
A Multidimensional Approach to Motivating Salespeople

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A multidimensional approach has been recognized as a superior method for motivating the individual worker [28]. Until recently, researchers made few systematic attempts to operationalize such an approach. Instead, the bulk of the research effort was expended on examining the efficacy of various types of rewards in motivating salespeople. Some researchers proposed that monetary rewards were the primary motivators of sales effort [11, 30, 34]; while others suggested that psychological incentives (e.g., recognition, personal growth) were also important in motivating salespeople [5, 8].

A number of different measuring instruments for job satisfaction has recently evolved [16]. One, INDSALES used for measuring industrial job satisfaction, has been proposed [7]. Scores obtained from this instrument however, fail to provide the required data for designing motivational techniques. The scores are lopsided to the degree that the manager cannot determine the individual level of satisfaction wanted since the satisfaction scores were not appraised against standards set by the individual salesperson.

The purpose of this paper is threefold: First, to discuss a multidimensional approach to motivation; second to

propose an alternative measuring instrument that would weigh the presently obtained job satisfaction scores by comparing them against evaluative standards set by the individual salesperson; and, third, to present a model in an attempt to operationalize the process of multidimensional approach to motivating salespeople.

MULTIDIMENSIONAL APPROACH TO SALES MOTIVATION

The orthodox assumption among many sales managers has been that sales motivation and performance can be improved simply by offering greater financial rewards [18]. Such an assumption however ignores findings in the behavioral sciences which indicate that nonfinancial incentives equally motivate the salesforce and in some instances even better [5, 1, 2].

Financial vs. nonfinancial incentives dictate a unidimensional approach to sales motivation. Such incentive theories, with their derivative techniques of motivation, are a function of different major assumptions about the nature of salespeople. In other words, what determines the technique[s] the sales managers employ, depend upon the assumptions they nurture about the nature of salespeople. So far there are three major assumptions about the nature of the individual employee: economic, social, and self-actualizing [6].

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Under each of these assumptions, certain needs are singled out as the prime motivators for human behavior. The needs that cause behavior are classified from physiological to self-realization based on the motivation theory of Maslow [20].

The "economic man" assumption about the nature of the individual focuses on Maslow's lower-order needs (physiological, safety, and security). The salesperson tries to satisfy his/her survival needs of food, shelter, and clothing, which are provided for by an economic means, such as pay. Financial incentives, therefore, are considered to be a primary sources of motivation.

Under the "social man" assumption, the individual is rather bent on satisfying his/her social needs such as belonging, esteem, and status. The sales manager, therefore, uses "social" incentives to motivate salespeople such as by providing them with an organizational climate

The three assumptions about the nature of the individual are unidimensional and thus overlook the complexity of human nature. This convinced one researcher to conclude that a new approach is in the offing since ". . . man is a more complex individual than rational-economic, social, or self-actualizing man" [28]. The nature of the individual is multifaceted. He or she is a complex being and, therefore, Maslow's low- and higher-order needs motivate at varying degrees in different situations. Churchill et al. [7] studied the motivators of salespeople in two large industrial firms and found that the importance of motivators varied among salespersons according to their age and family obligations. For example, financial rewards were highly valued by older salespeople and by those who were married and had large families; while younger, less experienced, and highly educated salespeople valued promotion and opportunities

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whereby they would be able to satisfy their social needs. Supervision, company parties, forming smaller work groups in which employees can interact and exchange sentiments are some means of social incentives.

The "self-actualizing" assumption of the individual centers on Maslow's self-realization and fulfillment needs. Here, the primary needs of the individual are for personal and psychological growth. To motivate the employee, the manager tries to provide the right conditions and surroundings for higher productivity and personal satisfaction through achieving Maslow's higher-order needs.

for growth the most. Thus, a sales force will have a complex need structure which necessitates the use of a variety of motivators.

Individuals are different and should be treated as such. A multidimensional approach to the "complex man" leads to a situational view of motivation. Motivation techniques then should be tailored to fit the particular needs of the individual, rather than having the manager adopt one generalized motivational device and apply it universally to all subordinates, as has been advocated by some theorists and practitioners under the economic, social, and self-actualizing assumptions about the nature of the individual. Motivation techniques chosen should be contingent upon the needs of the particular individual.

