

# How Salespeople Communicate Value in Business Markets

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## **Abstract**

While effective communication of value is key for sales success, anecdotal evidence and prior research indicate that salespeople often struggle to craft tailored value propositions in multi-actor buying processes. This study, therefore, examines adaptive value-based selling by analyzing how salespeople communicate value in varying successful sales conversations. Drawing on a combination of repertory grid, means-end chaining, and fuzzy set qualitative comparative analysis, the authors relate customer behavior characteristics with particular selling endeavors. By so doing, the authors unpack the context-dependency of sales interactions and identify a full list of 35 customer specific perception cues salespeople use for adapting customer value propositions as well as their value communication behavior. Further, the combination of value communication matrices/maps and buying center member configurations demonstrate heterogeneity in how value is communicated as arising both from particular constellations of customer as well as seller characteristics.

**Keywords:** *value-based selling; value in use; value propositions*

**Track:** Sales Management and Personal Selling