

DISTINGUISHING SALES PROFESSIONALS FROM THEIR MARKETING COUNTERPARTS: AN EMPIRICAL INQUIRY

PATRICIA KNOWLES, Clemson University
ANUSORN SINGHAPAKDI, Old Dominion University

Sales and other marketing professionals were compared in terms of some of their demographic, socioeconomic, and psychographic characteristics. It was generally expected that sales professionals would be different from the other marketing professionals in the sample. Regarding demographic and socioeconomic characteristics, more sales than other marketing professionals were male and they were less affluent. They also had fewer years of business experience. In terms of their personal values and moral philosophies, sales professionals, despite a general consensus evidenced in many leading sales and sales management texts that they are different from other employees, are generally speaking, very similar.

INTRODUCTION

Any of a number of sales management texts note that the process of sales management involves a number of interrelated steps; namely, 1) formulation of a salesforce strategy, 2), implementation of that strategy, and 3) evaluation and control of the salesforce (e.g., Churchill, Ford and Walker 1997; Ingram 1999). While we note that formulation of a salesforce strategy is important, the present study is focused more on an issue that relates to the second and third steps in the process. Specifically, our study is an attempt to clarify some dimensions along which sales professionals may be similar to and/or different from some other employees of a firm. Thus, it may aid in recruiting, training, motivating, and evaluating salespersons. In the remainder of this paper, some issues related to recruiting, training, motivation, and evaluation will be briefly discussed followed by explication of the specific factors and propositions we investigated. We will then present the results and a discussion of those results.

Recruitment. The recruiting process for many large companies entails a number of steps (e.g., Weitz,

Castleberry and Tanner 1997). Those steps range from an initial job analysis to an analysis of the firm's salesforce and, finally, to a comparison of recruit qualifications to those required by the firm. Thus, along with completing a sales job analysis and determining necessary qualifications to do the job, many firms analyze their present salesforce in order to determine what differentiates top from low performing sales professionals. For example, top sales professionals may be different from low performers in terms of their ability to perceive and process buying cues (e.g., Knowles, Grove and Keck 1994).

While one cannot point to a generalized personality profile of an ideal salesperson, the general consensus, as indicated by current business-to-business, sales management and professional/personal selling texts (e.g., Bingham and Gomes 2000; Ingram 1999; Marks 1996; Mondy, Premeaux, and Young, 1997), is that successful sales professionals are different from other employees or can somehow be characterized. For example, Churchill, Ford and Walker (1997) note that based on the results of several surveys, sales managers tend to look for enthusiasm, good organization, ambition, persuasiveness, and good verbal skills when looking to hire new sales reps (pp. 370-371).

This is not to imply that such factors as enthusiasm and/or good verbal skills, for example, are not found in other types of employees. On the other hand, there is an implication in available texts, data and lists that sales professionals possess characteristics or qualities that make them different in some way from other employees in a firm (e.g., Anderson 1994; Ingram 1999; Weitz, Castleberry and Tanner 1997).

In addition to knowing what differentiates top from low sales performers, it may also help sales managers to know what distinguishes sales professionals from other types of employees. For example, because sales professionals are sometimes recruited from the ranks of already employed marketing professionals, it would be useful to know if there are characteristics that distinguish sales professionals from those other marketers. If there are differentiating characteristics, one could "weed out" inappropriate in-house candidates for sales jobs up-front and save costs involved in further recruitment and selection activities directed toward those individuals. Recently, a line of research has developed that has investigated ethical and other differences between sales professionals and other employees. For example, a survey by Dubinsky and Gwin (1981) of salespeople and purchasing personnel from trade associations in a Midwestern region revealed that purchasers tend to be more sensitive to ethically questionable situations in an industrial marketing setting than salespeople. Ten years later, Singhapakdi and Vitell (1992) reported that salespeople tend to place more importance on their personal interests than other marketers. However, they also found that salespeople do not differ from other marketers on other ethical or moral aspects (i.e., with respect to their Machiavellianism, deontological norms, and ethical perceptions).

