

Active Participation in Exhibitions and Industry Events: Participate in exhibitions and conferences related to the bitumen and road-building industry to introduce company products and services, network with new customers, and understand market trends and needs. Offering free samples,

brochures, and comprehensive catalogs at these events can help attract new customers.

Attention to Environmental and Sustainability Issues: Adhere to environmental standards in the production and distribution of bitumen products to improve brand image and increase customer trust. Companies should focus on using recycled raw materials, reducing pollution and energy consumption, and providing environmentally friendly solutions for the use of bitumen.

By implementing these suggestions, companies can improve their marketing and sales performance in industrial markets, especially in the bitumen industry, and increase their market share.

Authors' Contributions

All authors have contributed significantly to the research process and the development of the manuscript.

Declaration

In order to correct and improve the academic writing of our paper, we have used the language model ChatGPT.

Transparency Statement

Data are available for research purposes upon reasonable request to the corresponding author.

Acknowledgments

We would like to express our gratitude to all individuals helped us to do the project.

Declaration of Interest

The authors report no conflict of interest.

Funding

According to the authors, this article has no financial support.

Ethical Considerations

In this research, ethical standards including obtaining informed consent, ensuring privacy and confidentiality were observed.

References

- Ancillai, C., Marinelli, L., & Pascucci, F. (2022). Digital-driven business model innovation: the role of data in changing companies' value logic. In M. Ratajczak-Mrozek & P. Marszałek (Eds.), *Digitalization and firm performance*. Palgrave Macmillan. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-83360-2_4
- Bendapudi, N., & Leone, R. P. (2002). Managing business-to-business customer relationships following key contact employee turnover in a vendor firm. *Journal of Marketing*, 66(2), 83-101. <https://doi.org/10.1509/jmkg.66.2.83.18476>
- Bock, M., Wiener, M., & Saunders, C. (2023). Non-ownership business models in the manufacturing industry: Uncertainty-exploiting versus uncertainty-mitigating designs and the role of context factors. *Electronic Markets*, 33, 16. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12525-023-00630-x>
- Burka, K., & Kelly, B. (2018). *Martech intelligence report: B2B marketing automation platforms: A marketer's guide, 6th edition*. <https://martechtoday.com/new-b2b-marketing-automation-platforms-marketers-guide-updated-2018-212578>
- De Luca, L. M., Herhausen, D., Troilo, G., & Rossi, A. (2020). How and when do big data investments pay off? The role of marketing affordances and service innovation. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 1-21. <https://doi.org/10.1037/t87909-000>
- Flavián, C., Ibáñez-Sánchez, S., & Orús, C. (2019). The impact of virtual, augmented and mixed reality technologies on the customer experience. *Journal of Business Research*, 100, 547-560. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2018.10.050>
- Fürst, A., Gabrielsson, M., Gabrielsson, P., Bourke, J. G., Izadi, J., & Olya, H. G. T. (2023). The role of marketing in new ventures: How marketing activities should be organized in firms' infancy. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 51, 966-989. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2019.103984>
- Graesch, J. P., Hansel-Borner, S., & Hensler, J. (2021). Information technology and marketing: an important partnership for decades. *Industrial Management & Data Systems*, 121(1), 123-157. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IMDS-08-2020-0510>
- Haghighi Kafash, M., Dehdashti Shahrokh, Z., Khashaei, V., & Hajeri, R. (2021). Designing and explaining the model of marketing and sales strategies in the food distribution industry. *Business Management Research*, 13(25), 331-369. <https://www.sid.ir/paper/953707/en>
- Hartmann, N. N., Wieland, H., Vargo, S. L., & Ahearne, M. (2020). Advancing sales theory through a holistic view: how social structures frame selling. *Journal of Personal Selling and Sales Management*, 40(4), 221-226. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08853134.2020.1838916>
- Homburg, C., Jensen, O., & Krohmer, H. (2008). Configurations of marketing and sales: A taxonomy. *Journal of Marketing*, 72(2), 133-154. <https://doi.org/10.1509/jmkg.72.2.133>
- Hoyer, W. D., Kroschke, M., Schmitt, B., Kraume, K., & Shankar, V. (2020). Transforming the customer experience through new technologies. *Journal of Interactive Marketing*, 51, 57-71. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.intmar.2020.04.001>
- Järvinen, J. (2016). *The use of digital analytics for measuring and optimizing digital marketing performance*. Jyväskylä. <https://jyx.jyu.fi/handle/123456789/51512>
- Krishen, A. S., Dwivendi, Y. K., Bindu, N., & Kumar, K. S. (2021). A broad overview of interactive digital marketing: a bibliometric network analysis. *Journal of Business Research*, 131, 183-195. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2021.03.061>
- Lacoste, S. (2018). From selling to managing strategic customers-a competency analysis. *Journal of Personal Selling and Sales Management*, 38(1), 92-122. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08853134.2018.1426991>
- Le Bon, J., & Merunka, D. (2006). The impact of individual and managerial factors on salespeople's contribution to marketing intelligence activities. *International Journal of Research in Marketing*, 23, 395-408. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijresmar.2006.10.002>
- Ma, L., & Sun, B. (2020). Machine learning and AI in marketing-Connecting computing power to human insights. *International Journal of Research in Marketing*, 37(3), 481-504. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijresmar.2020.04.005>
- Mahlamäki, T., Storbacka, K., Pyllkkönen, S., & Ojala, M. (2020). Adoption of digital sales force automation tools in supply chain: Customers' acceptance of sales configurators. *Industrial Marketing Management*, 91, 162-173. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.indmarman.2020.08.024>
- Mero, J., Tarkiainen, A., & Tobon, J. (2020). Effectual and causal reasoning in the adoption of marketing automation. *Industrial Marketing Management*, 86, 212-222. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.indmarman.2019.12.008>
- Rackham, N., & DeVincentis, J. (1999). *Rethinking the Sales Force: Redefining Selling to Create and Capture Customer Value*. McGraw-Hill. <https://www.kcapital-us.com/neil/downloads/Summary.pdf>
- Rajagopal. (2020). Industrial Marketing Generations. In *Transgenerational Marketing*. Palgrave Macmillan. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-33926-5>
- Rand, W., & Stummer, C. (2022). Agent-based modeling of new product market diffusion: an overview of strengths and criticisms. *Annals of Operations Research*, 305, 425-447. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10479-021-03944-1>