

Salesperson Influence on Product Development: Insights from a Study of Small Manufacturing Organizations

Ashwin W. Joshi¹

¹ Ashwin W. Joshi is Associate Professor of Marketing, and Director of the MBA Program at the Schulich School of Business, York University, Toronto, Ontario, Canada M3J 1P3 (e-mail: ajoshi@schulich.yorku.ca; Tel: 416-736-2100 x77958). The author is deeply grateful to the anonymous reviewers and to the editor for their developmental suggestions. The author is also indebted to Kersi Antia for his extensive and insightful commentary and to Chris Bell and Cyril Bouquet for their ideas. Support from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada and from the Schulich School of Business is acknowledged.

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This research addresses three questions: (i) How do salespeople get their desired product modifications implemented within organizations? (ii) What effect does salesperson trustworthiness have on the means they adopt to get product modifications implemented? and (iii) What are the performance outcomes of the modified products? Results from a survey of 149 product managers in small manufacturing organizations suggest that two influence strategies – rationality and exchange – have a positive impact and that two influence strategies – coalition building and upward appeal – have an inverse impact, on product modification implementation. Results also show that salesperson trustworthiness enhances the positive effects of rationality and exchange, while mitigating the inverse effects of coalition building and upward appeal. Finally, results show that product modification implementation has a positive effect on the product's performance in the marketplace. Collectively our results suggest that salespeople should adopt the rationality and exchange strategies to get their desired product modifications implemented, while also developing a reputation for trustworthiness, and that it pays for organizations to listen to their salespeople.

Keywords: salesperson influence strategies, salesperson trustworthiness, product development, market performance

Over the last two decades, the nature of the business-to-business selling activity has changed from a transactional selling orientation to a key account management orientation (Cespedes 1995; Homburg, Workman, and Jensen 2002; Palmatier, Dant, and Grewal 2007; Palmatier 2008). This shift in focus has important implications for the organization's salespeople. Where traditionally they could focus exclusively on the external customer interface, key account management with its emphasis on product customization requires salespeople to become skilled both at managing the external customer interface as well as the intra-organization interface with actors that are responsible for product development (Gardner, Bistriz, and Klopemaker 1998; Pelham 2006; Sengupta, Krapfel, and Pusateri 1997; 2000; Workman, Homburg, and Jensen 2003).

While there is a substantial body of literature on the salesperson-customer interface, salesperson relationships with intra-organizational entities involved in product development such as product development teams is relatively sparse (Judson, Schoenbachler, Gordon, Ridnour, and Weilbaker 2006; McDougal and Smith 1999). Our focus in this research is upon the salesperson's interface with product development teams as they typically have the formal responsibility for product modification decisions (Cespedes 1995). In particular, we examine this interface in the context of small manufacturing organizations as direct interaction between salespeople and product management teams is most extensive in this context.

As a result of their proximity to customers, salespeople are pre-eminent among the individual-level drivers of product modifications within organizations (Judson, Schoenbachler, Gordon, Ridnour, and Weilbaker 2006; McDougal and Smith 1999). Our

aim in this research is to address three questions that are designed to increase understanding of salesperson influence on product development:

1. How do salespeople influence product modifications?
2. When are they more or less likely to be successful?
3. What are the product-level consequences of adopting the salesperson's proposed modifications?

We draw from prior research on individual-level intra-firm influence strategies (Kipnis, Schmidt, and Wilkinson 1980; Kipnis and Schmidt 1983; 1988) to establish the means by which salespeople influence product modifications. Our research contributes to theory development in this domain in two ways: one, by identifying contextual conditions that impact the effectiveness of these influence strategies, and two, by examining the marketplace impact of the influence that is achieved as a result of these strategies. While there is a rich body of prior knowledge that examines the strategies that individuals use to attain intra-organizational influence, to the best of our understanding, only limited attention has been paid to both the identification of moderating factors (e.g., Atuahene-Gima and Li 2000) and to examining the outcome implications of this influence. From a practical perspective, given the hypothesized performance outcomes we expect that our research will be of interest both to salespeople and to product management teams. Implications for each of these entities are developed in the discussion section.

We begin by articulating the theoretical background for our study and developing our conceptual model. The methods and measures used to test this model are

subsequently identified. Following this, we present the results of our research and close with a discussion of their theoretical, managerial, and future research implications.

Conceptual Framework

Background Literature

Intra-organizational Influence Strategies. Kipnis and colleagues (Kipnis, Schmidt, and Wilkinson 1980; Kipnis and Schmidt 1983; 1988) define intra-organizational influence strategies as the means that organizational actors adopt to “get their way” (Kipnis, Schmidt, and Wilkinson 1980, p. 451). While the initial typology developed by Kipnis and colleagues comprised eight distinct intra-organizational influence strategies, subsequent refinements have resulted in a six-dimension typology of intra-organizational influence strategies (see Schriesheim and Hinkin 1990) that has received widespread adoption especially in the organizational behavior (e.g., Farmer, Maslyn, Fedor, and Goodman 1997; van Knippenberg, van Knippenberg, Blaauw, and Vermunt 1999) literature and to a lesser extent in marketing (e.g., Goebel, Marshall, and Locander 2006; Nonis, Sager, and Kumar 1996). We refer to this typology as the “refined Kipnis” typology. The six dimensions of this typology include Rationality, Exchange, Ingratiation, Assertiveness, Coalition Building, and Upward Appeal.

Trustworthiness. Mayer, Davis, and Schoorman (1995, p. 717) define trustworthiness in terms of three “factors”: ability, benevolence, and integrity. Ability refers to the “skills, characteristics, and competencies” (p. 717) of the partner (or trustee) that leads the party (or trustor) to believe that the partner has the capability to perform the actions that are expected of them. Benevolence refers to the trustor’s assessment that the trustee has “a positive orientation” (p. 719) toward the trustor. In other words, the trustee is believed by

the trustor to refrain from actions that could undermine the trustor's well-being, despite the fact that these actions may not be detected by the trustor and may confer gains for the trustee. Finally, integrity speaks to the trustor's belief about the trustee's character, that is, the extent to which the trustee will consistently adhere to a set of admirable moral principles.

Colquitt, Scott, and LePine (2007, pp. 910-11) distinguish between ability on the one hand and benevolence and integrity on the other by arguing that whereas the former refers to "can do" assessments of the trustee by the trustor, as in, the trustee has the requisite "skills and abilities," the latter refers to "will do" assessments, as in, the trustee "will choose to use those skills and abilities to act in the best interest of the trustor" (p. 911). This tri-partite conceptualization of trustworthiness has been empirically validated and adopted in subsequent research (Jarvenpaa, Shaw, and Staples 2004; Mayer and Davis 1999; Mayer and Gavin 2005).

Compliance. When a partner displays "overt behavioral adherence" (Brill 1994, p. 212) to a party's expressed desires, the partner is said to demonstrate compliance. Thus, in the context of our research, the product management team demonstrates compliance when the team implements the salesperson's product modification proposal (Payan and McFarland 2005).