Training. Another reason why it would be beneficial to know what distinguishes sales from other employees is that, once sales recruits are hired, the company could better develop its sales training program to meet their specific needs. Sales training is not only expensive but it also takes the time of new hires, sales managers, and/or experienced salespeople who help in training, away from the job of selling. Specifically, across a broad range of consumer and

industrial goods and service industries, firms spend more than \$6000 over an average of four months training each sales rep (Heide 1995). High-tech firms and/or firms with broad product lines can spend over \$100,000 and more than a year training new sales reps (Churchill, Ford and Walker 1997, Farber 1995). Knowledge of important factors identifying salespersons may actually increase the effectiveness as well as the efficiency of the sales training process.

Motivation. There are also data available that show that, in general, salespeople may be differently motivated than other employees. For example, in several studies, salespeople consistently rank pay as their primary motivator (e.g., Chonko, Tanner and Weeks 1992; Huber, Seybolt, and Venemon 1992). Other types of employees may find promotional opportunities, recognition or some other reward to be more preferred than pay (e.g., Lawler 1971). More detailed knowledge of salespeople may allow sales managers to better manage their employees by providing a tailored motivational mix to their employees.

Evaluation. Finally, more knowledge about sales professionals, in general, would likely increase the accuracy of evaluations of those salespeople. Evaluation of salesperson performance can be a very tricky and difficult task for even the best sales managers and may consist of a combination of evaluations of behavior, performance, and effectiveness. Clearly, salesperson behaviors, traits, and other characteristics can impact these evaluations. Knowledge of some behaviors, traits, and characteristics of salespersons is likely to lead to more valid and reliable evaluations.

Summary. Increased knowledge, then, of salespersons, may impact their recruitment, training, motivation, and evaluation among other things. Further, the importance of an increase in knowledge exists whether salespeople are found to be different from or similar to other employees of a firm. For example, if the salesforce is found not to be different from other marketing professionals, that could lead to more efficient development of recruitment, selection, training, and/or motivational

activities for all marketing professionals for that firm. Further, evaluation procedures could be similar across those marketing professionals.

THE STUDY

The present study extends one aspect of the research of Singhapakdi and Vitell (1992). It addresses, specifically, some demographic and socioeconomic characteristics of sales and other marketing professionals as well as two possible psychographic dimensions along which sales professionals may differ from other marketers, namely, personal values and moral philosophies.

Demographic and Socioeconomic Characteristics

According to Ford et al. (1988), among likely variables that could be used as selection criteria for new sales professionals are demographic and physical characteristics (e.g., age, gender, physical appearance), background and experience (e.g., level of educational attainment, sales work experience), and current status and lifestyle variables (e.g., marital/family status, activities/ lifestyle). In an initial exploratory study, we opted to compare sales to other marketing professionals according to a number of such demographic and socioeconomic characteristics, namely, their gender, age, level of education, income and years of business experience. Given that profiles are available for "average" or "ideal" sales professionals (e.g., Anderson 1994; Churchill, Ford and Walker 1997; Ingram 1999; Weitz, Castleberry and Tanner 1997), our first proposition was:

P₁: Sales professionals are different from other marketing professionals in terms of a number of demographic and socioeconomic attributes.

Psychographic Characteristics

Another basis upon which to differentiate employees is according to their psychographic characteristics. One could look for differences in psychographic variables such as personality factors, life-style, values, attitudes, level of motivation and the like. We opted to examine possible differences between

sales and other marketing professionals in terms of two such characteristics, namely, personal values and moral philosophies.

Personal Values. Although researchers have generally found little variance explained by personality characteristics such as those described by traditional personality theories (e.g., dispositional, psychodynamic, learning, and phenomenological theories), that lack of variance is, perhaps, a result of the fact that, even in psychology, there is no widely accepted definition of personality. That does not mean, however, that specific personality characteristics or personal values such as a need for excitement or security may not differentiate among various populations of employees. Although sales managers when selecting new sales professionals consider some characteristics to be important (e.g., enthusiasm), other characteristics such as high sociability are not considered to be important (Churchill, Ford, and Walker 1997). According to Ford et al. (1988) psychological traits and abilities that could be measured and used include aptitude (e.g., intelligence, sales aptitude), personality (e.g., responsibility, sociability), and specific skills (e.g., sales presentation and general management skills). Specifically, sales professionals could differ from other marketing professionals according to their need for excitement, their relationships with others, and their need for security among other variables. For example, Keck, Leigh and Lollar (1995) found that among critical success factors for successful captive, multi-line insurance agency salespeople, were extrinsic rewards and motivation to achieve peer recognition. These success factors would likely result in differences between salesforce members and other marketing professionals in terms of their personal relationships with others. Further, it may be that sales and other marketing professionals would be different in the extent to which they possess these factors.

