

Sharing emotions: Empathy and its influence on Selling skills

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Abstract

This research examines if there is an influence of a salesperson's empathy on perceived selling skills and whether the emotions displayed by the salesperson during a sales conversation are related to buyers' evaluations of the seller's empathy. Using structural equation modelling, we analyse data generated from automated emotion tracking of 63 role-played sales conversations, as well as post-questionnaires. Our findings indicate that empathy is a significant predictor of selling skills. Furthermore, the model reveals that overall negative emotions are negatively related to perceived empathy. Specifically, long displays of sadness have a significant negative effect on perceived empathy. Our work has important implications for personal selling and training on emotional intelligence in particular.

Keywords: *empathy; selling skills; emotions*

Track: Sales Management and Personal Selling