Having discussed the relevant background literature, we turn now to a discussion of our research hypotheses (see Figure 1).

FIGURE 1 ABOUT HERE

Hypotheses: Main Effects of Influence Strategies on Compliance

Effect of Rationality on Compliance. We expect that the use of facts and logic (i.e., rationality) by the salesperson will enhance product management team compliance with the salesperson's product modification proposal for two reasons: First, the proposal becomes "inherently desirable" (Frazier and Summers 1984, p. 44) for the product management team because this influence strategy connects the proposal directly to potentially favorable outcomes for the product management team. Secondly, by creating a "thorough argument structure" (Payan and McFarland 2005, p. 69), rationality reduces the likelihood of "faulty inferences" (Payan and McFarland 2005, p. 69) by the product management team while also facilitating a comprehensive understanding of the underlying basis for the proposal (Frazier and Rody 1991).

A number of prior studies (see Kipnis and Schmidt 1988; Wayne, Liden, Graf, and Ferris 1997; Yulk and Tracey 1992) show that use of the rationality influence strategy by an influence source enhances the extent to which their views are considered by the target. Prior research on the influence of individuals on organizational teams also shows that the use of data driven strategies such as advocacy (Bristor 1993), rational persuasion (Farrell and Schroder 1996) and information exchange (Venkatesh, Kohli, and Zaltman 1995) by individuals increases their manifest influence on the buying team. Indeed, as Kohli (1989, p. 61) concludes from his research on influence on buying teams, "expert power is the most important determinant of manifest influence." Accordingly, based on the preceding rationale and empirical evidence, we submit the following hypothesis for empirical testing:

H1: Rationality will be positively related to compliance.

Effects of Exchange and Ingratiation on Compliance. Exchange as an influence strategy is said to be in use when the salesperson facilitates tasks for the product management team in return for (or in anticipation of) their compliance with the salesperson's proposals. A salesperson is said to engage in ingratiation or "other enhancement" when the salesperson directs "flattering commentary or behaviors" toward the product management team (Strutton and Pelton 1998, p. 3).

We contend that both exchange and ingratiation foster compliance by creating positive affect in the influence target vis-à-vis the influence source. Consistent with our argument, prior research has shown that task facilitation in the form of favor doing by a source toward a target enhances the extent to which the latter likes the former (Wayne and Ferris 1990; Wayne and Liden 1995; Wayne, Liden, Graf, and Ferris 1997). Similarly, prior research has also documented a positive impact of ingratiation on liking (Kipnis and Schmidt 1988; Ralston 1985; Strutton and Pelton 1998; Wayne and Ferris 1990; Wayne, Liden, Graf, and Ferris 1997). Prior research on the influence of individuals on organizational teams has shown that individuals with "reinforcement power", that is, the ability to provide the buying centre with rewards/punishments, gain manifest influence over the buying centre (Kohli 1989, p. 61). With respect to ingratiation, this body of knowledge shows that the use of "other" oriented strategies such as consultation (Farrell and Schroder 1996) increased an individual's impact on the buying centre. More specifically, in the context of the salesperson's intra-organizational relationships, prior research shows that by developing "lateral friendships" within the organization, the salesperson is able obtain "preferential treatment for specific issues" (Tellefsen and Eyuboglu 2002, p. 160). Prior ethnographic research (Workman 1993)

also provides evidence for the cultivation of “informal social networks” as means by which individuals are able to increase their potential influence/power within organizations (see also Ronchetto, Hutt, and Reingen 1989). Based on the preceding, we submit the following hypotheses for empirical testing:

H2: Exchange will be positive related to compliance.

H3: Ingratiation will be positively related to compliance.

Effects of Assertiveness, Coalition Building, and Upward Appeal on Compliance.

Assertiveness by a salesperson entails the persistent use of a direct and forceful approach in making their case for a proposed product modification to the product management team. Unlike assertiveness, which occurs in a bilateral (i.e., salesperson – product management team) context, both coalition building and upward appeal involve other players – co-workers from other functional areas and senior management, respectively – whose support is sought for the proposed product modification and is subsequently communicated to the product management team.

In all three instances, we contend that despite the use of different means, the net effect on the product management team is the same, namely, a constraint imposed by an external party (e.g., the salesperson, other members of the organization, senior management) on the behavioral options faced by the product management team. Consequently, following the logic of Reactance Theory (Brehm 1966; 1972; 1989) we expect that when faced with restrictions on their behavioral freedom with respect to the product modification decision, the product management team will experience reactance, as a result of which their compliance is undermined.

Prior research provides empirical support for our argument regarding the inverse effect of assertiveness (Dosier, Case, and Keys 1988; Falbe and Yukl 1992, Keys, Case, Miller, Curran, Jones 1987; Mowday 1978), coalition building (Falbe and Yukl 1992), and upward appeal (Kipnis and Schmidt 1988; Wayne, Liden, Graf, and Ferris 1997), on compliance. Similarly, prior literature that has examined the manifest influence of individuals on organizational teams shows that strategies such as legalistic pleas (Venkatesh, Kohli, and Zaltman 1995) reduce the individual's manifest influence on the buying centre. In a related vein, Tellefsen (2006, p. 65) argues that adoption of strategies such as upward appeal generates "resentment and therefore will diminish relational support" for the individual within the organization. Thus, we posit that:

H4: Assertiveness will be inversely related to compliance

H5: Coalition-building will be inversely related to compliance.

H6: Upward appeal will be inversely related to compliance.

Hypothesis: Interaction Effects Between Influence Strategies

Rationality (Cespedes 1995; Rackham and De Vincentis 1999) and assertiveness (Rasmusson 1999) have been identified as key success drivers in the field of personal selling. In other words, salespeople are encouraged to adopt a fact based means of communicating with targets and to be persistent in the face of avoidance/rejection by the target. While these observations have been made in the salesperson-external customer context, our field interviews with both salespeople and product managers confirmed the importance of rationality and assertiveness (most notably, the persistence aspect of this construct) in the intra-organizational context of securing product modifications as well.

Accordingly, we investigate the interaction (or combined) effects of the rationality and assertiveness influence strategies on compliance by the product management team.

Because it entails a voluntary change in the target's perception of a proposal through the use of facts and logic, rationality as an influence strategy does not result in a felt (by the target) constraint on behavioral freedom. In contrast, as a result of by-passing the target's perceptions and focusing directly on changing the target's behavior through force and persistence, we expect that the assertiveness influence strategy will create a felt constraint of behavioral freedom within the target. Consequently, based on Reactance Theory (Brehm 1966; 1972; 1989) we expect that the positive effect of rationality on compliance will be muted when it is coupled with assertiveness.

