

## IMPACT OF SALES PROMOTIONAL STRATEGIES ON ORGANIZATIONAL PERFORMANCE IN NIGERIA

**Stephen Pembi, PhD Student**

Department of Business Administration, Faculty of Social and Management Sciences,  
Adamawa State University, P.M. B. 25, Mubi-NIGERIA

**Aliyu Umaru Fudamu, PhD**

Department of Business Administration, Faculty of Social and Management Sciences,  
Adamawa State University, P.M. B. 25, Mubi-NIGERIA

**&**

**Ibrahim Adamu**

Faculty of General Studies, Federal University Dutse, Ibrahim Aliyu Bye – Pass,  
P.M.B. 7156, Dutse, Jigawa State-NGERIA

### ABSTRACT

Marketing communication is very important and at the same time challenging in the organization. The marketing communication mix elements have become the important players in the life of any businesses be it small, medium or large. The objectives of this study are to examine the impact of sales promotional strategies on organizational performance with reference to Flour Mills Maiduguri, Borno State Nigeria. The population of this study was carved out of the entire staff of the Flour Mills of Nigeria Maiduguri, Borno State branch cutting across the Top, Middle and lower level management. The study employed both the primary and secondary sources of data collection. Questionnaires were administered to twenty (20) staff using random sampling techniques. The data collected were subjected to descriptive statistics such as percentage analysis in order to analyse the data and regression analyses were used for testing hypotheses. The result signifies that sales promotional strategies have positive and significant effects on organizational performance. The study recommend that company should at all time have to planned, organized, directed and controlled their sales promotion programme in place as this will help them to make such promotional strategies effective and efficient. Also, they should take advantage of festival period or events by developing effective sales promotional tools that can influence consumers' awareness about the product in the events.

**Keywords:** Consumer Promotion, Trade Promotion, Sales Promotion, sale Force Promotion.

### INTRODUCTION

Organizations have to communicate with their existing and prospective customers about the new development in the organization. This, indeed, is a phenomenal task in Nigerian market environment due to their characteristic nature which is further sum up by the notion of Nigeria's economic, demographic, social, political, legal, religious, cultural and environmental forces. Marketing communication is very important and at the same time challenging in the organization. The marketing communication mix elements have become important players in the life of any businesses be it small, medium or large. They help move market offerings (goods, services and ideas) from manufacturers/sellers to consumers and build and maintain relationships with customers, prospects and other stakeholders of the company.

Nowadays, in an era where the word 'integration' is used to express a variety of marketing and communication-related activities, where corporate marketing is emerging as the next important development (Balmer & Gray, 2003) and where relationship marketing is the preferred paradigm (Gronroos, 2004), marketing communications now need to move beyond the product information model and become an integral part of an organization's overall communications and relationship management strategy. The holistic marketing approach for services requires external marketing which deals with the interaction of the company as a whole with the customers in terms of the company's product, price, distribution channels, and promotional activities, as well as with other stakeholders (Lancaster & Reynolds, 2004).

To Fill (2005), marketing communications should be an audience-centred activity. In this sense, it is important that messages be based on a firm's understanding of both the needs and the environment of the audience. Marketers have access to several forms of communication, referred to collectively as the marketing communication mix. The mix elements include: advertising, personal contact, publicity and public relations, sales promotion, instrumental material and corporate design (Lovelock & Wirtz, 2004).

Thus, sales promotion is the main target of this study. The purpose of sales promotion is to motivate the customers to immediately purchase a particular product hence enhancing its sales. Sales promotion is an initiative undertaken by organizations to promote, increase in sales, usage of a product or services. Sales promotion act as a competitive weapon by providing an extra incentive for the target audience to purchase or support one brand over another. It is particularly effective in spurring product trial and unplanned purchases (Aderemi, 2003). In addition, sales promotion can be an effective tool in a highly competitive market environment, when the objective is to convince retailers to carry new product or influence consumers to select it over those of competitors. Also it tends to work best when it is applied to impulse items whose features can be judged at the point of purchase, rather than more complex, expensive items that might require hands demonstration (Odunlami & Ogunsiji, 2011). Sales promotion includes communication activities between the producer of goods and services, and the end users (consumers) that provide extra value or incentives to ultimate consumers, wholesalers, retailers and other organizational customers.