Thus, in addition to some demographic and socioeconomic variables, we measured personal values of our subjects. Given the consensus in the literature concerning differences between sales

professionals and other employees of a firm, our second proposition was:

- P₂: Sales professionals are different from other marketing professionals in terms of their personal values.

Moral Philosophies. When recruiting salesforce members, ethics or moral philosophy is an important aspect to consider as it is another dimension along which sales professionals and other marketers may differ. Selection of ethical recruits is likely to make the sales training process easier in that training could simply reify already existing ethical beliefs of those trainees rather than taking considerable time and effort to instill ethical values into relatively unethical trainees. Having ethical salespeople can benefit the company along a number of fronts. Research has shown that buyers are more likely to want to do business with companies that are perceived to be ethical (Trawick et al. 1991) and there are many anecdotes that show that customers can easily become angered by unethical practices on the part of salespeople (e.g., Bernstein 1990; Romano 1994). Thus, ethical behavior on the part of salespeople can help a firm achieve long-term profitability goals since it may result in increased customer loyalty. It can keep regulators at bay since it is unlikely that society would feel a need to regulate a practice (sales) that does not take advantage of consumers and that is fair to competitors. Finally, it may be beneficial to U.S. society as a whole since, if salespeople in the U.S. are perceived as being ethical, it may strengthen the general perception of our current economic structure with positive results for the U.S. economy.

Although ethics or moral philosophy is an important aspect to consider in selecting salespeople a 1983 Gallup Poll showed that the public generally believed insurance and automobile salespeople to be at the bottom of a list of marketing occupations when it came to honesty and ethical standards (Laczniak and Murphy 1985, p. 99). In another study, Robertson and Anderson (1990) found that of 443 industrial salespeople, 12 percent were termed "sinners" while 38 percent were termed "saints." Sinners were more apt to endorse less ethical behaviors while saints were more likely to endorse more ethical behaviors.

Fifty percent, then were somewhere in between with a total of about 62 percent endorsing less than saint-like behavior.

Also related to ethical behavior is the fact that the sales job entails some unique pressures relative to other jobs. Performance of sales professionals is highly visible with members of a salesforce often being compared to each other on a routine basis. Constant comparison with others may lead sales professionals to behave in ways to ensure favorable ratings in relation to the group and this pressure to perform well could lead to unethical behavior. They may be tempted to behave in those ways because they generally experience relatively less direct supervision compared to other firm employees. That relative lack of supervision may open the door to unethical behavior on the part of some members of the salesforce (Wotruba 1990). Finally, there is a preponderance of commission pay plans (both combination plans and straight commission plans) in effect in most firms (DeVincentis and Rackham 1998), perhaps leading some sales professionals to engage in unethical behavior in order to boost their commissions. Given these unique aspects of the sales job, one might expect to find that sales professionals, as a group, behave less ethically and are less moral than others.

One way to measure morality is to measure a person's perception of idealism and relativism. As Forsyth (1980) and Schlenker and Forsyth (1977) demonstrated, those two dimensions of moral philosophies can describe moral judgments most parsimoniously. Generally, the more idealistic and less relativistic one is, the more one favors "moral absolutes" and relies on universal moral rules. In other words, one would be less likely to "bend the rules" in one's own favor over others and, thus, one could be considered more moral.

