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The sales manager's tasks, rights and scope of responsibilities – an exploratory study from the agricultural machinery market

Abstract

The purpose of the paper is twofold: first, to briefly review the competences and tasks of the sales manager; second, to attempt to verify empirically the normative model of work of the sales manager on the market of agricultural machinery in Poland. The presented results of an exploratory study show tasks, rights and scope of the sales manager's responsibilities on the agricultural machinery market. They also contain information about the place of the sales manager position in the organisational structure of the enterprise. On the basis of the presented findings one can conclude that managing the sales department effectively and efficiently poses a great challenge. The sales manager should have broad competences which enable not only achieving sales objectives but also moulding positive relations with internal and external environment. Furthermore, skills in the key areas of tasks and rights attributed to the position should be constantly developed.

Keywords: sales manager, tasks, rights, scope of responsibility, competences, job description, sales manager's position in the enterprise's organisational structure

Introduction and objectives

The one of a kind role of the sales manager, who is a link between the market and the enterprise affecting both systems and shaping their mutual relations, seems to be noticed (and appreciated) rather by practitioners than academics dealing with the subject of sales. On the publishing market lack of scholarly papers on specificity of the sales manager's work is noticeable. The literature refers above all to the characteristics that a good sales manager should exhibit (more on the subject: Deeter-Schmelz 2008), and to general descriptions of functions and tasks performed in this position (e.g. Stanton & Spiro, 1999; and Strafford & Grand 1989; Cybulski 2004). What is missing, however, are detailed analyses of areas of responsibilities and scopes of tasks of those managing sales departments.

The main purpose of this paper is to verify empirically the normative model of work of the sales manager on the market of agricultural machinery in Poland. The background for presenting the research results constitutes critical analysis of the subject literature, with special recognition of the publications related to the sales manager's competences and tasks.

Competences searched in the recruitment process of prospect-effective sales manager

While looking for a sales person, whether it will be a sales representative or a sales manager, various qualities are taken into consideration. It is worth remembering, that different traits can be obligatory for a management related position and for a seller in a local grocery shop. Nevertheless, there are some meta-qualities needed while recruiting a prospect-effective salesperson (Fournier and Poujol, 2011, p. 287). They can be divided into seven areas: personality, intellectual qualities, moral qualities, communication, organization, actions and physical qualities (see Table 1).

Table 1. The salesperson's meta-qualities

Personality	Enthusiasm, emotional stability, self-confidence
Intellectual qualities	Open-mindedness, flexibility, ability to analyze and synthesize
Moral qualities	Reliability, sense of responsibility, ethics
Communication	Listening, ability to present arguments, empathy
Organization	Methodical ability to delegate and to be accountable
Actions	Ambition, dynamism, creativity
Physical qualities	Physical and mental stamina

Source: Fournier Ch., Poujol J.F., (2011), Sales force recruitment and selection in Guenzi P., Geiger S. (eds), *Sales management. A multinational perspective*, Ed. Palgrave Macmillan, p. 287

Contemporary sales managers should have the skills to communicate, lead, build teams, motivate salespeople and form alliances with clients (Carter 1997, p. 3). According to D.R. Deeter-Schmelz et al. study (2008, p. 13), there is a correlation between particular characteristics and the effectiveness of a sales manager. Attributes that an effective sales manager needs to possess are (in order of relevance in manager's ranking):

- communication and listening skills,
- human relations skills,
- organization and time management skills,
- knowledge possession,
- coaching skills,
- motivational skills,
- honest and ethical tendencies,
- selling skills,
- leadership skills,
- willingness to empower,
- adaptability.

Communication and listening skills that stand for the ability to communicate and listen effectively, were also pointed out by the sales representatives as the most important for the managers to be successful.

In the opinion of M. Schwarz (2006, p. 2) ideal sales managers exhibits certain predominant traits, which lead to exceptional performance. The exemplary characteristics

mentioned are: ambition, ethics, orientation for the results, ability to help motivate, care, morality, supportive attitude, eagerness to collaborate, dedication, patience, strategic thinking, empathy, passion and intelligence. Additionally, the author states in his book that excellent sales managers must have four areas of skills well-developed:

- team-building skills and critical management communication,
- the ability to lead the future,
- profound understanding of the business dynamics and competitive forces,
- the predominant instruments to build and manage accounts and channels of distribution (ibidem, p. 3).