Thus, the fundamental nature of this study is to examine the impact of sales promotional strategies on organizational performance with reference to Flour Mills of Nigeria. However, the specific objectives are to:

- i. examine the impact of consumer promotion on organizational performance;
- ii. examine the impact of trade promotion on organizational performance; and
- iii. examine the impact of sales force promotion on organizational performance

Based on the objectives the following hypotheses were formulated:

- i. Consumer promotion has no positive and significant relationship with organizational performance
- ii. Trade promotion has no positive and significant relationship with organizational performance
- iii. Sales force promotion has no positive and significant relationship with organizational performance

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Concept of Sales Promotion

The power of sales promotion at influencing sales and customer's patronage has been acknowledged in the literature of marketing and sales management. Hardie (1991) explains

that sales promotion gives a short-term inducement of value offered to arouse interest in buying a good or service. It is offered to intermediaries as well as consumers in the form of coupons, rebates, samples and sweepstakes'. Foskett (1999) argues that sales promotions cannot be the sole basis for a campaign because gains are often temporary and sales drop off when the deal ends so that advertisement is often used to convert the customer who tried the product because of sales promotion into a long-term buyer.

Kotler (1994) noted that if sales promotion is conducted continuously, they lose their effect. Customers begin to delay until a coupon is offered or they question the product's value. When organizing sales promotion firms' can direct sales promotion to ultimate consumers, that is, Consumer-oriented sales promotion to support a company's advertising and personal selling. On the other hand firms' can also direct their sales promotion to traders like the wholesalers, retailers or distributors. This can be done by giving the traders allowances and discounts. They can also carry out cooperative advertising whereby manufacturer pays a percentage of the retailers' local advertising expenses for advertising the manufacturer's products and lastly, firms can train distributor sales forces to increase their performance (Hardie, 1991). To Moemeke (1997), besides advertisement, sales promotion is the next available marketing strategy that help to promote sales, increase product life cycle, sales growth and enhance customers' goodwill. Modern marketing management calls for more than developing good quality product, attractive price and making brands accessible to target customers. Companies engage in integrated marketing communication to attract and retain customers' loyalty.

In similar vein, Nwankwo (1996) observes that sales promotion as those marketing activities other than personal selling, advertising and publicity, which stimulate consumer purchasing and dealer effectiveness, such as display, shows and exposition, demonstrations and various nonrecurring selling efforts not in the ordinary routine. Achumba (2002) defined sales promotion as those marketing activities, other than personal selling, advertising and publicity that stimulate consumer purchasing and dealer effectiveness, such as displays, shows and exposition, and demonstration. Sales promotion is one of the ways used by firms to communicate with intended target audience. Sales promotion is unique in that it offers an extra incentive for action (Adrian, 2004). It also includes a combination of all marketing devices or techniques, special reductions, trade gift, premium offers, contests, and other such short-lived promotional activities directed towards consumers and retailers, aimed at motivating sales. In other words, it encourages immediate purchases. According to Manale, Jose and Zacharias (2007), Sales promotion has become a vital tool for marketers and its importance has been increasing significantly over the years.

Given the growing significance of sales promotion, there has been extensive interest in the effect of sales promotion on different dimensions such as consumers' price perceptions, brand choice, brand switching behaviour, evaluation of brand equity, and effect on brand perception. One of the purposes of a consumer promotion is to elicit a direct impact on the purchase behaviour of the firm's customers (Kotler, 2002; Blattberg & Scott, 1990). Research evidence recommended that sales promotions positively affect short term sales (Priya, 2004). Promotions affect significantly sales aggregate and stock piling and purchase acceleration (Akanbi & Ajagbe, 2012). However, there have also been studies that recommend that sales promotion affects brand perceptions. In another study, Schultz (2004) argues that over dependence on promotions can erode consumers' price-value equation. Similarly, Yoo, Dondhu and Lee (2000), based on structural equation model, suggest that frequent price promotions, such as price deals are related to low brand equity, whereas high advertising

spending, high price, good store image and high distribution intensity are related to high brand equity. There is also a managerial belief that if a brand is supported with frequent promotional offers, the equity of the brand tends to get diluted. On the contrary, there have also been studies that indicate brands benefit from promotions.