Note that while we could use this rationale to predict interaction effects among all compliance generating (rationality, exchange, ingratiation) and compliance impeding (assertiveness, coalition building, and upward appeal) influence strategies (see Figure 1), we restrict our attention to the interaction between rationality and assertiveness because of indications both from prior research and from our field interviews that these strategies are key to securing changes in target behavior. Based on the preceding discussion, we submit the following hypothesis for empirical testing:

H7: The positive effect of rationality on compliance will be attenuated when assertiveness is high.

Hypotheses: Moderating Effects of Salesperson Trustworthiness on the Main Effects

In the context of our research, salesperson trustworthiness refers to the product management team's perception that the salesperson is able, benevolent, and that s/he is a person of integrity (Mayer, Davis, and Schoorman 1995). We expect that salesperson

trustworthiness will moderate (i.e., enhance/mitigate) the impact of each influence strategy on compliance. We develop these moderator effects in the discussion below.

Moderating Effect of Trustworthiness on Rationality. Given that the costs of implementing a product modification proposal are typically incurred in the short-term with the pay-back emerging over the long-term, it is essential for the salesperson's pay-back projections to be regarded as credible by the product management team in order for these projections to have an impact on the product management team's belief regarding the viability of the salesperson's proposal. Accordingly, we argue that salesperson trustworthiness, that is, the assessment by the product management team that the salesperson is able, benevolent, and a person of high integrity, underlies the impact of rationality on compliance. Thus, when salesperson trustworthiness is high we expect that the positive effect of rationality on compliance will be stronger than when salesperson trustworthiness is low.

Prior research on source credibility (Atkin and Block 1983; Wilson and Sherrell 1993; see also Hovland and Weiss 1951) and source attractiveness (Friedman and Friedman 1979; Wilson and Sherrell 1993; see also Kang and Herr 2006) in the advertising literature provides empirical evidence for a positive relationship between these source characteristics and target persuasion (i.e., the extent to which the target is persuaded by the source). Based on this extensive body of empirical knowledge and the conceptual rationale discussed previously, we expect that:

H8: The positive effect of rationality on compliance will be enhanced when salesperson trustworthiness is high.

Moderating Effect of Trustworthiness on Exchange and Ingratiation. Given their different world views, there is immense potential for goal conflict (Tellefsen and Eyuboglu 2002) between salespeople and product development teams (Workman 1993). In such an environment, even though the salesperson may reach out to the product development team through exchange and ingratiation, it is likely that the perceptual gulf prevents the latter from responding favorably to the former. To the extent that a salesperson is regarded as trustworthy by the product development team, however, that salesperson is able to reduce the product management team's perceived goal conflict. Consequently, we expect that the product management team will be more receptive to the salesperson's relational bonding overtures as manifest through exchange and ingratiation. Based on the preceding, we submit:

H9: The positive effect of exchange on compliance will be enhanced when salesperson trustworthiness is high.

H10: The positive effect of ingratiation on compliance will be enhanced when salesperson trustworthiness is high.

Moderating Effects of Trustworthiness on Assertiveness, Coalition Building, and Upward Appeal. Given that influence attempts do not occur in isolation but in the context of a pre-existing relationship, we contend that product management team assessment of the salesperson over the course of their relationship will affect the effectiveness of any influence strategy that they deploy in a given instance. Specifically, with respect to the effects of assertiveness, coalition building, and upward appeal, we submit that when salesperson trustworthiness is high (i.e., the product management team regards the salesperson as being trustworthy), there will be a greater proclivity on the part of the

product management team to understand and accept the salesperson's message. Thus, we expect that the causal chain connecting these influence strategies to compliance as explicated by Reactance Theory (Brehm 1966; 1972; 1989) will not hold when salesperson trustworthiness is high. In other words, when product management teams believe the salesperson to be trustworthy, we expect that despite salesperson use of the assertiveness, coalition building, and upward appeal influence strategies, the product management team will not perceive or experience a restriction in their behavioral freedom because they are more willing to internalize the salesperson's message. Conversely, when salesperson trustworthiness is low, the salesperson's message is not internalized by the product management team and as a result reactance is high.

Accordingly, we submit the following hypotheses for empirical testing:

H11: The inverse effect of assertiveness on compliance will be attenuated when salesperson trustworthiness is high.

H12: The inverse effect of coalition building on compliance will be attenuated when salesperson trustworthiness is high.

H13: The inverse effect of upward appeal on compliance will be attenuated when salesperson trustworthiness is high.

Effect of Product Management Team Compliance on Market Performance

At the organizational level, product management team compliance with the salesperson's product modification proposal means that the organization is responsive to changing customer conditions and demands. We expect that such organizational responsiveness will be positively related to market performance. Based on our review of prior research,

we identify two key explanations for this relationship. First, drawing from open systems theory (Katz and Kahn 1978), we argue that since salesperson product modification proposals are based on real-time information regarding changes in the customer environment, product management team compliance with these proposals ensures that the organization is adapting in a timely fashion to changes in the customer environment, thereby increasing its chances of long-term growth and survival. Secondly, drawing from recent marketing strategy literature, we argue that organizational responsiveness to changes in customer demands/conditions fosters customer satisfaction (Anderson, Fornell, and Lehmann 1994) and has the potential to create first-move advantage (Kerin, Varadarajan, and Peterson 1992), both of which in turn enhance market performance. Recent empirical studies by Homburg, Grozdanovic and Klarmann (2007) and by Jayachandran, Hewett, and Kaufman (2004), among others (e.g., Jaworski and Kohli 1993), provide empirical support for these arguments.

Accordingly, based on the preceding, we argue that:

H14: Compliance will be positively related to market performance.

Control Variables

In order to account for the possibility that the product management team's decision to modify the product is the result of forces other than the salesperson's influence, we controlled for the extent to which the salesperson's proposal was consistent with the feedback that the team was hearing from other sources. Relatedly, we also controlled for the magnitude of the modification being proposed and the frequency with which modifications were proposed by the salesperson, as we expected these factors to impact

the extent to which the particular modification proposal under consideration would be adopted. In addition to characteristics of the proposed modification, we also controlled for three salesperson characteristics, namely, salesperson work experience, track record, and sex.

Method

Research Context and Survey Respondents

Our research context comprised organizations within three SIC codes – 35 (industrial machinery and equipment), 36 (electronic and other electrical equipment), and 37 (transportation equipment). We focused on these industries for two reasons. First, prior research (Heide and John 1990; 1992) has shown firms in these industries express their interest in developing long-term relationships with customers by being responsive to evolving customer preferences, with the sales function in particular playing a key role in this process (see Homburg, Jensen, and Krohmer 2008, p. 145). Secondly, our field interviews with sales managers, product managers, and salespeople in these industries consistently revealed that the core phenomenon of our research, namely, salesperson efforts to influence changes in the organization's market offering, was both regarded as an important activity and one that was in widespread existence.

Reflecting our focus on small manufacturing organizations, the typical firm in our sample had annual sales revenues of \$21 million, with a total employee base of 70, of whom 12 were directly responsible for sales.

