

How B2B marketing function drives sales? Understanding customer journey facilitation in different interaction contexts

Harri Terho

Tampere University

Anna Salonen

University of Jyväskylä

Deva Rangarajan

IESEG School of Management

Mekhail Mustak

IESEG School of Management

Acknowledgements:

This research was partly funded by the Finnish Foundation for Economic Education (LSR). Grant no: “Managing the new B2B sales imperative: The role of sales enablement in facilitating digitally supported customer purchase journeys.

Cite as:

Terho Harri, Salonen Anna, Rangarajan Deva, Mustak Mekhail (2023), How B2B marketing function drives sales? Understanding customer journey facilitation in different interaction contexts. *Proceedings of the European Marketing Academy, 52nd*, (114357)

Paper from the 52nd Annual EMAC Conference, Odense/Denmark, May 23-26, 2023



How B2B marketing function drives sales? Understanding customer journey facilitation in different interaction contexts

Abstract

Digitalization is fundamentally transforming the nature of B2B exchange across industries. To respond to this shift, B2B firms' marketing functions have a substantial role in driving sales by engaging the buying and usage center members along the customer journey. However, we lack a detailed understanding of how this is accomplished in practice. To fill this gap, this study generates a contextualized understanding of how B2B firms' marketing function supports sales through customer journey engagement. Through an analysis of 48 interviews with senior marketing and sales managers from leading B2B firms across various industries in Europe and the USA, we explicate how purchase journey challenges differ between four identified interaction contexts. These interaction contexts form the basis for delineating and explicating the contingent nature of the studied firms' marketing responses. The study contributes to business marketing and sales research by providing an integrative, yet contextualized view of the contemporary marketing function's role in driving sales.

Subject Areas: *Business-to-Business Marketing, Marketing Planning and Implementation, Marketing Strategy*

Track: Business-To-Business Marketing & Supply Chain Management