The multidimensional concept implies that a motivational problem can be created by one or more factors. Therefore, it is necessary for the sales manager to investigate all three major areas of the salesperson's needs (economic, social, and self-actualizing) to see if there is any lack of fit between them. According to the multidimensional concept, motivation is not a matter of hier-

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archy but a balance of the three needs in the salesperson's life space¹ as is shown in Figure 1.

By a *balance state* we mean a state in which economic (existence), social (relation-oriented), and self-actualizing (growth) needs fit together without stress in the salesperson's life space. On the other hand, a lack or imbalance results in stress and pressure toward change (e.g., another job, another supervisor, or simply a dissatisfied salesperson). Thus, imbalance results in tension which forces a change toward balance. In sum, multidimensional, rather than unidimensional, approach to motivation is more congruent with the multifaceted, multi-need nature of the individual. Such a multidimensional approach necessitates the use of an appropriate measuring instrument which would provide data to determine the state (balanced or imbalanced) of the salesperson's triumvirate of needs.

DISEQUILIBRIUM MODEL

Although INDSALES, an instrument developed uniquely for measuring the job satisfaction of industrial salespeople [7], takes into consideration that a raw score on a psychological measurement instrument should contain a point of reference to judge the relative positions of respondents on the job characteristic by comparing their raw scores, this problem is solved merely by using the total distribution of raw scores as a set of norms.

This procedure of transforming raw scores into standardized scores by taking account of the mean and standard deviation of the total distribution of scores provides useful information on a given respondent's position *only* relative to other respondents in the distribution [7]. However, it fails to take into account that individuals are unique and that each individual's raw scores should be compared against his/her own frame of reference or standard. A simple example suffices. Two salespersons spend 8 hours on sales calls. One does three sales, the other, two. If satisfaction were synonymous with rewards received, the first salesperson should be more satisfied with his day's work. But what if the first salesperson aspired or expected to make at least five sales that day, then we would consider him or her to be more

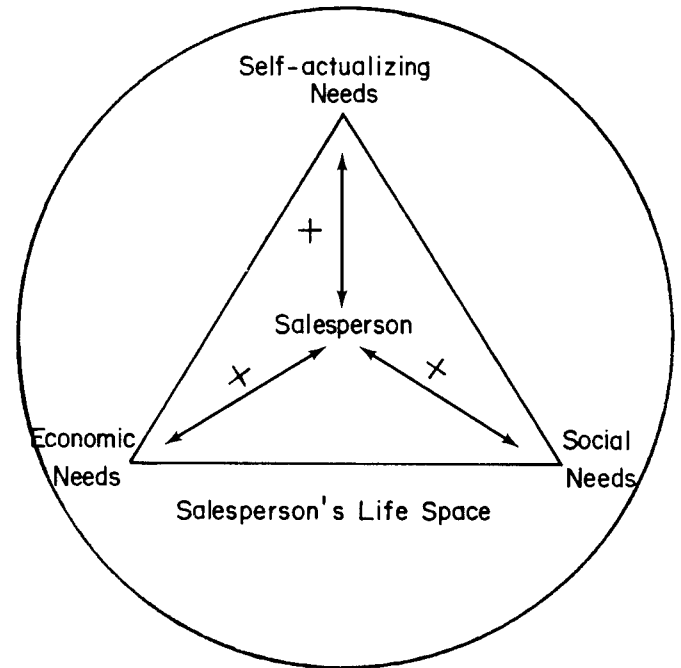


FIGURE 1. A triumvirate of needs in the salesperson's life space (+ means needs are filled or satisfying; - means needs are unfilled or dissatisfying).

dissatisfied than the salesperson who expected or aspired to make two sales and closed two sales. Since there are variations in opinions, convictions, feelings, and values of what is appropriate among the members of a group of people, then individual satisfaction may not be compared to group norms, especially in the area of social-psychological needs and values where the variations are greater from one individual to another [14, 29, 35, 33]. The concept of personal values reflects expectations about an individual's own behavior and the behavior of others. "Values, like attitudes, define what is expected and what is desired" [19]. A given job characteristic, i.e., promotion, is differently desired by different individuals [16, 7].