Based on a comprehensive review of the literature on the use of influence strategies, Atuahene-Gima and Li (2000, p. 457) note that “the use of the target as a respondent may be the most useful in assessing the antecedents and outcomes of the

influence tactics of the source.” Accordingly, our primary source of data collection was the product manager, with additional product management team member data (e.g., R&D manager, marketing manager) being used to corroborate product manager data. We contacted product managers in organizations across these three SIC codes and requested them to serve as key respondents on an episode that occurred between six and twelve months prior, where a salesperson attempted to influence changes in a product. As representatives of their product management teams, product managers were asked to provide data on all the model variables. With respect to salesperson trustworthiness, product managers were asked to provide data on both their team’s assessment of salesperson trustworthiness prior to the commencement of the influence episode and upon conclusion of this episode. This enabled us to assess whether the influence strategies adopted by the salesperson in the recent episode had affected the product management team’s assessment of salesperson trustworthiness. Note, however, that the trustworthiness construct that appears in our model refers only to trustworthiness prior to the commencement of the influence episode.

In addition to providing data on a recent influence episode, product managers were also asked to identify the salesperson by name as well as details on the modification being proposed and to provide contact information on an additional member of the product management team. The nominated additional members were contacted and their data was used to corroborate product manager assessments of salesperson (prior) trustworthiness, compliance, and the product’s market performance.

Measure Development and Pretest

Measure development entailed creating items to map out the domain of each construct in our model (Churchill 1979). Items were created either by modifying items from existing scales or through insights gleaned from our field interviews². We undertook a qualitative pre-test of the questionnaire in interviews with two academics, three sales managers, two product managers, and two salespeople. Based on these interviews, several items were revised for clarity, while others were eliminated because they were considered to be redundant. Additionally, new items were created to measure constructs that were not being comprehensively measured by the existing items. The questionnaire was subsequently pre-tested with a small sample of product managers. Of the 100 questionnaires that we mailed out, we received 21 (product manager respondents) completed surveys after two weeks. Responses from this pre-test led to further item eliminations and/or modifications.

Sampling Frame and Data Collection

Our sampling frame comprised of all the manufacturers in Canada within the three SIC codes (n=861) that we drew from the *Dunn and Bradstreet* database. Our database provided the name of a product manager for each organization whom we contacted by telephone with a request to participate in the survey. The survey was mailed to those whom we could reach (after 3 call backs) and agreed to participate.

473 of the 861 product managers agreed to participate in our study. Two weeks following the mailing of our questionnaire to these individuals, we sent out reminder postcards. We closed the survey four weeks after the initial mailing, having received 149 completed surveys from product managers (response rate = 31.5%). In addition to

² We interviewed 15 individuals who were not part of the sampling frame. We assessed the face validity of our conceptual model in these interviews. In addition, we used their comments to construct scale items.

providing data on all the model variables, survey respondents were also asked to identify the salesperson on whom they were reporting, as well as the name of an additional member of the product management team that could be contacted for additional perspectives on the influence episode under consideration. Of the 149 additional product management team members that we approached for a short telephone survey, we were able to obtain data from 77. We used the additional member data as a validity check on the product manager data.

Measures

Intra-Organizational Influence Strategies. Kipnis, Schmidt, and Wilkinson (1980) developed scales to measure each of the intra-organizational influence strategies that they identified in their typology and these scales were subsequently refined by Schriesheim and Hinkin (1990). In this research we draw from the Schriesheim and Hinkin (1990) scales to measure salesperson use of each of these influence strategies. Note that we requested the respondents to focus on an influence episode that occurred six to twelve months prior to the date of their response to the survey. This time frame reduces affective bias while also enabling us to study the market performance implications that arise from the use of these influence strategies.

Compliance. Drawing from prior literature (Payan and McFarland 2005), we developed a five item scale that captures the extent to which the product management team actually implements the modifications being proposed by the salesperson.

Salesperson Trustworthiness. Mayer and Davis (1999) developed scales to measure the three dimensions of trustworthiness, namely, ability, benevolence, and integrity. We draw from these scales in our research to measure salesperson trustworthiness.

Market Performance. Drawing from prior discussions and measures of the market performance of products (Sethi 2000; Sethi and Iqbal 2008), we developed a five item scale that captures various types of outcomes including market share and profit margin. Recall that the respondents were asked to report on an influence episode that occurred between six and twelve months prior to the date of responding to the survey. By specifying the last three months as the time frame for market performance, we are able to assess the extent to which salesperson influence has an impact the outcomes that are generated by the product in the marketplace.

Controls. The control variables – three proposed modification characteristics (consistency, magnitude, and frequency) and three salesperson characteristics (work experience, track record, and sex) - were measured using scales that we either adapted from prior research or developed for the purposes of this research (e.g., consistency, magnitude, and frequency).

The scale items are presented in full in the appendix and information regarding scale reliabilities and other descriptive statistics are presented in Table 1.

TABLE 1 ABOUT HERE

Results

Measure Validation

Following the recommendations by Churchill (1979) and Gerbing and Anderson (1988), we purified our measures in three stages. In stage one, we examined the item-to-total correlations for each scale and eliminated low scoring items. In stage two, we submitted the remaining items to an exploratory factor analysis (maximum likelihood, oblique

rotation). Having eliminated the items with high cross-loadings, we submitted the data to confirmatory factor analyses (CFA).

Given our sample size ($n = 149$), we could not do a global CFA using all 52 items across the 9 constructs that were measured using multi-item scales, because it violates the recommended ratio of 5 observations per item (Hair, Anderson, Tatham, and Black 1995; Homburg and Jensen 2007). Accordingly, we constructed a series of CFA models, with each model dedicated to examining the factor structure of the scales of theoretically related constructs. Thus, CFA model 1 examined the factor structure of the multi-item scales that were used to measure the six influence strategies (chi-square = 551.2, degrees of freedom = 260, average off diagonal standardized residual = .04; comparative fit index = .95), CFA model 2 examined the factor structure of the scales used to measure compliance and market performance (chi-square = 69, degrees of freedom = 34, average off diagonal standardized residual = .02, comparative fit index = .98), and CFA model 3 examined the factor structure of the scales used to measure the three dimensions of trustworthiness, namely, ability, benevolence, and integrity (chi-square = 241, degrees of freedom = 116, average off diagonal standardized residual = .04, comparative fit index = .93).

As indicated, the models suggest a good fit to the data. By way of additional analyses, we examined the factor loading of each item in each model to establish convergent validity and we followed the Anderson and Gerbing (1988) procedure to establish discriminant validity by comparing the fit of each of the above models with alternate models wherein the correlations between construct pairs were sequentially constrained to unity. In terms of providing support for convergent validity, results

showed that all of the factor loadings were statistically significant (the lowest factor loading across all constructs and items was .63, $p < .01$). Similarly, in terms of providing support for discriminant validity, results showed that the “free” models outperformed the “constrained” models in all cases (difference in chi-square = 19.03, d.f. = 1, $p < .001$ was the lowest difference). Collectively, these results provide substantial support for the validity of the measures used in this study.