Several researchers have employed Forsyth's taxonomy to empirically measure idealism and relativism of salespersons (e.g., Vitell, Rallapalli and Singhapakdi, 1993; Tansey et al. 1994; Singhapakdi et al. 1995). Vitell, Rallapalli and Singhapakdi (1993) found that marketers who were more idealistic and less relativistic tended to exhibit

higher honesty and integrity than marketers who were less idealistic and more relativistic. Tansey et al. (1994) found that life insurance agents with different moral philosophies differed in their moral judgments about some ethically-questionable actions. For example, similar to findings of Vitell, Rallapalli and Singhapakdi (1993), agents who were more idealistic and less relativistic judged a deceitful prospecting tactic as more unethical than did agents who were less idealistic and more relativistic. Finally, Singhapakdi et al. (1995) consistently found that idealism and relativism are significant indicators of a marketer's perceptions regarding the importance of ethics and social responsibility to organizational effectiveness. Similar to the other two studies, they also reported that marketers who were more idealistic and less relativistic tended to perceive ethics and social responsibility as more important than those marketers who were less idealistic and more relativistic. Therefore, recruiters should perhaps be searching for those candidates who are more idealistic and less relativistic than others.

Thus, given public perception of sales professionals, the fact that over 60 percent of sales professionals cannot be considered "saints," and the unique pressures on sales professionals, our third proposition was:

- P₃: Sales professionals are less idealistic and more relativistic than other marketing professionals.

METHOD

Sample

Data were collected via a self-administered questionnaire. Similar to other studies (e.g., Singhapakdi and Vitell 1993a, 1993b), an American Marketing Association (AMA) mailing list of U.S. practitioner members with primary areas of interest in marketing management and sales management was selected as the sampling frame. Two thousand target respondents were sampled from a list of 14,739 members. Of the 1997 delivered questionnaires, 492 persons responded for a response rate of 24.6 percent. Of the 492 completed questionnaires, only 482 were usable which resulted in an actual response

rate of 24.1 percent. That response rate is comparable to those of other studies that have also used AMA mailing lists as sampling frames (e.g., Hunt and Chonko 1984; Hunt, Chonko and Wilcox 1984; Singhapakdi and Vitell 1990, 1991).

Of the 482 subjects, 63 (13.1 percent) indicated they were sales professionals (Sales Executive, Sales/Account Manager) with the remainder identifying themselves as other marketing professionals, e.g., Marketing VP/Marketing Manager, Head of Marketing Research, etc. These numbers are consistent with other samples drawn from the AMA mailing list (e.g., Singhapakdi and Vitell 1992) and with what might be expected when one considers that marketing professionals include various other positions beyond selling, e.g., product/brand management, distribution/ logistics, advertising, and public relations.

Instruments

The demographic and socioeconomic characteristics measured were gender, age, education, income, and business experience. As can be seen in Table 1, slightly more than half (53.5 percent) of our total sample was male. More than half (69.7 percent) were younger than 40 years of age and 94.2 percent had at least a Bachelor's degree. A majority (56.9 percent) had incomes over \$40,000 and there was almost no difference in percentages of respondents who reported more than and less than 10 years business experience overall.

Personal values of sales and other marketing professionals were measured via the nine-item "List of Values" scale (LOV) developed by Kahle (1983). Although Rokeach's (1973) conceptualization of values has been the standard in values research, it is not without its detractors. For example, Homer and Kahle (1988, p. 639) noted that among criticisms of Rokeach's scale are 1) information loss due to rank orderings, 2) the impossibility of ties when using the scale, 3) the difficulty involved in the ranking task, and 4) the questionable relevance of all the values to daily life. Therefore, we used the LOV scale as it was developed as an alternative to Rokeach's method. Further, it is more parsimonious than

Rokeach's scale. More importantly, the results of empirical tests of the LOV scale have generally been favorable (e.g., Beatty et al. 1985; Swenson and Herche 1994). The instructions developed by Weeks, Chonko, and Kahle (1989) for the LOV scale were adopted for this study since a goal of ours was to obtain results in the form of ratio characteristics. The "List of Values" along with the instructions used is given in Appendix A.

