



APPLIES TO ACADEMIC YEAR 2013/2014

## GRA 6441 Sales and Sales Force Management

### Programme

Master of Science in Strategic Marketing Management

### Responsible for the course

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### Department

Department of Marketing

### Term

According to study plan

### ECTS Credits

6

### Language of instruction

English

### Introduction

Selling is an imperative within all private companies. There is no other single factor in the company that is of higher importance than sales. The "top line" of the company is the "navel string" from which every person and every function in the company is fed. Consequently, sales and sales management have the scrutinizing attention of owners, managers, employees and customers, to build the values promised and get paid for it. High expectations on the sales function and its ability to fulfil company goals whatever happens in the market place and internally.

This course build on the reality of sales being the focus is concerned specifically with the management of business-to-business sales, the management of the sales force and its activities to achieve results.

Accordingly, the desired result is to develop individuals who can take responsibility for their own customer portfolio, influence to sell, build relations, and through a solid understanding of how effective sales are structured, manage a sales organisation and organise one self and others in the endeavour to reach company goals.

Thriving under ever changing market conditions, the sales force must exploit opportunities and constantly rethinking their selling concept. Changes in customer needs, and the resulting recasting of the sales role and sales practices creates a current shift in emphasis of what to focus. Getting close to the best customers and stay there is a "must" in modern sales organisations. The seller needs to be personal accountable for the desired result of the customer, by understanding the customer's business and thereby building relevant customer values. It's necessary to solve problems and still be creative in an international market place where the digital buy is just a "mouse click" away.

It is imperative to the management of the sales force to create a customer-driven culture, recruiting and selecting the right sales talents and train the sales force for the right set of skills. Helped by still more integrated CRM-systems the formal sales processes can be analysed as never before for continuous sales process development and CRM-analysis is a part of the course. The role of IT in sales support and communication is enhanced to ensure knowledge of the customer relationship management dialogue so fundamental when building new customer values.

### Learning outcome

Sales representatives and sales managers must face the changes the market is forcing upon them. These large and small variations from former planning and previous behaviour, influences sales management actions and the management of sales, in the way the selling is planned and organized, on the recruiting, training, motivation and reward of the individual sales person. Consequentially the superior learning goal of every sales person and every sales manager is to fathom recurring changes and take the right strategic and practical consequences.

### Acquired Knowledge

During the course students should:

- Know how to create targeted results, conduct personal selling and develop the sales function within the company, do sales planning in practice, recruit and lead a sales staff.
- Understand what it means, in practice, to sell professionally and how to acquire skills that enable one to act as the seller by profession.
- Get an added expertise that enables to establish and develop customer relationships as well as motivate and plan.

### Acquired Skills

After completing the course, students will:

- Be able to contact potential customers and establish a sales process.
- Be able to prepare a sales plan that meets the management of the sales, schedule activity targets and carry out planning of the customer relationship over time.
- Be able to prepare a sales plan and learn about the skills needed to work the plan.

- Be able to conduct meetings with industrial sales (B2B) clients.

### **Reflection**

- During the course, the student will understand how indispensable the seller is for the company, and what role an active builder of corporate reputation mean to new and existing customers.
  - Through professionalization of the participants a critical and constructive attitude to the concept of sales will be established.
- A sound understanding of the ethical side of the personal selling and management of sales staff will be developed

### **Prerequisites**

A Bachelor's degree, qualifying for admission to the MSc programme.

### **Compulsory reading**

#### **Books:**

Spiro, Rosann L., Gregory A. Rich, William J. Stanton. 2008. Management of a sales force. 12th ed. McGraw-Hill/Irwin

#### **Collection of articles:**

A collection of research articles will be made available at the start of the course. These are selected articles from journals on the following topics: Operational selling, ethics, post-heroic management, emotional intelligence, value creation, motivation, compensation, control, sales force training, CRM, CRM-systems, communication and stress

#### **Other:**

During the course there may be hand-outs and other material on additional topics relevant for the course and the examination.