To overcome the shortcoming of INDSALES, an alternative approach to measuring satisfaction is proposed based on Porter and Lawler [25] and Locke's [16] definition of job satisfaction. Porter and Lawler [25] defined job satisfaction as the extent to which rewards actually received meet or exceed the perceived equitable level of reward. Similarly, Locke [16] defined job satisfaction as the perceived difference between what a person actually receives and what he wants to receive. The difference between Porter et al. and Locke is that the former uses the equitable reward level as a basis for comparison, while the latter uses the aspiration level as a point of

¹According to Lewin, the life space affects all aspects of behavior, loving, thinking, analyzing, buying, consuming, working. Thus, it is the totality of the individual's world as he/she perceives it [15, 13]. Rogers referred to life space as phenomenal field, and both of these terms relate to the subjective experience of the individual in terms of what he/she perceives, what he/she feels, and what he/she thinks he/she needs [27].

reference. A failure to receive the expected level of rewards creates a feeling of job dissatisfaction.

According to the two definitions previously given, the computation of satisfaction involves the subtraction of the amount of rewards received from the amount expected or aspired. Such a procedure ignores the important factor attached to the job characteristic from which the reward is derived. Since individual salespersons differ on their perceptions of the importance of various job characteristics, the "value importance" attached to each job characteristic makes a great deal of difference in the appraisal of job satisfaction on the individual basis. Bett-

In the Disequilibrium model, the evaluation is arrived at in a similar manner to that followed in the expectancy-value model used for attitude scaling, with the exception that an explicit assessment is made of the difference between the preferred and actual on each job characteristic.

In this formulation, satisfaction will be expressed inversely. The smaller the absolute difference between the preferred (aspired) and actual, the smaller D will be, but the higher the satisfaction derived from job characteristic_i will accrue, which can be computed individually or aggregately for all job characteristics_n in the motivational

"the value importance attached to each job characteristic makes a great deal of difference."

man [4] attempted to isolate conditions under which "value importance" will enhance prediction, and concluded that it will contribute to the explanatory power only when the evaluative criteria are differing in their importance to the individual.

To determine the state of the relationships between the salesperson's triumvirate of needs, the following formulation is proposed which is a modification of the expectancy value model:

$$D_{jk} = \sum_{i=1}^n W_{ik} (B_{ijk} - P_{ijk}) \text{ where:}$$

D_{jk} = salesperson K's disequilibrium score for motivational need_j.

W_{ik} = the importance weight given job characteristic_i by salesperson K.

B_{ijk} = salesperson K's belief as to the extent to which job characteristic_i is provided for motivational need_j by the present work situation.

P_{ijk} = salesperson K's preferred (aspired) level of attractiveness of job characteristic_i in the need_j area.

n = the number of job characteristics important in the satisfaction of a given motivational need_j.

need_j. For example, if there were actual job characteristics at the preferred level, the term $(B_{ijk} - P_{ijk})$ would cancel out and disequilibrium would be zero in need_j.

The principle of exception is applied to this approach for, what is important to the sales manager is the knowledge of the makeup of the unsatisfied portion (disequilibrium) of a salesperson's triumvirate of needs at a particular time. Such an information would enable sales management to determine the appropriate incentives (economic, social, or self-actualizing) in motivating the salesperson along desired lines [31, 6].

To use the disequilibrium paradigm, the sales manager will have to obtain three responses from the salesperson on each component of the triumvirate of needs (see Table 1):

1. Rating of value importance of each job characteristic by the salesperson (i.e., How important is this job characteristic to you?)
2. Determining belief as to the extent or level of satisfaction is presently obtained from a given job characteristic (i.e., How much of the characteristic is there now connected with your job?)
3. Determining the preferred (aspired) level of satisfaction the salesperson would like to obtain from

each job characteristic (i.e., How much of the characteristic do you think should be connected with your job?)

Each rating will be recorded on a 7-point scale as indicated below: (minimum 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 (maximum)).

