

The Dynamics of Product-Led and Relational Selling: Toward an Integrated Sales Strategy Framework for B2B Firms

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Abstract

This study examines how digitally enabled B2B firms combine product-led and seller-led sales approaches rather than treating them as a binary choice. Drawing on relationship marketing and an abductive qualitative design, we conducted semi-structured interviews with twenty B2B professionals involved in product evaluations. Findings show that firms often begin with product-led mechanisms (e.g., freemium, self-service trials) due to low entry barriers, but shift toward relational, trust-based selling as complexity, risk, or integration needs increase. Perceived value also evolves from functional benefits to strategic alignment and co-created outcomes. The study conceptualizes product-led sales as an entry stage within a dynamic sales continuum and offers guidance for designing hybrid go-to-market models that adjust engagement modes to enhance adoption, relationship depth, and long-term value.

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