

Learning Cross-Selling from Peers: How Networking Affects Cross-Selling and Sales Performance

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Abstract

This article investigates how salespeople learn to cross-sell successfully. Although cross-selling is a top strategic priority for many firms, many fail to do it successfully. Surprisingly, research largely neglected this managerially relevant topic. Drawing on social learning theory, we theorize and test (1) how networking facilitates learning to cross-sell and (2) how cross-selling affects individual sales performance. To this end, we collect multisource data, including survey data and archival data, from 262 B2B salespeople. Notably, we pioneer measuring cross-selling performance using objective data. The results reveal that networking behavior increases cross-selling behavior through networking performance, suggesting networking facilitates social learning of how to cross-sell. Moreover, we find that cross-selling strengthens salespeople's customer retention and sales revenue. However, cross-selling also has a dark side as it harms customer acquisition and profitability.

Keywords: *networking; cross-selling; learning*

Track: Sales Management and Personal Selling