Porter's [25] need Fulfillment Questionnaire for Management can be used for measuring job satisfaction of the salesperson, but only after rewording and/or reanalysis. Robinson et al. [23] states that such a scale would probably be most useful for situations requiring a scale that can be applied directly to the same (a highly similar) type of occupations (e.g., salesforce of a company). The part of the questionnaire that measures need fulfillment and need satisfaction is identical with a questionnaire that has been adopted previously in several studies involving over 5,000 managers [24, 10, 9, 32, 26]. However, definitive psychometric data are lacking on Porter's instrument [23]. The construct validity of this scale is of the greatest concern, not only for this scale, but for any psychological instrument for that matter. The validity of any measurement instrument can never be ascertained beyond all doubt [21]. Therefore, results obtained from such a scale should be approached with caution, at least until stronger evidence is available.

TABLE 1
A Sample of Job Characteristics within each Component of the Triumvirate of Needs in the Salesperson's Life Space

Component	Job Characteristics
Economic Needs (existence needs)	Pay Fringe benefits Job security
Social Needs (relation-oriented needs)	Supervision Fellow workers Customers Company policy & support
Self-Actualization Needs (growth needs)	The job Promotion and advancement Recognition Responsibility

MADAM-T MODEL

In an attempt to facilitate the sales manager's monitoring of a subordinate's state of motivation in a constantly changing socioeconomic and work environment, a model is presented. This model integrates and synthesizes most of the theoretical functions discussed in this article for multidimensional approach for determining the appropriate motivational technique (MADAM-T) which is shown

"Meet the multiple needs of a salesperson."

The questionnaire primarily consists of 13 items of the following form:

The opportunity for personal growth and development in my management position:

- a) How much is there now?
(min) 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 (max)
- b) How much should there be?
(min) 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 (max)
- c) How important is this to me?
(min) 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 (max)

These items can be preclassified into one of the three types of needs (economic, social, and self-actualizing) to determine the disequilibrium conditions in the salesperson's triumvirate of needs. The triumvirate of the salesperson's needs, thus, would serve the basis for taking corrective actions by the sales manager.

as a flow diagram in Figure 2. MADAM-T can be programmed mathematically to simulate each important decisional area. Methodologically, such a process-oriented model is similar to most stepwise simulation techniques in which the different components of motivational need areas are treated separately at every stage.

Although MADAM-T model is self-explanatory, here is, briefly, how it flows: After scanning the internal and external environment for changes which may affect the motivation status of the salesperson, the manager has to determine whether a disequilibrium in the triumvirate of needs has taken place. By means of the disequilibrium model, the manager can decide whether the disequilibrium exists in economic, social, or self-actualizing needs. The selection of the motivational technique is, thus, dependent on the type of need in imbalance. On the other hand, if the input causes no disequilibrium, the present motivational technique is continued.