Furthermore, M.A. Sahaf (2008), while establishing relational sales force requirements, noticed that the sales executives should identify the following key success factors ensuring high performance of salespeople:

- knowledge about product mix, corporate philosophy and culture, level and intensity of competition, sales technology that inspire customer's confidence and enable gaining buyer's trust,
- interpersonal, communication, technical and self-management skills,
- and knowledge and expertise competences (pp. 366-367).

A combination of the qualities mentioned above enables sales managers to fulfill their tasks. The roles and areas of responsibilities of sales management personnel will be elaborated in the next section of this paper.

The sales manager's responsibilities

The qualities required to manage the sales department are numerous and diverse, so as the roles a sales manager has to play in a company functioning. The subject literature presents different approaches to the fields of his responsibilities and duties (e.g. T.R. Bacon 1999, pp. 11-12; R. Brown 1990, pp. 2-4; T. Carter 1997, p. 3; M. Schwartz, 2006, p. 4). G. Gschwandtner (2006, pp. 2-10) describes a sales manager as a leader, coach, mentor, goal setter, strategist and communicator. After the author, the most important and the most difficult task of a sales manager is to coach and develop his team.

B. J. Farber (2003) sets five goals for those who manage sales departments:

- to make quotas for salespeople consistently,

- to operate at a profit,
- to grow and expand the business,
- to build a strong team,
- and to self-develop (pp. 51-54).

The last aim is particularly important as a manager must develop salespeople and should serve as an example for his personnel.

According to C.L. Tyagi and A. Kumar (2004) sales managers' areas of responsibility can be divided into three groups:

- activities within the company – building formal and informal organizational structures, ensuring effective communication inside the sales department and in its relations with other company's sections;
- activities outside the company – building and maintaining an effective distribution network, serving as a key contact with customers and other external publics;
- other responsibilities – taking part in decision processes related to: budgeting, quotas, distribution policies, pricing etc. (pp. 1-2)

The range of tasks assigned covers both administrative and executive work. A detailed job description of a sales manager in a medical instruments company illustrates the diversity of this position. The responsibilities mentioned are: recruiting, setting and achieving sales goals, managing company assets, managing operating expenses, human resource management, general management and total compensation management (A. A. Zoltners et al. 2009, p. 208). In the light of the above, one can conclude that the most important roles a sales manager has to play are: to recruit, build, lead, manage and reward a group of sales representatives.

Research methodology

Dissimilarity of sales situations, as well as a different position of the sales department in the management structure of the company determine diversification of functions, tasks, rights and working styles of sales managers. Thus questions arise whether one can distinguish their universal tasks and areas of responsibility, and whether one can build a model of work of sales managers.

An attempt at developing such a model was undertaken in the years 2009-2010 in relation to agricultural machinery industry¹. At the first research stage a method of literature studies was used. Next, normative documents were studied (National Standards of Professional Qualifications, sales managers' job descriptions obtained from companies operating on the analysed market). The conducted literature analysis and document studies laid the foundation for developing a normative set of tasks, duties, responsibilities and rights of the sales manager of agricultural machinery². Subsequently, this set was submitted for verification in a questionnaire study. Its results are discussed in this paper.

The study, conducted between January and March 2010, embraced 61 sales managers representing manufacturing companies from the agricultural machinery sector in Poland³. Its tool was a questionnaire divided into several sections with the lowest number of questions possible (mostly closed-ended questions). The particular thematic blocks were concerned with: tasks performed by sales managers (the managers were asked to indicate intensity of performing a given task⁴), a range of rights related to the discussed position, a detailed scope of responsibility assigned to the sales manager position, the place of the sales manager position in the organisational structure of the enterprise and working conditions. The final section of the questionnaire contained questions on a socio-demographic profile of the sales manager and characteristic features of the company, e.g. the employment size, the type of business entity, or the duration of the enterprise's existence on the market.

In order to receive a maximum number of returned survey questionnaires a series of various research techniques was applied. The questionnaire, among other things, constituted an enclosure to a business offer, was distributed during business meetings, sent by post or

¹ The choice of the market was dictated by the interests and professional experience of P. Niewiadomski, who for more than five years has been linked with national and international production, trade and services enterprises of the agricultural machinery sector, being employed at a managerial position in one of them and providing advisory-training services for several others.

² A theoretical model of the agricultural machinery sales manager's work was presented in detail in P. Niewiadomski's doctoral dissertation, Competences assessment of sales managers in machine manufacturing companies, defended at Poznan University of Technology in 2011. Due to limitations regarding the text size, it is impossible to present it in this paper.