### **Recommended reading**

#### **Books:**

Buchanan, David A. and Andrzej A. Huczynski. 2010. Organizational behaviour.. 7th ed. Financial Times/Prentice Hall

O'Reilly, Charles A., Jeffrey Pfeffer. 2000. Hidden value : how great companies achieve extraordinary results with ordinary people. Harvard Business School Press. 320 pages

### **Course outline**

The structure of the course is similar to the structure of the textbook and research articles are connected to the topics of the course.

#### **Key topics:**

1. Introduction to sales and sales management in the 21<sup>st</sup> century
2. Organising, staffing and training a sales force
3. Sales operation (1)
4. Sales operation (2)
5. Sales planning
6. Leadership, managers, teams and bosses
7. CRM, CRM-systems and CRM analytics
8. Sales force loyalty, control and motivation
9. Sales force compensation
10. Ethics
11. Evaluating sales management and the sales force

### **Computer-based tools**

- The student will be introduced to a typical CRM-system
- It's learning. The use of the Internet and use of personal productivity and communications tools are seen as integral parts of this course.

### **Learning process and workload**

A course of 6 ECTS credits corresponds to a workload of 160-180 hours.

Please note that while attendance is not compulsory. It is the student's own responsibility to obtain any information provided in class that is not included on the course homepage/It's learning or text book.

The course is structured as a combination of lectures, discussions, in-class activities, and compulsory student presentations. It requires a substantial amount of preparation by the students and active involvement during class.

A number of guest lecturers from sales departments will present their views on the key topics mentioned in point 12 above.

The class will be organized around discussing selected topics illustrated by theory and practical cases. The students are expected to be well prepared and highly involved in the discussions.

Students will also be assigned three cases during the course. Groups of 2-3 students hand in a write-up for each case. The

case write-ups are handed in through it's learning one week before the case is scheduled to be discussed in class. Other cases might also be utilized, but without write-ups in advance.

### **Examination**

- 1) A 3 hour written exam (individual) accounting for 40% of the final grade.
- (2) An termpaper over a chosen topic from the course (group work, maximum three students in a group) accounting for 40% of the final grade.
- (3) Class participation 20%.

Specific information regarding student evaluation beyond the information given in the course description will be provided in class. This information may be relevant for requirements for term papers or other hand-ins, and/or where class participation can be one of several elements of the overall evaluation.

This is a course with continuous assessment (several exam elements) and one final exam code. Each exam element will be graded using points on a scale (e.g. 0-100). The elements will be weighted together according to the information in the course description in order to calculate the final letter grade for the course. You will find detailed information about the point system and the cut off points with reference to the letter grades on the course site in It's learning.

Specific information regarding student evaluation beyond the information given in the course description will be provided in class. This information may be relevant for requirements for term papers or other hand-ins, and/or where class participation can be one of several elements of the overall evaluation.

### **Examination code(s)**

GRA 64411 continuous assessment accounts for % of the final grade in the course GRA 6441.

### **Examination support materials**

A bilingual dictionary

Exam aids at written examinations are explained under exam information in the student portal @bi. Please note use of calculator and dictionary in the section on examaids

### **Re-sit examination**

It is only possible to retake an examination when the course is next taught.

The assessment in some courses is based on more than one exam code.

Where this is the case, you may retake only the assessed components of one of these exam codes.

Where this is not the case, all of the assessed components of the course must be retaken.

All retaken examinations will incur an additional fee.

### **Additional information**

#### **Honor Code**

Academic honesty and trust are important to all of us as individuals, and represent values that are encouraged and promoted by the honor code system. This is a most significant university tradition. Students are responsible for familiarizing themselves with the ideals of the honor code system, to which the faculty are also deeply committed.

Any violation of the honor code will be dealt with in accordance with BI's procedures for cheating. These issues are a serious matter to everyone associated with the programs at BI and are at the heart of the honor code and academic integrity. If you have any questions about your responsibilities under the honor code, please ask.