Testing for Respondent Knowledgeability and Bias in the Data

We ascertained knowledgeability of our key informants (i.e., product managers) by asking them to report on an episode where a salesperson tried to secure modifications to a product that was under this manager’s purview. We also collected a direct self-report measure of their knowledgeability by having product managers score themselves on the following item: How knowledgeable are you with respect to the issues raised in the survey? (1 = not at all knowledgeable and 5 = highly knowledgeable). The mean score on this item was 4.6, thereby providing evidence for respondent knowledgeability.

Relatedly, we asked the additional product management team members whom we subsequently surveyed to report the extent to which the product manager was knowledgeable about the issues raised in the survey. The mean score on this item was 4.8, thereby providing additional evidence for the knowledgeability of our key respondents (Kumar, Stern, and Anderson 1993).

Given that data on all the model variables was obtained from a single respondent, namely, product managers, there is potential for self-report bias in our data. Accordingly, we took a number of steps to ascertain that our data was free from such bias. Specifically, we examined three types of self-report bias: social desirability bias,

common methods bias, and non-response bias. We assessed social desirability bias in two ways: (i) by examining the correlation between product manager assessment of their compliance with the salesperson's proposal and the additional product management team member's assessment of the same construct, and (ii) by substituting the product manager's assessment of team compliance with the additional team member's assessment of the same in a regression equation wherein compliance was regressed on the influence strategies. Evidence of a high correlation between product manager reported compliance and additional team member reported compliance ($r = .73, p < .001$), as well as an identical (in terms of statistical significance) set of regression results using both product manager reported compliance and additional team member reported compliance as dependent variables, indicates against the possibility of a social desirability bias in the data.

We assessed the threat of common methods bias using both the traditional Harman's one-factor test as well as the more recent "marker variable approach" advocated by Malhotra, Kim, and Patil (2006, p. 1868). Results from the common factor analysis (orthogonal rotation) showed that the first factor only accounted for 19% of the overall variance (77%), thereby reducing the likelihood of the threat of common methods bias (Podsakoff and Organ 1986). In light of the limitations associated with this test (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee, and Podsakoff 2003), we also tested for common methods bias using the marker variable approach. With the correlation between rationality and frequency ($r = .01$) being used as a proxy for the marker variable, we re-estimated all of the correlations between all the independent and dependent variables in the model. The "adjusted" correlation coefficients – that is correlations adjusted for common methods

variance – were not different from the ones reported in Table 1, thereby providing additional evidence against the existence of common methods bias in our data.

We used the Armstrong and Overton (1977) procedure to test for non-response bias. Results showed that there were no statistically significant differences between the early (defined as the first one-third of the questionnaires received) and late (defined as the last one-third of the questionnaires received) respondents across the substantive and control variables, thereby reducing the likelihood of non-response bias.

Having established that our data sources were knowledgeable and that there is no compelling evidence to suggest the existence of either self-report, non-response bias or common methods bias, we submitted our data for formal hypothesis testing.

Hypothesis Testing

We tested our conceptual model in two stages. In stage one, we examined the relationships between the influence strategies and compliance using a hierarchical regression model (HRM). In stage two, we ascertained the role of compliance as a mediator between influence strategies and market performance using the approach recommended by Baron and Kenny (1986). We describe each of these stages in turn.

We used a hierarchical regression model (HRM) comprising of three equations (or steps) in order to test our predicted relationship between the influence strategies and compliance. Equation 1 contained only the control variables in our conceptual model. In equation 2, the main effects of the six influence strategies and trustworthiness were added to the control variables. Finally, in equation 3, the hypothesized interactions between the influence strategies and trustworthiness were incorporated into the model. In regression equations that contain both independent variables and their constituent interaction terms,

the potential for multicollinearity is high. Accordingly, following the recommendation by Aiken and West (1991), we used mean centered data to curtail this potential. Results showed that the highest variance inflation factor across all three equations was 2.3, which is well below the multicollinearity indicating threshold value of 10 (Neter, Wasserman, and Kutner 1990). This enables us to rule out the hypothesis that our research findings are a function of multicollinearity in the data.

Results of the HRM are presented in Table 2. Note that of the 14 hypotheses only three – (i) the main effect of ingratiation (H3), (ii) the main effect of assertiveness (H4), and (iii) moderating effect of salesperson trustworthiness on the effect of ingratiation (H10) – were not supported. We turn now to a discussion of the results in terms of their theoretical and managerial implications.

TABLE 2 ABOUT HERE

Discussion

With respect to our first research question, namely - how do salespeople influence product modifications? - we drew from the literature on intra-organizational influence strategies to identify six influence strategies that salespeople can use to secure product management team compliance. Consistent with our expectations, results from our empirical research show that rationality and exchange have a positive effect on product management team compliance and that coalition building and upward appeal have an inverse effect. Contrary to expectations neither ingratiation nor assertiveness had their intended (positive and inverse, respectively) effects on compliance. Given that the rationale for the supported results was discussed earlier, we focus upon the non-significant results.

While there is considerable theoretical and empirical support for the positive effect of source ingratiation on target compliance, research that has investigated the ingratiation - compliance relationship specifically in the upward influence context has found the effect to be muted (e.g., Yukl and Falbe 1990; Gravenhorst and Boonstra 1998). By way of explanation, Yukl and Tracey (1992, p. 527) note, “Compliments and flattery are more credible when the status and power of the agent is greater than that of the target.” Thus, lack of organizational-position based credibility is offered as a potential explanation for the null effect of salesperson use of ingratiation on product management team compliance. Further, our results show that even when “relationship-based credibility” is present (i.e., salesperson trustworthiness is high) the lack of organizational-position based credibility stymies the effectiveness of source ingratiation on target compliance.

Whereas prior research suggests that ingratiation is used least frequently in the upward influence context (Yukl and Falbe 1990), note that ingratiation has both a high mean and low standard deviation (see Table 1) in our data, suggesting that it is an extensively used strategy in the upward influence context. One explanation for the high usage of this strategy despite its lack of effectiveness in generating compliance could be that that ingratiation may be acting as a “hygiene” (Herzberg 1964) influence strategy in this context. That is, whereas its presence does not necessarily induce benefits for the source, its absence can trigger significant losses.

Recall that we drew from Reactance Theory (Brehm 1966; 1972; 1989) to posit an inverse relationship between source assertiveness and target compliance. A potential explanation for the non-significant effect that we obtained is that target assertiveness – in

and of itself – may not be sufficient to foreclose the target’s behavioral options.

Consistent with this explanation, prior research that has investigated the effects of assertiveness specifically in the upward influence context concludes that assertiveness as an influence strategy works best when it is coupled with source exercise of a coercive power base (Gravenhorst and Boonstra 1998; Yukl and Falbe 1990; Yukl and Tracey 1992). In other words, without the ability to punish the target for non-compliance, source actions such as setting compliance deadlines for the target, appear to be of limited effectiveness.