Table 1
Profile of Sample

Factors	Overall Percentage	Sales Professional Percentage	Other Marketing Professional's Percentage
Gender			
Male	53.3	60.3	46.3
Female	46.7	39.7	53.7
Age*			
Under 30	34.0	41.3	26.6
30-39	35.7	28.6	42.8
40-49	21.7	22.2	21.1
50-59	6.8	7.9	5.7
60 and over	1.9	0.0	3.8
Education*			
Some college	5.8	6.3	5.3
Bachelor's degree	34.2	39.7	28.7
Graduate study	60.0	54.0	66.0
Income			
Under \$30,000	23.0	29.0	16.9
\$30,000-39,000	20.4	22.6	18.1
\$40,000-49,000	18.8	17.7	19.8
\$50,000-59,000	11.5	9.7	13.2
\$60,000-69,000	8.5	6.5	10.5
\$70,000-79,000	4.6	3.2	5.9
\$80,000-89,000	2.3	1.6	2.9
\$90,000 and over	11.2	9.7	12.7
Years of Business Experience*			
Less than 5 years	23.2	30.2	16.1
5-9 years	27.3	28.6	25.9
10-14 years	20.8	14.3	27.3
14 or more years	28.9	27.0	30.7

*These variables were measured at the continuous level and have been categorized here.

The Ethics Position Questionnaire (EPQ) developed by Forsyth (1980) was used to measure personal moral philosophies (see Appendix B). The EPQ is used to measure idealism and relativism and consists of two scales of ten items each. A high score on the idealism scale indicates that a respondent favors "moral absolutes" when making moral judgments. Likewise, a high score on the relativism scale indicates that a respondent relies less on universal moral rules and is more "relativistic" when it comes to making moral judgments. Given that both the

idealism and relativism scales are composite in nature, reliability assessments were carried out. Both scales appear to be reliable, with coefficient alpha of 0.85 for the idealism scale and 0.79 for the relativism scale.

Factor analysis of the EPQ scales resulted in a 2-factor solution. Specifically, the first ten items "loaded" together to form the idealism scale and the next ten items "loaded" together to form the relativism scale, findings consistent with those of Forsyth (1980).

RESULTS

Demographic and Socioeconomic Characteristics

In addition to the profile of the overall sample, Table 1 further shows the profile of the sales professionals versus other marketing professionals. Most of the sales professionals (60.3 percent) were male (a finding consistent with other profiles of sales professionals, see Bingham and Gomes 2000 who report that as of the year 2000 about 40 percent of the non-retail sales force is female) whereas slightly more than half (53.7 percent) of the other marketing professionals were female. Chi-square analysis revealed that males were more prevalent among sales professionals than among other sorts of marketers, $X^2=4.31$, $df=1$, $p<.04$.

Table 2
Means ($\pm$ SD) for Sales and Other Marketing Professionals for Age, Education, Income and Business Experience Factors

Factors	Sales Professionals	Other Marketing Professionals	F	p value
Age (years)	34.0 (± 9.1)	36.1 (± 9.8)	2.56	0.11
Education (years)	17.2 (± 2.0)	17.6 (± 1.9)	1.86	0.17
Income (categ.; 1-8)	3.1 (± 2.2)	3.7 (± 2.2)	4.86	0.03
Business experience (years)	10.2 (± 8.4)	12.3 (± 8.9)	3.20	0.07

The sales professionals in our sample were younger than the other marketing professionals with over 40 percent being less than 30 years of age. Indeed, as shown in Table 2, sales professionals were, on average, about two years younger than other

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marketers ($ms = 34.0 \pm 9.1$ vs. 36.1 ± 9.8 years, sales and other marketers, respectively). Note, however, about 70 percent of both groups were less than 40 years of age, suggesting that sales professionals may get promoted into other marketing positions in their 30s.

Education for the two groups was comparable. Specifically, sales professionals indicated 17.2 ± 2.0 years of education compared to 17.6 ± 1.9 for other marketers (see Table 2).

Whereas a slight majority (51.6 percent) of the sales professionals made less than \$40,000 per year, a majority (65 percent) of the other marketing professionals reported incomes greater than \$40,000. As seen in Table 2, sales professionals indicated an income level that resulted in a mean low in the third category - \$40,000-49,000 - (3.1 ± 2.2) while other marketers were nearer to the fourth category - \$50,000-59,000 - (3.7 ± 2.2).

Finally, a majority (58.8 percent) of sales professionals reported less than 10 years of business experience while a majority of the other marketing professionals reported greater than 10 years business experience. This fact is consistent with the younger age of our sales professionals. As seen in Table 2, these results translated into a mean of 10.2 ± 8.4 years of business experience for sales professionals compared to a mean of 12.3 ± 8.9 years for other marketers.