Amongst the elements of marketing mix, sales promotions have long-term influence on brand equity (Yoo, Dondhu, & Lee, 2000). Mariola and Elena, (2005), based on a sample of 167 buyers suggest that monetary and nonmonetary promotions are useful to create brand equity because of their positive effect on brand knowledge structures. Belch and Belch, (1998) have define sales promotion as a direct inducement that offers an extra value or incentive for the product to the sales force, distributors, or the ultimate consumer with the primary objective of creating immediate sales. Sales promotion involves some type of inducement that provides an extra incentive to buy. This incentive is usually the key element in a promotional programme. Also, Osunbiyi (1991) observed that sales promotion is the marketing practice of temporarily offering better value for money, sales promotion is not a personal selling. It is a miscellaneous selling tool not categorized as advertising or personal selling. It is a non routine sales activity. Promotion centres on some form of special purchase incentive offered to the consumers or retailers and it is usually short-termed in nature. It is tactical, and it is designed to achieve a short term objective, sometimes in a limited area or through certain outlets. Promotion is used as a tool to gain the support of the trade, either directly through trade promotion or indirectly through consumer promotion (Akanbi & Ajagbe, 2012).

Some researches prove that sales promotions do not have a constant or continued effect on volume of sales of a firm which tend to diminish and come at the initial level at which it was before the sales promotion is being offered (Dekimpe, Hanssens & Silva-Risso 1999; Pauwels, Hanssens, & Siddarth, 2002; Srini, Srinivasan, & Anderson, 2000). However the usefulness of sales promotion, that whether it promotes, the long term growth and profitability among brands for which it is projected is not compulsory (Kopalle, Mela & Marsh, 1999). Research conducted by Ailawad and Neslin (1998) revealed that sales promotions motivate the consumers to make immediate purchases and also positively impacts the consumption volume.

Therefore, based on the above literature, it is reasonable to conclude that sales promotion is a marketing strategies that is designed to attract a customer to take a specific action such as creating a purchase that usually occur for adequate period of time to help create a sense of necessity. In other word sales promotion is promotional activities other than personal selling, advertising, publicity/public relation, and direct marketing that stimulate interest, trial, or purchase by end users (final consumers).

### **Objectives of Sales Promotion**

The most important objective of sales promotion is to bring about a change in the demand prototype of products and services. Essentially, sales promotion has three precise objectives. First, it is meant to give significant marketing information to the prospective buyers. The second objective is to induce and influence the potential buyers through convincing measures. Thirdly, sales promotion is meant to operate as an influential tool of competition. The specific objectives of sales promotion according to Jain, (2014) are:

- i. **Add to the stock of the dealers:** Dealers like wholesalers and retailers usually deal with a multiplicity of goods. Their selling activity becomes easier when the manufacturer supplements their efforts by sales promotion measures. When a product

- or service is well supported by sales promotion, dealers are automatically induced to have more of such items.
- ii. **Attract new customers:** Sales promotion measures also play an important role in attracting new customers for an organization. Typically, new customers are those persons that are won away from other firms. Samples, gifts, prizes, etc. are used to encourage consumers to try a new brand or shift their patronage to new dealers.
  - iii. **Helps the firm to remain competitive:** Most of the companies undertake sales promotion activities in order to remain in the competitive market. Therefore, in the modern competitive world no firm can escape the responsibility of undertaking sales promotion activities.
  - iv. **Increase sales in off-seasons:** Many products like air-coolers, fans, refrigerators, air-conditioners, cold drinks, room heaters, etc. have seasonal demand. Manufacturers and dealers dealing with such type of goods make every effort to maintain a stable demand throughout the year. In other words, firms try to encourage the purchase of such goods in off-seasons also. That is the main reason behind discounts and off-season price reductions of such items in the market during slack seasons.
  - v. **Induce existing customers to buy more:** Sales promotion devices are most often used to induce the existing customers of a firm to buy more. Product development, offering three products at the cost of two, discount coupons, are some of the sales promotion devices used by firms to motivate the existing buyers to buy more of a specific product.
  - vi. **Introduce new products or services:** Sales promotion is often used to motivate prospective consumers to try new products and services. Dealers are also induced to introduce new products and services in the market. More often than not, free samples are provided through dealers during such introduction. Likewise, discounts in cash or goods may also be offered to dealers to stock new products or deal with new services. Free samples, trade discounts, cash discounts are basically sales promotion measures.