³ In the selection procedure of sales managers of agricultural machinery the following formula was used: affiliation to the Polish Chamber of Commerce for Agricultural Machines and Facilities, partnership with the Industrial Institute of Agricultural Engineering in Poznań, membership of the Chamber of Industry and Commerce for Agricultural and Food Machines, co-operation with the Manufacturing Plant of Spare Parts and Agricultural Machines "Fortschritt", represented by the author of this publication, and a marketing report on an analysis of agricultural machinery, equipment, devices and spare parts developed by International Consulting Agency

⁴ For each of 50 characteristics a Likert scale (from 0 to 5) was applied, described also verbally: 0 – lack of task performance, 5 – very intensive task performance.

email. Depending on the applied technique of the survey, completed questionnaires were returned directly on the day of the meeting, returned in self-addressed stamped enveloped or sent by email via an especially prepared application facilitating the process of answering questions. Exceptionally, in a few cases direct interviews were used.

Research results

Tasks of sales managers

Sales managers are involved in various tasks in their companies, with the intensity of task performance measured on a scale of 0 (lack of task performance) to 5 (very intensive task performance) varying depending on the type of a task. Taking into account the criterion of intensity of performed tasks, the tasks were divided into three groups, i.e. tasks characterised by high, average and low intensity of performance. Assigning the isolated 50 tasks to the particular groups was based on their average value, calculated on the basis of indications by the majority of managers participating in the study. The following solution was adopted: the lower limit of the value interval for the group of tasks with a high intensity of performance was constituted by the value of the third quartile, whereas the upper limit of the value interval for the low-intensity tasks – the value of the first quartile. As a result, the following value intervals were identified:

- 5.0-3.32 – tasks performed with high-intensity (group 1),
- 3.31-2.57 – tasks performed with average-intensity (group 2),
- 2.56 and less – tasks performed with low-intensity (group 3).

In the group of tasks performed by sales managers with highest intensity dominant are those connected with customer service and conducting commercial transactions, resulting from subordinate-superior relations within a specific organisational structure of the company, and the ones to do with monitoring and analysing the situation on the market (see table 1.)

The conducted study results suggest that the overriding task conducted by sales managers of agricultural machinery is building lasting partnership relations with customers (an average evaluation at 3.92 on a 0-5 scale). Such a high position of this task leads to a conclusion that agricultural machinery sales managers in a practical way implement in their enterprises the principles of customer relationship management strategy.

The comprehensive nature of activities undertaken and implemented by sales managers in the field of customer service are confirmed by other tasks indicated by them as “tasks of high-intensity performance”. Among these there are: maintaining commercial relations with prospective customers, keeping a record of customers and topics (an average of 3.79) and maintaining and developing relationships with company's customers, as well as gaining and handling new customers (an average of 3.72).

Table 2. Tasks performed with high intensity

Specification	Average
I take part in building long-term, partnership relations with customers	3,92
I maintain business contacts with potential customers, I keep a record of customers and topics I deal with	3,79
I maintain and develop relationships with existing customers of the company, I gain and handle new customers	3,72
I negotiate and decide on detailed terms of co-operation and monitor their correct course	3,69
I promote the company's offer in its full extent or a part	3,62
I set and delegate tasks to my subordinates	3,61
I create reports to be passed on to my superiors	3,57
I supervise team performance	3,52
I decide on a sales strategy and forms of company promotion	3,43
I conclude commercial contracts and negotiate their terms and conditions	3,43
I conduct market analysis	3,41
I gather market information and monitor competitors	3,38
I evaluate staff performance	3,33

Legend:

related to customer service and conducting commercial transactions

resulting from superior-subordinate relations within the company's specific organisational structure

related to market analysis and monitoring

Source: Own work based on research results

Another important area of sales managers' work are also activities undertaken as part of promotion and negotiations, which have a direct effect on the course and results of co-operation with customers. Those performed with high intensity include: negotiating and establishing detailed terms of co-operation and monitoring their correct course (an average of 3.69), promoting the company's offer (an average of 3.62), deciding on sales strategies and forms of company promotion (an average of 3.43), and concluding commercial contracts and negotiating their terms and conditions (an average of 3.43).

The second group of tasks characterised by sales managers as those with the highest intensity of performance is comprised of activities resulting from subordinate-superior relations. The key role in this case plays delegating tasks to subordinates (an average of 3.61) and effective reporting to superiors (an average of 3.57). A comprehensive management of customer relations requires also the skill of being the team leader. Therefore, the task of managing team work is performed with high intensity by sales managers (an average of 3.52). The consequence of holding a managerial position is conducting a performance evaluation of subordinates (an average of 3.33).