Recognizing that salespeople use a mix of influence strategies over the course of their attempt to secure product modifications, we examined the interaction effect of two influence strategies that are deemed to be especially important for effective selling, namely, rationality and assertiveness. Consistent with our Reactance Theory (Brehm 1966; 1972; 1989) based prediction results showed that assertiveness undermined the positive effect of rationality on compliance³.

With respect to the second research question, namely, the moderating effect of trustworthiness on the impact of the intra-organizational influence strategies on compliance, note that with the exception of ingratiation where a non-significant result was obtained, salesperson trustworthiness moderated the impact of the other intra-organizational strategies on compliance in exactly the manner predicted. In other words, consistent with our expectations, salesperson trustworthiness enhanced the effect of rationality and exchange and muted the impact of assertiveness, coalition building and upward appeal. Collectively these results for the moderating effects of trustworthiness

³ We also examined the interaction effect of two of the strongest influence strategies in our data set, namely, rationality and upward appeal (see Table 4). As with assertiveness, results showed that upward appeal attenuated the positive effect of rationality on compliance.

make a strong case for the importance of considering the background context when assessing the impact of influence strategies, a consideration that we found to be lacking in our review of the prior literature.

Finally, in terms of the impact of product management team compliance on the market performance of the modified product, consistent with the expectation that we derive from the organizational responsiveness literature (Homburg, Grozdanovic and Klarmann 2007; Jayachandran, Hewett, and Kaufman 2004), results show that having controlled for a range of factors, *listening to the salesperson matters*, in that it has a positive impact on the product's performance in the marketplace.

Practical Contributions

While prior research discusses salesperson motivation to participate in product design decisions and documents the extent of their participation in these decisions (e.g. Judson, Schonebachler, Gordon, Ridnour, and Weilbaker 2006), it offers little to salespeople by way of advice in terms of the strategies that they should deploy/avoid and the type of reputation they should cultivate with product management teams in order to ensure that their product modification proposals are actually implemented.

With respect to the influence strategies that they should deploy, research results provide strong support for the deployment of two influence strategies: rationality and exchange. Similarly, with respect to the influence strategies that they should avoid, research results provide strong support for the avoidance of coalition building and upward appeal. From our discussion of these results with five salespeople, we found that the recommendation to engage in rationality was consistent with what they regarded as best practice. As well, the recommendation to avoid coalition building and upward

appeal was consistent with their intuition. The significant relationship between exchange and compliance, however, came as a surprise to them. Accordingly, we develop specific action proposals that salespeople should adopt to implement the exchange influence strategy.

Based on our discussions with seven product management teams, we note that a product management team look to salespeople for assistance in three key areas: (i) securing customer feedback on new product ideas/prototypes, (ii) arranging access to key customers (e.g., lead users), and (iii) persuading customers to adopt the innovations that are developed by the product management team (see also Judson, Schoenbachler, Gordon, Ridnour, and Weilbaker 2006; McDougal and Smith 1999). By facilitating these tasks for the product management team, results from our research show that salespeople can leverage the ensuing good-will to get their desired product modifications implemented by the product management team.

In addition to providing guidance on the types of influence strategies they should deploy/avoid, our research also emphasizes the importance for salespeople of developing a reputation for trustworthiness among product management teams. A track record of behavior that demonstrates benevolence, integrity, and capability, as our results show, enables the salesperson to secure their desired product modifications both in terms of a direct main effect and indirectly in terms of its ability to enhance the positive impact of influence strategies such as rationality and exchange (see Table 4).

As our results demonstrate, product management team compliance with salesperson proposals for product modifications has a positive impact on the product's market performance. Consequently, our research has implications beyond salespeople

and for the organization as a whole. For product management teams, a concrete take-away is that they should indeed listen to their salespeople's proposals and insights and act on them as this has a direct and positive impact on the performance of the products that they manage.

Limitations and Future Research Directions

We identify research limitations in two domains – methodological and theoretical – and suggest future research remedies for the same. From a methodological perspective, the use of a single-source, namely, product managers, to report on all the variables in the model creates potential limitations. While we took precautions (discussed earlier) to ensure that the data is free from different types of bias, it remains the case that data from different sources for the independent and dependent variables would provide a more rigorous test of our hypotheses. Relatedly, the fact that we used a cross-sectional survey design with respondents being drawn from a small set of industries creates two limitations: lack of evidence for the causal claims that are implied within our model and the lack of support for the implied generalizability of the model. In order to fully address the causal claims that are implied in our model, future research should explore either longitudinal survey designs or experimental designs as both these methodological approaches require a temporal break in the collection of data across the independent and dependent variables. The fact that we tested our model with data from small manufacturing organizations in only three SIC codes places limits on the generalizability of our findings.

Recall that we asked our respondents to report on an episode that occurred between six and twelve months prior, where a salesperson attempted to influence changes

in a product. There may have been multiple instances in this time period where the salesperson attempted to achieve such influence. Our instructions did not provide respondents with clear selection rules to choose among these instances and as such they may have systematically over (under) reported on instances that were successful (unsuccessful) both in terms of attained influence and market outcomes. Future research should address this concern by providing more specific episode selection rules for respondents.