### Impact of Sales Promotion on Organizational Performance

The effect that sales promotions have on the organizational performance according to Odunlami and Ogunsiji (2011) are:

- i. **Building brand loyalty:** Sales promotion helps to build brand loyalty by giving the seller the chance to draw a loyal and profitable set of customers which provides sellers some protections from competition and greater control in planning their marketing mix (Shira, 2003)
- ii. **Encouraging off season buying:** Sales promotion has also encouraged off season buying especially during the festive periods, people tend to buy more of a particular product because of the added value, compared to normal season.
- iii. **Encouraging purchase of large size unit:** Sales promotion consists of diverse collection of incentive tools, mostly short term designed to stimulate quicker or greater purchase of products or service by consumer e.g. the use of premiums, product warranties etc. stimulate consumer purchase in larger quantities (Rotimosho, 2003 as cited in Odunlami & Ogunsiji, 2011)
- iv. **Generating trials among non-users:** Trials among non-users of a product are generated through invitation of potential purchasers to try the product without cost or little cost with the hope that they will buy the product.
- v. **Influencing retailers to carry new items and higher level of record:** Sales promotion persuades retailers to give shelf freedom to original products. Companies provide retailers with financial motivation to stock novel products.

Categorically, sales promotion has been seen to centre on customer relationship management, free gifts, free sample, and price discount. If an organization successfully gear sales promotion techniques, it will not only push large purchase but it will also boost the sales performance of a company, consistently leading to the realization of the declared objectives.

### Conceptual Framework

From the literature reviewed, the conceptual framework is presented below. The framework is established on the relationship among sales promotional strategies and organizational performance. As argued in the previous discussions, the dimensions of sales promotion include consumer promotion, trade promotion, and sales force promotion. In this study sales promotion strategies serve as independent variables, while organizational performance serves as dependent variable of the study.

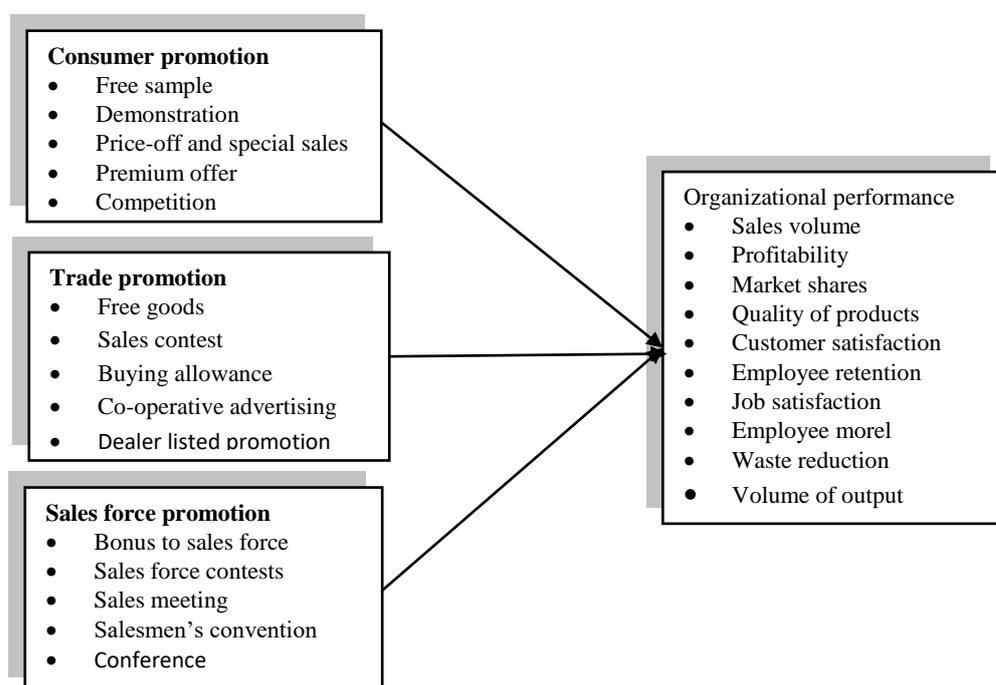


Figure 2.1 Conceptual Model of sales promotional strategies and organizational performance (Researcher' design, 2017)