Among tasks related to monitoring and analysing the market (the third distinguished category) in the foreground there are activities connected with gathering market information, including the immediate company environment – customers and competitors (an average of 3.38) and conducting analyses of the collected information (an average of 3.41).

A characteristic feature of the second group, embracing tasks of average intensity performance, is its high number. On a scale of 0 (- lack of task performance) to 5 (very intensive task performance) as many as 23 statements received average estimations in the 2.57-3.31 interval, which is almost half of the defined list.

In the group of tasks typical of the sales manager position which are implemented with lower intensity in comparison with those listed in group 1, one can distinguish four groups of activities: those related to customer service and conducting commercial transactions, those resulting from superior-subordinate relations within a specific organisational structure of the company, those linked with determining strategies and programmes of company activity on the market, and the ones connected with implementing marketing programmes of the company's activity on the market.

Among tasks associated with customer service and conducting commercial transactions, unlike group 1 tasks included in this category, dominant tasks are those about advising customers and providing them with appropriate information. The conducted study has revealed that the tasks are not as priority in character as the group 1 tasks. Sales managers are obliged to advise potential customers on the purchase of a particular model, kind of product or a technical solution (an average of 3.23), ensure support in an optimal choice of solutions in the process of developing projects, products or services (an average of 3.13) and

disseminate informational materials, catalogues and technical descriptions among prospective buyers (an average of 3.02). As far as customer service related tasks are concerned, sales managers focus relatively little in their activity on receiving and processing orders from customers (respective averages of 2.80 and 2.98). To a yet smaller extent do they organise training for and meetings with customers (an average of 2.66).

The second group of tasks characterised by average intensity of performance stems from superior-subordinate relations within the framework of a specific organisational structure of the enterprise. In the subordinate role, the sales manager conducts two types activities, that is: filing reports about undertaken activities and problem issues (an average of 3.11) and co-operating with superiors (an average of 2.93). On the other hand, as a superior towards their subordinates, the sales manager deals with selecting incentive strategies (an average of 3.02) and – yet to a lesser extent – recruiting employees and organising training for them (an average of 2.59).

Another category of tasks embraces activities related to developing strategies and programmes of the company's activity on the market. Taking into consideration the intensity level of performance, the tasks form the following hierarchy:

1. analysis and evaluation of market opportunities related to selling a product or a service (an average of 3.28),
2. planning, co-ordination and implementation of marketing activities and strategies (an average of 3,26),
3. co-development of the company's strategy (an average of 3,15),
4. developing and introducing new products and services (an average of 2,75),
5. involvement in developing promotional and loyalty programmes (an average of 2,59).

Looking at the above list from the point of view of the company's marketing management, one can formulate a thesis that sales managers are to a higher degree involved in activities typical of the strategic management phase rather than the tactical one, for which it is typical for example to develop specific programmes of promotional and loyalty-building activities.

The final group of tasks distinguished by an average intensity of performance consists of activities to do with implementing marketing programmes of the company's activity on the

market. The key task in this case is participation in trade fairs, exhibitions as well as maintaining contact with media and running meetings with dealers (an average of 3.28). Other typical marketing activities conducted by sales managers include:

- developing a field sales network (an average of 2.98),
- passing on directives to appropriate organisational units of the company (an average of 2.84),
- organising and accounting for conducted promotions (an average of 2.70),
- taking care of product availability on the market, their display, the culture of sales and post-sales services (an average of 2.69),
- developing, analysing and evaluating marketing reports (an average of 2.69),
- preparing and implementing marketing activities in the allocated area (an average of 2.57).

Similarly to the previously analysed groups of tasks with high and average intensity of performance, also low-intensity tasks can be divided into several categories. Unlike the other two groups, among less significant tasks there are practically no activities related to customer service and conducting commercial transactions, with one exception, i.e. supervising deliveries for customers. Among the low-intensity of performance tasks there are not either those resulting from superior-subordinate relations. In this group one can generally distinguish two categories of tasks:

- a) tasks connected with establishing strategies and implementing marketing programmes of the company's activity on the market⁵,
- b) tasks related to monitoring and analysing the market situation.