Analysis of variance performed on these data revealed significant differences between sales and other marketing professionals only in terms of income, [$F(1,465)=4.86, p<.03$]. Thus, while there were no significant differences between sales and other marketing professionals in terms of age, education, or years of business experience, salespeople tended to make less money per year than other marketing professionals.

Psychographic Characteristics

Personal Values. As shown in Table 3, the personal value items, in order of importance for the sample as a whole, were self-respect, a sense of

accomplishment, self-fulfillment, warm relationships with others, being well-respected, fun and enjoyment in life, security, a sense of belonging, and, finally, excitement. When comparing sales professionals to other marketing professionals, sales professionals rated warm relationships with others as less important to them (7th out of the 9 values) than did other marketing professionals (4th out of 9). A Spearman's rank correlation, however, revealed that the groups were very similar in terms of their ranking of personal values, $rs = .90$

An analysis of variance (ANOVA) performed on the LOV data revealed only one significant difference between sales and other marketing professionals. More sales professionals indicated that "excitement" was important to them compared to other marketing professionals, $F(1, 461) = 4.33, p < .04$.

Concerning the personal moral philosophies of the sample, the idealism mean for all subjects indicates they lean toward moral absolutes (idealism) when making moral judgments and they seem fairly neutral when it comes to relying on universal moral rules (relativism). There were no marked differences between sales and other marketing professionals for either idealism or relativism, and, in fact, an ANOVA performed on the personal moral philosophies data revealed no significant differences between sales and other marketing professionals.

CONCLUSIONS AND LIMITATIONS

In this exploratory study, we examined data as they related to three propositions. Our first proposition was that sales professionals would be different from other marketing professionals in terms of their demographic and socioeconomic attributes. That hypothesis was somewhat supported by our data since our sales professionals were significantly different from other marketers in terms of their gender and income level. Further, the data for years of business experience approached significance with sales professionals indicating about two years less business experience than other marketers ($p < .07$, see Table 2).

Table 3
Measures of Personal Values and Moral Philosophies

Variables	Overall Mean ($\pm$ SD)	Sales Professionals	Other Marketing Professionals Means	F*	p value
Personal Values#					
Self-respect:	93.9 ($\pm$ 9.7)	95.8 ($\pm$ 5.6)	93.8 ($\pm$ 10.1)	2.42	0.12
A sense of accomplishment:	91.3 ($\pm$ 10.3)	93.2 ($\pm$ 8.3)	90.8 ($\pm$ 10.5)	2.86	0.09
Self-fulfillment:	90.7 ($\pm$ 12.5)	92.0 ($\pm$ 9.4)	90.5 ($\pm$ 12.9)	0.83	0.37
Warm relationship with others:	87.0 ($\pm$ 16.1)	84.8 ($\pm$ 21.5)	87.1 ($\pm$ 15.1)	1.06	0.30
Being well-respected:	85.5 ($\pm$ 14.0)	87.4 ($\pm$ 14.6)	85.4 ($\pm$ 13.9)	1.08	0.03
Fun and enjoyment in life:	84.2 ($\pm$ 15.3)	85.2 ($\pm$ 15.50)	84.0 ($\pm$ 15.1)	0.34	0.56
Security:	80.8 ($\pm$ 17.4)	84.9 ($\pm$ 15.0)	80.4 ($\pm$ 17.5)	3.56	0.06
Sense of belonging:	76.3 ($\pm$ 18.7)	77.6 ($\pm$ 21.4)	76.2 ($\pm$ 18.3)	0.28	0.60
Excitement:	71.5 ($\pm$ 20.1)	76.5 ($\pm$ 19.2)	70.7 ($\pm$ 20.2)	4.33	0.04
Moral Philosophies##					
Idealism:	61.4 ($\pm$ 14.7)	61.8 ($\pm$ 14.4)	61.3 ($\pm$ 14.8)	0.08	0.78
Relativism:	46.6 ($\pm$ 14.0)	45.4 ($\pm$ 14.6)	46.7 ($\pm$ 13.9)	0.45	0.50

= Scores could range from 0 - 100

= Scores could range from 10 - 90

* = Fs were performed on the sales professionals versus other marketing professional data.