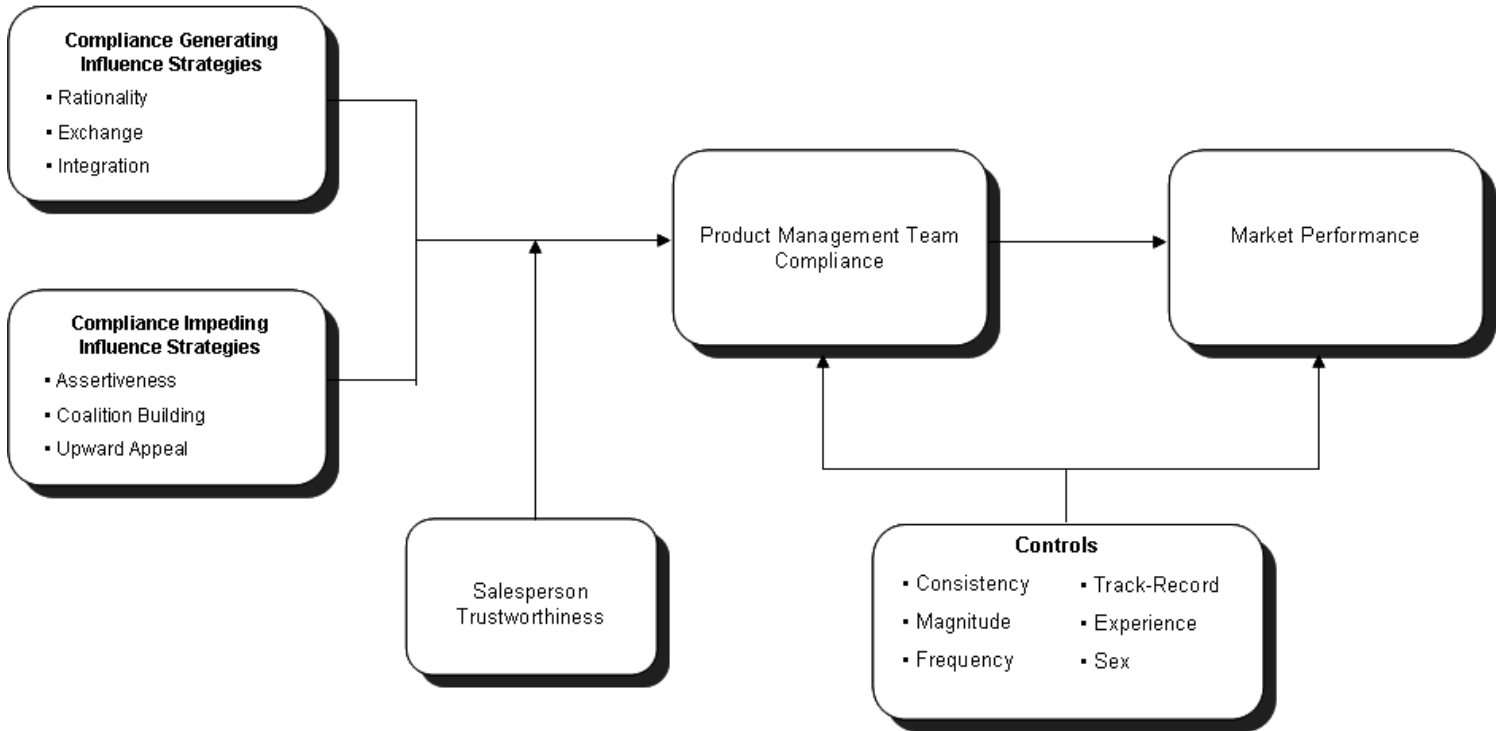
The core theoretical insight from our research pertains to the moderating role of trustworthiness in the relationship between the different influence strategies and compliance. Future research could extend this core theoretical insight in two general ways: by (i) developing a more fine-grained analysis of the moderating role of trustworthiness, and by (ii) identifying additional potential moderators of this relationship. In terms of developing a more fine-grained analysis of the moderating role of trustworthiness, future research should identify the specific dimension of trustworthiness (capability, benevolence, or integrity) that is most active in moderating the effectiveness of each of these influence strategies. Such a fine-grained study will give us a deeper understanding and more sophisticated understanding of the moderating effect of trustworthiness than was observed in this research. To the best of our knowledge, current theory is not well developed to provide this and as such the first step will be to develop theory at this fine-grained level before it can be tested empirically.

With respect to identifying additional moderators, building on the argument that assertiveness may need to be coupled with coercive power in order to be effective, we note that while salespeople typically lack coercive power against the product

management team, they may well have relative power (Emerson 1962) over the team as a result of the team's greater need for the salesperson's insight and contribution in relation to the salesperson's need to be part of the product management team. Thus, we contend that the relative power of the salesperson vis-à-vis the product management team needs to be taken into consideration, in particular, as a moderator of the effectiveness of assertiveness. Future research should also explore, more generally, the extent to which the salesperson's relative power moderates the impact of the other influence strategies on product management team compliance.

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FIGURE 1
Conceptual Model



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TABLE 1
Correlations and Descriptive Statistics

Variables	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9.	10.	11.	12.	13.	14.	15.
1.Consistency	1.00														
2.Magnitude	.08	1.00													
3.Frequency	.07	.03	1.00												
4.Track Record	.04	.14	.07	1.00											
5.Experience	.18	.21	-.16	.19	1.00										
6.Sex	-.06	.01	.08	.23	.34	1.00									
7.Rationality	.16	.35	.01	.19	.10	.08	1.00								
8.Exchange	.03	.09	.21	.26	.06	.01	.24	1.00							
9.Ingratiation	-.01	.24	.23	.21	-.02	.13	.15	.18	1.00						
10.Assertiveness	.07	.06	-.09	.08	-.06	.07	-.07	-.02	-.27	1.00					
11.Coalition Building	.04	.27	.07	.17	.06	.04	.36	.33	.26	-.12	1.00				
12.Upward Appeal	-.12	.03	-.03	.03	-.01	.09	.02	.16	-.17	.05	.21	1.00			
13.Trustworthiness	.23	.23	.01	.32	.17	.04	.47	.23	.03	-.16	-.17	-.31	1.00		
14.Compliance	.17	-.13	-.05	.19	.11	-.03	.35	.31	.09	-.01	-.16	-.31	.27	1.00	
15.Market Performance	.13	.09	.04	.12	.03	.01	.18	.20	.02	.05	.02	-.06	.10	.46	1.00
Means	3.68	3.38	3.96	3.26	3.01	.68	3.77	3.17	4.23	2.98	3.18	3.71	3.51	3.31	3.51
Standard deviation	.74	.86	.69	.93	.45	.47	.87	.63	.41	.77	.82	.64	.72	1.06	1.06
Number of Items	1	1	1	4	4	1	4	5	6	6	4	4	17	5	5
Construct Reliability	NA	NA	NA	.68	.89	NA	.76	.88	.77	.84	.91	.73	.88	.75	.84

Notes: All correlations > .14 (.19) are statistically significant at $p < .05$ (.01).

TABLE 2
Compliance: Effects of Control Variables, Main Effects, and Moderator Effects

	Equation 1 - Dependent Variable = Compliance	Equation 2 - Dependent Variable = Compliance	Equation 3 - Dependent Variable = Compliance
Independent variables			
Consistency	.19 (t=2.68, p<.001)	.19 (t=2.68, p<.001)	.14 (t=1.71, p<.05)
Magnitude	-.06 (t=-1.10, p=ns)	-.06 (t=-1.10, p=ns)	-.06 (t=-1.10, p=ns)
Frequency	-.11 (t=-1.26, p=ns)	-.11 (t=-1.26, p=ns)	-.13 (t=-1.56, p<.10)
Track Record	.23 (t=3.41, p<.001)	.23 (t=3.41, p<.001)	.23 (t=3.41, p<.001)
Experience	.09 (t=1.20, p=ns)	.09 (t=1.20, p=ns)	.09 (t=1.20, p=ns)
Sex	-.02 (t=.23, p=ns)	-.02 (t=.23, p=ns)	-.02 (t=.23, p=ns)
Rationality		.42 (t=7.79, p<.001)	.37 (t=5.73, p<.001)
Exchange		.36 (t=5.70, p<.001)	.31 (t=4.98, p<.001)
Ingratiation		.01 (t=.05, p=ns)	.01 (t=.05, p=ns)
Assertiveness		-.11 (t=-1.26, p=ns)	-.11 (t=-1.26, p=ns)
Coalition Building		-.18 (t=-2.51, p<.001)	-.16 (t=-2.14, p<.01)
Upward Appeal		-.37 (t=5.73, p<.001)	-.34 (t=5.13, p<.001)
Trustworthiness		.29 (t=4.56, p<.001)	.23 (t=3.41, p<.001)
Rationality*Assertiveness			-.17 (t=-2.29, p<.01)
Rationality*Trustworthiness			.33 (t=5.09, p<.001)
Exchange*Trustworthiness			.20 (t=2.79, p<.001)
Ingratiation*Trustworthiness			.05 (t=1.02, p=ns)
Assertiveness*Trustworthiness			.20 (t=2.79, p<.001)
Coalition Building*Trustworthiness			.15 (t=1.99, p<.01)
Upward Appeal*Trustworthiness			.31 (t=4.98, p<.001)
Adjusted r ²	.02	.16	.39

Notes: Cells include un-standardized beta (t-value, one-tailed p-value).