In the group of tasks characterised by a low intensity of performance the clearly dominant are promotional activities resulting from the marketing plans adopted by the company. These are:

- determining the target groups, budget and forms and elements of advertising message (an average of 2.13),

⁵ In the case of some of the defined tasks activities typical of the stage of strategic marketing management (related to developing a strategy) were combined with tasks of tactical character (related to implementing marketing programmes). For this reason – unlike the division applied in group 2 – one category was created, embracing the whole of marketing activities conducted by the sales manager.

- determining the mission, aims and detailed solutions of the conducted advertising campaigns (an average of 2.12),
- organising and commissioning advertising actions of the company's products (an average of 1.97),
- supervising production of promotional and advertising materials (an average of 1.74),
- co-operation with advertising agencies on developing and implementing promotional programmes (an average of 1.57),
- preparing press advertisements (an average of 1.49).

Among marketing activities conducted by sales managers one can also distinguish designing and conducting marketing research (an average of 2.23), running training for the personnel of entities co-operating with them (an average of 2.56) and taking care of merchandising standards (an average of 2.33). A notable effect of the whole of the activities undertaken in sales are specific financial results, thus analysing accounting-financial documents which allow for assessing the obtained results is yet another task of sales managers (an average of 2.26).

The other category of tasks characterised by a low intensity of performance embraces a series of analytical activities, relating to the functioning of the company's immediate environment. In this case definitely dominant are tasks linked with monitoring the market of potential employees, and not customers and competitors as in group 1 embracing tasks characterised by the highest intensity of performance. Sales managers' tasks include analysing job offers with an angle to sought after employees (an average of 2.54) and collecting offers from potential employees (an average of 2.30). Moreover, as part of the environment monitoring they also deal with supervising co-operation with entities of public administration, suppliers and financial institutions (an average of 1.75).

The scope of sales manager's rights

The results of the conducted study suggest that the highest percentage of managers have the rights to sign agreements and contracts, and every second manager – to establish prices and discount policies as well as to decide on the marketing-sales strategy. Less than half of the managers declare having the authority to make decisions on a special price, payment dates and hiring and firing employees, and very third manager can freely manage the

finances. The decidedly smallest group consists of managers who have access to the company bank account and have an active influence on the production processes (see table 2.).

Table 3. The scope of rights related to the held position

Specification	% of responses
The right to sign agreements, contracts	62,3
Establishing prices	54,1
Deciding on the marketing-sales strategy	50,8
Preparing the discount policy	49,2
Authority to make decisions on a special price	47,5
Deciding on payment dates	47,5
Hiring and firing staff	44,3
Managing the allocated finances	32,8
Access to the company's bank account	13,1
Influence on production processes	9,8

Source: Own work based on research results

Responsibility held by sales managers

In relation to the held position, sales managers bear various kinds of responsibility, which could be distinguished into five groups: financial, personal, material, legal and quality responsibility. The biggest number of sales managers – more than half – declare financial responsibility, nearly every second indicates bearing personal responsibility, and 39% of the managers – legal responsibility. Every third manager is responsible for material side of their activity, and relatively the lowest number – every fifth – indicates supervising the quality of provided services.

People employed as sales managers of agricultural machinery are also responsible for concrete activities and their implementation, such as, above all, sales effectiveness and sales results. Special attention is also given to maintaining long-term relations with customers, as well as representing the company and its image (see table 3).

Table 4. Detailed scope of the sales manager's responsibilities

Specification	% of responses
Sales effectiveness, sales results	77,0
Maintaining long-term relations	63,9
Worthy representation of the company, creating an image	62,3
Rational price offers	54,1
Hiring and firing staff	48,3
Establishing beneficial discount policy	47,5
Processing concluded agreements, contracts	44,3
Appropriate motivating	42,6
Customer service quality	31,1
Financial liquidity (payment dates)	27,9
Loss of customers	21,3
Employment size	11,5
Appropriate circulation of documents	9,8

Source: Own work based on research results

An important area of sales managers' competences are price-related activities – every second among them bears responsibility for pricing and establishing a beneficial discount policy. More than half of the managers declare holding responsibility for hiring and firing staff, and more than 40% - for motivating their subordinates. An equally important task is care of processing the concluded agreements and contracts, on the other hand, the managers are slightly less frequently responsible for maintaining financial liquidity.

A very important area of managers' responsibility is customer relationship management – every third manager is responsible for customer service quality, and every fifth – for loss of customers. The sales manager's position is relatively seldom linked with bearing responsibility for employment size and the right circulation of documents.