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study examines the effect of sales promotion on organizational performance with reference to Flour Mills of Nigeria. The study is a descriptive research and survey method implored to elicit relevant information. This implies that the population of this study was carved out of the entire staff of the Flour Mills of Nigeria Maiduguri, Borno State branch cutting across the Top, Middle and lower level management.

In understanding this study, it employs both the primary and secondary sources of data collection. In this end questionnaires were administered to twenty (20) staff using random sampling techniques in order to generalize the findings later on the entire population. The data that were collected through the structured questionnaire that were effectively administered were further subjected to percentage analysis and Regression statistics in order to test the relationship between the variables.

**Data analysis, Result and Discussions**

As earlier noted, the analysis of this study is based on the questionnaires that were administered.

**Table 1: Sales Promotion affects Company Sales Volume**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Agree	10	50.0	50.0	50.0
Agree	5	25.0	25.0	75.0
Strongly Disagree	3	15.0	15.0	90.0
Disagree	2	10.0	10.0	100.0
Total	20	100.0	100.0	

Source: Survey, 2017

Table 1 above shows that 50% of the respondents strongly agreed, 25% agreed, while 15% and 10% strongly disagreed and disagreed respectively. This signifies that the nature of products determine the type sales promotional strategies to be adopted by the organization.

**Table 2: Sales Promotion helps to Increase the Profit of the organization**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Agree	9	45.0	45.0	45.0
Agree	7	35.0	35.0	80.0
Strongly Disagree	3	15.0	15.0	95.0
Disagree	1	5.0	5.0	100.0
Total	20	100.0	100.0	

Source: Survey, 2017

Table 2 above indicates that 45% of the respondents strongly agreed, 35% agreed, 15% strongly disagreed and 5% disagreed with the statement. This means that the profitability of the organization is determined by sales promotion.

**Table 3: Degree of Competition Determines the Sales Promotion of the Organization**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
High	5	25.0	25.0	25.0
Moderate	9	45.0	45.0	70.0
Low	3	15.0	15.0	85.0
undecided	3	15.0	15.0	100.0
Total	20	100.0	100.0	

Source: Survey, 2017

In analysis of table 3, 45% of the respondents indicate that the degree of competition is moderate, 25% shows high degree, while 15% indicates low and undecided. This shows that the degree of competition in the market place determines the sales promotion of the organization.

**Table 4: Sales Promotion Enhances the Purchase of Organizational Products**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Agree	6	30.0	30.0	30.0
Agree	10	50.0	50.0	80.0
Strongly Disagree	3	15.0	15.0	95.0
Disagree	1	5.0	5.0	100.0
Total	20	100.0	100.0	

Source: Survey, 2017

Table 4 above establishes that 30% of the respondents strongly agreed, 50% agreed, while 15% and 5% strongly disagreed and disagreed respectively. This implies that the purchases of the organization products are determined by sales promotion.

**Table 5: Sales Promotion helps in Increasing Market shares of the Company**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Agree	5	25.0	25.0	25.0
Agree	9	45.0	45.0	70.0
Strongly Disagree	4	20.0	20.0	90.0
Disagree	2	10.0	10.0	100.0
Total	20	100.0	100.0	

Source: Survey, 2017

Table 5 above, designate that 25% of the respondents agreed with the statement, 45% agreed, while 20% and 10% strongly disagreed and disagreed respectively. This connote that the sales volume and market share of the organization are enhanced by effective sales promotion.