In our sample, 60 percent of the sales professionals were male. In addition, sales professionals tended to make less money and to have fewer years of experience in business than other marketers. These findings are also consistent with Anderson's profile in that the average length of service for salespeople in his profile was 7.3 years. In our study, the majority of our respondents had less than 10 years experience with a mean of 10.2 years. It is likely that sales professionals make less money and have fewer years of experience than other marketers because, for many firms, sales is an entry level position into marketing and other positions.

Given that sales professionals are somewhat different from other marketing professionals in some demographic and socioeconomic variables, managers may consider altering their behavior toward sales professionals relative to that shown toward other marketing professionals. For example, since sales professionals tend to have less business experience than do other marketers, they may require more direction or more directive leadership from sales managers. Or, since they make less money than do other marketers, they may need or want financial counseling as part of their benefit package with a firm.

Proposition 2 was that sales professionals would be different from other marketers, in terms of their personal values. That proposition was not generally supported. As summarized in Table 3, of nine "values" only one, excitement, reached significance at our strict p-value of 0.05. Two others, "security" and "sense of accomplishment," were significant at the less strict p-value of 0.10. Thus, although there were some differences between sales and other marketing professionals in terms of strength and ranking of personal values, only the need for excitement clearly differentiated the two groups. Perhaps not surprisingly, excitement was rated as more important to sales professionals than it was for other marketing professionals. Therefore, sales managers may need to attend to this factor in their dealings with salespeople since it may be that a lack of "excitement" in the job may lead to problems in the workforce such as higher turnover or lower morale. Among ways to build excitement into the sales position include sponsoring sales promotions aimed at salespeople such as sales contests, bonuses and the like.

Sales managers may also wish to address issues related to the needs for security and a sense of accomplishment in their salesforce since our sales professionals tended to rate security and a sense of accomplishment as more important to them than did

other marketers. As for security, it may be that sales professionals experience more stress in their jobs leading to more of a sense of insecurity than other marketers. As a result, they may come to rate security as being more important to them. In addition, sales professionals may be more driven by a sense of accomplishment than other marketers. This may be because of the nature of sales jobs mentioned earlier, e.g., performance of sales professionals is highly visible with members of a salesforce often being compared to each other on a routine basis. Given the constant comparison, sales professionals might be more driven than other marketers by a sense of accomplishment.

Finally, Proposition 3 was that sales professionals would be less moral than other marketing professionals. That proposition was not supported by our data. Sales professionals and other marketing professionals demonstrated nearly identical scores for both idealism and relativism. Thus, it may be that sales managers are likely to have neither a more difficult nor an easier time than other managers when it comes to managing their workforce when it comes to moral behavior.

Although sales professionals were not less moral than other marketing professionals, neither were they more moral. This finding may be considered to be somewhat alarming. As pointed out by Wotruba (1990), because salespeople often work in isolation and there may be more pressures for them to perform (i.e., due to the nature of sales performance evaluations), they may have more opportunity and more pressure than other marketers to engage in unethical behavior. Accordingly, it is crucial that sales professionals have high moral characters in order to resist the myriad of temptations they are likely to face in their daily lives. A sales manager may feel more comfortable with a salesforce demonstrating idealism scores nearer to 90 and relativism scores nearer to 10 on the respective scales. As can be seen in Table 3, however, similar to other marketers, our sales professionals demonstrated a mean idealism score of 61.8 and a mean relativism score of 45.4, both near the midpoints of those scales.

There are several limitations in our study that should be mentioned. First, our sample was derived via an American Marketing Association (AMA) mailing list. Although AMA is the largest marketing organization in the U.S., not every marketer belongs to AMA. Therefore, it may be that our marketers are somehow different from other marketers in the U.S. Answering that question was beyond the scope of this exploratory study and remains to be answered.

Second, in our study, we measured only marketing professionals. For someone concerned with the wider variety of employees in a firm, our results may or may not be of value.

Third, our sales professionals consisted of both sales executives and salespersons. One might argue that there is likely to be a difference in moral behavior at the different levels of sales positions, e.g., that sales reps would show less (or more) moral behavior than sales managers. Thus, we categorized our sales professionals into sales executives vs. salespeople/account managers (salespeople) for each measure and analyzed those data. T-tests run on the data, however, revealed no differences between the two groups when it came to any of our measures. Similarly, Chonko and Burnett (1983) found no significant differences among salespersons, sales managers, and sales support personnel when it came to the perceived importance of ethical situations.

MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

In sum, while we did find some differences between sales professionals and other marketers in our study, there were many similarities between the two groups. Therefore, upper management would do well to avoid assuming that sales professionals are very different from other marketing professionals.

The differences between the two groups, however, may lead upper level managers to look for and address some unique aspects of their own organizations. For example, a CEO may examine her/his own sales organization and decide to diversify it in terms of gender and, perhaps, race. A diverse sales organization may allow a firm a

competitive advantage over other traditionally male sales organizations in that it may allow a firm to better meet the needs or wants of its customers. In addition, whereas other upper level managers in a firm may choose a more democratic leadership style, managers of sales professionals may choose to adopt a more directive style, at least with the younger and/or less experienced sales professionals. In addition, benefit packages may be tailored to the unique needs of the sales professionals when compared to other marketing professionals within a firm. For example, since the salesforce may be "poorer" than other marketing professionals in a firm, they may need or want benefit packages that take into account that circumstance. Further, upper management may find it useful to collect some information about their own sales professionals in order to better address their needs, e.g., for excitement and/or for security. Finally, they may wish to assess the ethical/moral nature of the sales professionals and take heed of our findings that, at present, marketing professionals tend, as a group, to be somewhat amoral (neither moral nor immoral) in character. If a firm wishes to counteract possible negative perceptions of consumers concerning its ethical behavior, upper management may wish to recruit potential employees who are more moral rather than simply amoral.

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APPENDIX A

List of Values (LOV)

Instruction: Here is a list of things people look for or want out of life. For each of the following select the one that is most important in your life. It is possible that you may have two things that are the most important. Write the value of 100 to the right of the item or items. Next, one at a time, compare the remaining items to the most important one(s) and write in a value less than 100. This will reflect the item's importance to you compared to the most important one(s).

Excitement:	_____
Warm relationships with others:	_____
Being well respected:	_____
Security:	_____
Sense of belonging:	_____
Fun and enjoyment in life:	_____
Self-fulfillment:	_____
A sense of accomplishment:	_____
Self-respect:	_____

Source: Kahle (1983)

APPENDIX B

Ethical Ideologies*

- 1) A person should make certain that their actions never intentionally harm another even to a small degree.
- 2) Risks to another should never be tolerated, irrespective of how small the risks might be.
- 3) The existence of potential harm to others is always wrong, irrespective of the benefits to be gained.
- 4) One should never psychologically or physically harm another person.
- 5) One should not perform an action which might in any way threaten the dignity and welfare of another individual.
- 6) If an action could harm an innocent other, then it should not be done.
- 7) Deciding whether or not to perform an act by balancing the positive consequences of the act against the negative consequences of the act is immoral.
- 8) The dignity and welfare of people should be the most important concern in any society.
- 9) It is never necessary to sacrifice the welfare of others.
- 10) Moral actions are those which closely match ideals of the most "perfect" action.
- 11) There are no ethical principles that are so important that they should be a part of any code of ethics.
- 12) What is ethical varies from one situation and society to another.
- 13) Moral standards should be seen as being individualistic; what one person considers to be moral may be judged to be immoral by another person.
- 14) Different types of moralities cannot be compared as to "rightness."
- 15) Questions of what is ethical for everyone can never be resolved since what is moral or immoral is up to the individual.
- 16) Moral standards are simply personal rules which indicate how a person should behave, and are not to be applied in making judgments of others.

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- 17) Ethical considerations in interpersonal relations are so complex that individuals should be allowed to formulate their own individual codes.
- 18) Rigidly codifying an ethical position that prevents certain types of actions could stand in the way of better human relations and adjustment.
- 19) No rule concerning lying can be formulated; whether a lie is permissible or not permissible totally depends upon the situation.
- 20) Whether a lie is judged to be moral or immoral depends upon the circumstances surrounding the action.

*Items 1 through 10 are idealism items. Items 11 through 20 are relativism items.

Source: Forsyth (1980)