Sales manager's position in the organisational structure of the enterprise

In the company structure the sales manager of agricultural machinery operates usually as a subordinate towards another member of staff. When asked about their direct superior, managers most often indicate a person working in the position of a director. Equally often the

superior is the company owner, slightly less often the role is performed by the company's chairperson. A decisively lower percentage of the respondents list another sales and marketing manager or director as their superior (see table 4).

Table 5. Subordination of the sales manager's position in the organisational structure of the enterprise

Specification	% of responses
Director	23,0
Company owner	21,3
Chairperson	14,8
Manager	4,9
Sales and marketing director	1,6
No data	34,3

Source: Own work based on research results

Sales manager as a superior

The obtained data indicates that nearly 40% of the respondents perform the function of a superior for 5-9 employees (see table 5). A rather small number of employees (up to five) is subordinate to every fourth sales manager embraced by the study, every fourth indicates also being a superior to at least a dozen or so employees. Managing a team of 50 or more employees, on the other hand, is declared by a mere 5% of the managers.

Table 6. Number of employees subordinate to the sales manager

Specification	% of responses
4 and less	24,6
5-9	36,1
10-50	26,2
51-249	4,9
No data	8,2

Source: Own work based on research results

Time devoted to professional work

Due to the scope of the possessed rights and responsibilities and the company's size and profile, the number of hours managers spend daily at work is very varied. Definitely most of them, since more than half (54.1%), declare that they devote from 9 to 12 hours to their work per day. Significantly fewer, as only one in three managers (27,9%), spend 6 to 8 hours in the company, whereas every fifth manager (18%) indicates that professional activity takes them more than 12 hours a day.

Sales manager's conditions of work - advantages and disadvantages resulting from the held position

The conducted study reveals that, contrary to stereotypic opinions, the biggest advantage of holding the sales manager's position is not a high salary, but an opportunity to take up new challenges. The prospect of professional development takes the second place, and the level of salary finds itself only in the third place (see table 6).

Table 7. Benefits of holding the position of “sales manager”

Specification	% of responses
New challenges	67,2
Vision of professional development	62,3
Salary level	57,4
Operating within a broad circle of people	42,6
Out of office work	24,6
Prospect of promotion	19,7
High social rank	3,3

Source: Own work based on research results

Social benefits stemming from operating in a wide circle of people are indicated a little more seldom. Among benefits related to the sales manager's position listed are: the possibility of working out of office and promotion prospects. It is noteworthy that only 3% of the managers associate their position with holding a high social rank, in other words perceive it as raising the social prestige.

The obtained data suggests that decidedly the biggest drawback of the sales manager's position is stress. Among other major shortcomings mentioned are also: a wide scope of tasks and responsibilities and necessity to do office-administration jobs. Flexitime and a high level of responsibility are also major burdens in the opinion of the respondent managers. What is mentioned less often is fierce competition on the market and out of office work - which for some constitutes an advantage of the sale manager's work (see table 7).

Table 8. Drawbacks of holding the position of the “sales manager”

Specification	% of responses
Stress	75,4
A wide scope of tasks and responsibilities	54,1
Office-administration jobs	37,7
High level of responsibility	36,1
Flexitime	36,1
Fierce competition	16,4
Out of office work	9,8
Necessity for ongoing development of competences	4,9

Source: Own work based on research results

Conclusions and research limitations

The study results provided knowledge about the specificity of the sales manager's work on the market of agricultural machinery. It appeared that the primary aim of this position's existence is performing tasks related to customer service and managing the sales team. Tasks performed with lower intensity include: monitoring and analysing the situation on the market, as well as establishing strategies and programmes of the company's activity on the market. The sales manager has a wide range of rights – first of all, to sign contracts, and decide on the price and sales-marketing strategies. They also bear great responsibility for sales results, maintaining long-term relations with customers and representing the company and its image.

In this context one can state that nowadays it is a great challenge to manage the sales department efficiently and effectively. It is becoming important to recruit the manager with

broad competences and constantly improve their skills and tasks in the areas of the tasks and rights attributed to the position. The presented results of the study may therefore prove useful for companies – both for those which recruit sales managers and those which develop programmes of professional development for their sales directors/managers. Knowledge about the model of work of those managing the sales department may also come in handy for training companies and universities offering programmes and post-graduate studies which enhance the skills of this type of managers.

The main limitation of the presented study results is the specificity of their line of business. The conducted study was exploratory in nature and one should treat it as a starting point for proper research, which would form the basis for creating a general profile of the sales manager's work. In the future it is planned to widen the scope of research to include other lines of business from the business-to-business sector.

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