#### 4.2 Testing Hypotheses

**Hypothesis 1:** Consumer promotion has no positive and significant relationship with organizational performance

The dependent variable is organizational performance and the independent variables the dimensions of consumer promotional strategies: free sample, demonstration, price off and special sales, premium offer and competition. The estimation results shows that all the dimensions of consumer promotional strategies have positive and significant impact on organizational performance at (F=15.984, P<0.01) significance level. The overall model fit for regression equation was determined by F-statistics. The independent variables accounted for 47% ( $R^2 = 0.470$ ) of variance in dependent variable of organizational performance with (Beta=0.686). This implies that the  $H_0$  which state that Consumer promotion has no positive and significant relationship with organizational performance is rejected thereby accept the  $H_1$ .

Table 6: Coefficients<sup>a</sup>

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	-.490	.567		-.865	.398
Consumer Promotional Strategies	.718	.180	.686	3.998	.001

a. Dependent Variable: Organizational Performance

Significant at  $P < 0.01$ ;  $R = 0.686$ ;  $R^2 = 0.470$ ; Adjusted  $R^2 = 0.441$  and  $F = 15.984$

**Hypothesis 2:** Trade promotion has no positive and significant relationship with organizational performance

The result of regression analysis based on independent variables: trade promotional strategies (i. e. free goods, sales contest, buying allowance, co-operative advertising and dealer listed promotion). The overall model fit for regression equation was determined by F- statistics. The model indicate positive and statistically significant impact on organizational performance ( $F = 18.950$ ,  $P < 0.01$ ). The independent variables accounted for 51.3% ( $R^2 = 0.513$ ) of variance in dependent variable of organizational performance with a (Beta=0.716). This signifies that the  $H_0$  that is state trade promotion has no positive and significant relationship with organizational performance is rejected and  $H_1$  is accepted.

Table 7: Coefficients<sup>a</sup>

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	-.092	.434		-.211	.835
Trade Promotions Activities	.578	.133	.716	4.353	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Organizational Performance

Significant at  $P < 0.01$ ;  $R = 0.716$ ;  $R^2 = 0.513$ ; Adjusted  $R^2 = 0.486$  and  $F = 18.950$

**Hypothesis 3:** Sales force promotion has no positive and significant relationship with organizational performance

The result of the regression analysis with regards to independent variables: sales force promotion strategies (i.e. bonus to sales force, sales force contests, sales meeting, salesmen's convention and conference). The estimated result indicate that all the dimensions of sales force promotion have a positive and significant impact on organizational performance at ( $F = 15.819$ ),  $P < 0.01$ ) with a (Beta=0.684). The independent variables accounted for 46.8 ( $R^2 = 0.468$ ) of variance in dependent variable of organizational performance. This implies that the  $H_0$  which is stated that Sales force promotion has no positive and significant relationship with organizational performance is accordingly rejected and accepted  $H_1$

Table 8: Coefficients<sup>a</sup>

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	-.005	.453		-.012	.991
Sales Force Promotional strategies	.598	.150	.684	3.977	.001

a. Dependent Variable: Organizational Performance

Significant at  $P < 0.01$ ;  $R = 0.684$ ;  $R^2 = 0.468$ ; Adjusted  $R^2 = 0.438$ ; and  $F = 15.819$

## CONCLUSION

From the results of the study, sales promotion is believed to have significant impact on organizational performance. Sales promotion is any program undertaken by an organization to promote an increase in sales, usage or experiment of a product or service

Sales promotions are one of the key communication mix tools being used by almost all of the organizations to positively impact their profitability. Many researches prove the positive impacts of this tool on organization profitability, while some also discuss its possible potential or the lack of it as a long run weapon for the organization.

Sales promotion is important at all level of product life cycle but it is more important at the preliminary and growth stage. Therefore, the impact of sales promotion on organizational performance have been positive and have resulted in increased organizations sales volume and profitability in terms of purchase of products by consumers which will in turn lead to advanced sales and profitability.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

With regards to the finding of this study, it is logical to recommend as follows:

- i. Any company, be it large or small should be aware that there are certain time for effective use of sales promotions. For instance during festival period, there organization should take advantage of that by developing effective sales promotional tools that can influence consumers awareness about the product.
- ii. Company should at all time have to planned, organized, directed and controlled their sales promotion programme in place as this will help them to make such promotional strategies effective and efficient.
- iii. Organization should train and retrained their sales personnel as how they should embark on their sales activities.

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