APPENDIX

NOTES:

1. Respondents were required to focus on a product modification that was proposed by the salesperson between six and twelve months prior to the date of filling out the questionnaire.
2. Unless noted otherwise the anchors for all scale items were 1 = Strongly Disagree and 5 = Strongly Agree.

Construct: Intra-Organizational Influence Strategies

Adapted From: Shriesheim and Hinkin 1990; Goebel, Marshall, and Locander 2006

Rationality

The salesperson...

1. Presented a detailed justification for their ideas to the product management team.
2. Presented facts, figures, or other related information to support their point of view.
3. Very carefully explained the reasons behind their request.
4. Used logic to convince the product management team of the validity of their ideas.

Exchange

The salesperson...

1. Offered to do things to facilitate the product management team's role in exchange for compliance with his/her request.
2. Reminded the product management team of past favors that they had done while making their case for a specific product modification.
3. Offered to do things to make the product management team's job easier if we would comply with their proposal.
4. Offered to help with the product management team's tasks if we would comply with the salesperson's proposal.
5. Offered the product management team a desired task benefit in return for compliance with the proposal.

Ingratiation

The salesperson...

1. Emphasized the important role that the product management team plays in generating competitive advantage for the firm.
2. Was very polite when speaking with the product management team.
3. Was friendly with the product management team before making their request.
4. Went out of their way to make the product management team feel good about him/her.
5. Sympathized with the product management team about the challenges we face in getting things done within the organization.

Assertiveness

The salesperson...

1. Set a deadline for the product management team to do what they wanted.
2. Repeatedly reminded the product management team of what they wanted.
3. Pointed out to the product management team that organizational rules required us to comply with the request.

Coalition Building

The salesperson...

1. Obtained support from other units in the organization to back-up their position.

2. Obtained support from individuals within the marketing team to back-up their position.
3. Discussed their position widely across functional units within the organization in order to generate support for their position.
4. Presented their position to other functional units within the organization (e.g., operations) to secure their approval.

Upward Appeal

The salesperson...

1. Appealed to senior management in order to put pressure on the product management team.
2. Filed a report with senior management in order to pressure the product management team to do what the salesperson wanted.
3. Requested the product management team to consult with senior management in deciding whether or not to accept their position.
4. Obtained informal support for their position from senior management.

Construct: Trustworthiness

Adapted From: Mayer and Davis (1999)

The following statements refer to the product management team's assessment of the salesperson PRIOR to their discussions with the team about their product modification proposal. Please indicate the extent to which the product management team agrees with the following statements⁴.

Ability

1. This salesperson was very capable at performing their job.
2. This salesperson was known to be successful at the things they try to do.
3. This salesperson had much knowledge about what the organization needs to do to meet customer preferences
4. We were very confident about this salesperson's skills
5. This salesperson had specialized capabilities that could increase sales revenues for our organization
6. This salesperson was well qualified.

Benevolence

1. This salesperson was very concerned about our welfare.
2. Our needs and desires were very important to this salesperson.
3. This salesperson would not knowingly have done anything to undermine our activities.
4. This salesperson really looked out for our well-being.
5. This salesperson would go out of their way to help us out.

Integrity

1. This salesperson had a strong sense of justice.
2. We never had to wonder whether this salesperson would stick to their word.
3. This salesperson tried hard to be fair in their dealings with customers and functional units within the organization.

⁴ We also measured trustworthiness using the present-tense version of these items to capture the current level of salesperson trustworthiness. We tested our hypotheses using both measures and obtained identical (in terms of statistical significance levels) results.

4. This salesperson's actions and behaviors were not very consistent. (Reverse Coded)
5. We approved of this salesperson's values.
6. Sound principles seemed to guide this salesperson's behavior.

Construct: Compliance

Adapted From: Payan and McFarland (2005) and Kohli (1989)

1. The product management team went along with the salesperson's proposed modification.
2. The product management team implemented the salesperson's proposed modification.
3. The product management team accommodated what this salesperson wanted us to do.
4. The product management team adjusted the product according to the salesperson's proposal.
5. The product management team acted in order to accommodate the salesperson's desire.

Construct: Market Performance

Adapted From: Sethi (2000); Sethi and Iqbal 2008

Using the **last 3 months** as the time-frame, please provide your ratings on the following items:

Over the last 3 months...

1. The sales revenues generated by this product have increased.
2. The market share of this product has increased.
3. The profit margins associated with this product have increased.
4. Customer satisfaction with this product has increased.
5. We are happy with the performance of this product in the marketplace over the last three months.

Controls

Constructs: Consistency of Proposed Change, Magnitude of Proposed Change, Frequency of Change Proposals; Salesperson Tenure, Salesperson Track Record, Sex

Consistency of Proposed Change (New Scale)

How consistent was the salesperson's proposed modification to the product with your data from other sources (e.g., your independent market research, your own industry knowledge, accepted wisdom within your organization)

Anchors: 1 = entirely consistent and 5 = entirely consistent

Magnitude of Product Modification Request (New Scale)

Modification of the product per the salesperson's request will require...

Significant changes to our production processes

Significant changes to our marketing campaign

Significant changes to our other product lines

Significant investment of company resources

Frequency of Product Modification Requests (New Scale)

This is the first time that that this salesperson has requested product modification.

(reverse)

This salesperson seeks to modify our products all the time.

This salesperson has made many attempts in the past to get changes made to the features of the product that they are selling.

This salesperson is always recommending changes to product features to ensure a good fit with customer preferences.

Salesperson Tenure

How long has this salesperson worked for your organization?

Less than 6 months

Between 6 months and 1 year

Greater than 1 year and less than 2 years

Between 2 years and 3 years

Greater than 3 years

Salesperson Track Record

Where does this salesperson rank relative to their peers on their selling performance vis-à-vis your organization's customers?

Bottom 25%

Between 26% and 50%

Between 51% and 75%

Between 76% and 90%

Between 91% and 100%

Salesperson Sex

Female (value = 0)

Male (value = 1)

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