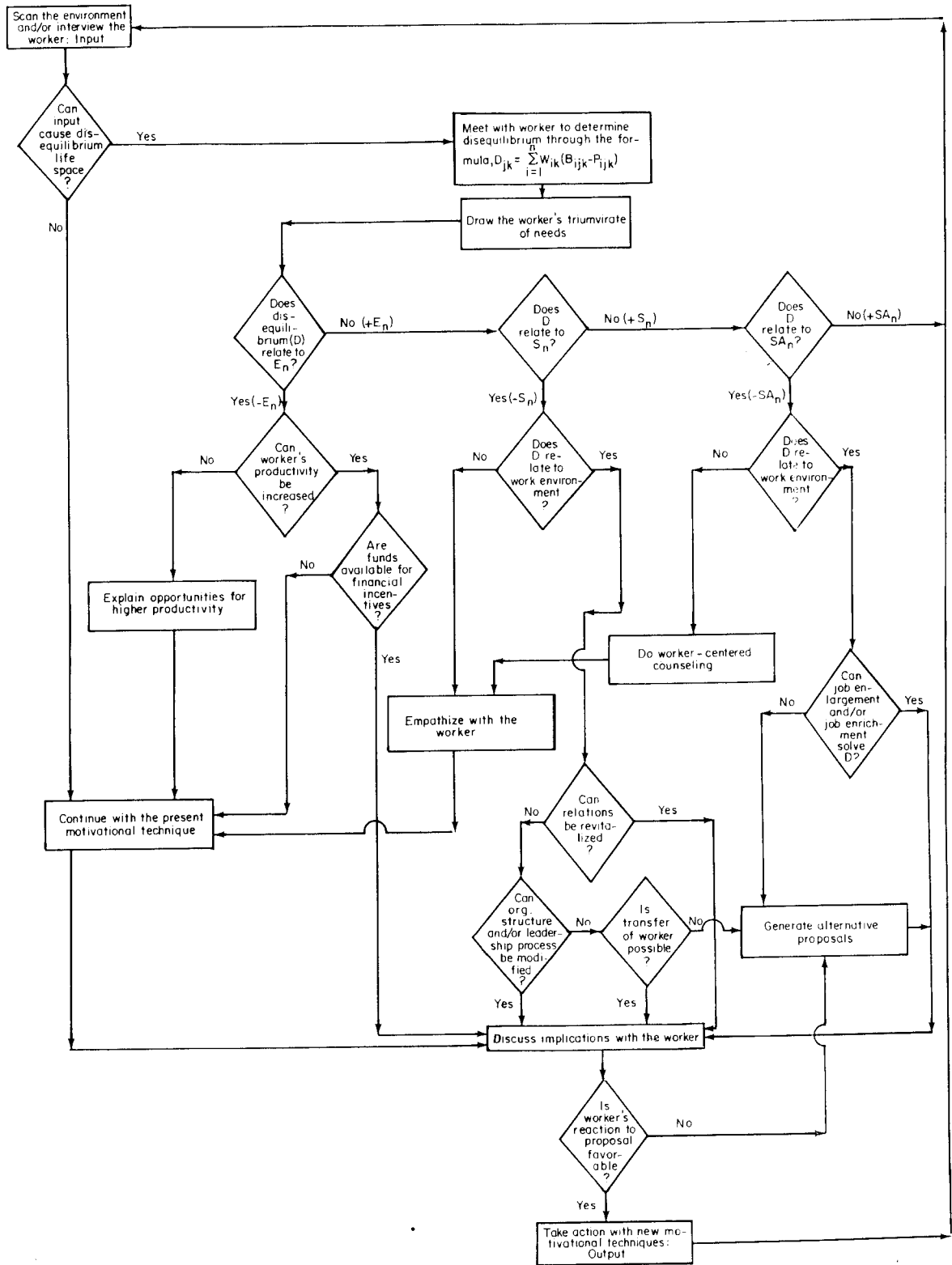


FIGURE 2. Multidimensional approach for determining the appropriate motivational technique (MADAM-T Model).

Once the disequilibrium area is determined, the manager's next task is to change the imbalance state into a balanced one via financial incentives (e.g., higher wages), affective motivation (e.g., leadership style), or innovative work system (e.g., job enrichment). Whatever action has to be taken, the implications have to be discussed with the salesperson. Should the worker's reaction be favorable, then the suggested motivational technique be adopted and, thus, the manager arrives at a new motivational technique which completes the cycle and gives rise to another round of scanning the environment.

CONCLUSION

The multidimensional approach to motivation can be summed up by the following relationship:

$$M = f [(+E_n) + (S_n) + (+SA_n)]$$

- M = motivation.
 +E_n = economic needs of the salesperson.
 +S_n = social needs of the salesperson.
 +SA_n = self-actualizing needs of the salesperson.

Expressed in algebraic terms, the triumvirate is balanced if the product of the signs is positive and not balanced if the product of the signs is negative. This means that systems of one negative and two positive relations, or three negative relations are not balanced. Hence, $M = f [(+E_n) + (S_n) + (+SA_n)]$ is noncompensatory in terms of individual motivational areas (e.g., a balanced or positive E_n does not necessarily make up for an imbalanced or negative S_n).

MADAM-T model attempts to operationalize the multidimensional approach with the help of the disequilibrium model, as an alternative to INDSALES. Like the open-management approach, as presented by Kafka and Schaefer [12], the disequilibrium model emphasizes the importance to see the salesperson's needs through his or her eyes.

The unidimensional approach to motivation is incongruent with a multineed and complex worker. Motivation of the sales force should begin with an understanding of the various personal needs of the salespeople who, like all individuals, have a triumvirate of needs. MADAM-T appears to promise the sales manager one possible way to plan and control in one of the most valuable areas of the sales force management of the firm.

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