COMMERCE 4ME3 - SALES MANAGEMENT
Winter 2023 Course Outline
Marketing
DeGroote School of Business, McMaster University

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course examines the essential functions of a `Sales Professional' in today's business environment. With the emerging nature of global and fiercely competitive markets, the onus is on the sales team, within most business organizations, to provide that vital edge. Good personal selling skills allow sellers to secure business by helping customers problem solve, meet new challenges and leverage current or emerging opportunities. This course introduces students to key theoretical frameworks for a sound foundation in the `science of selling' in face-to-face interactions. It offers opportunity to experience the practical application of learnt concepts in a controlled setting and will prepare students to become effective, ethical and strategic business-to-business sellers.

INSTRUCTOR AND TA CONTACT INFORMATION

Mandeep Malik
Associate Professor
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TA: Aravind Sithamparapillai
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COURSE ELEMENTS

Credit Value:	3	Team skills:	Yes	IT skills:	No	Global:	No
Avenue:	Yes	Verbal skills:	Yes	Numeracy:	Yes	Political:	No
Participation:	Yes	Written skills:	Yes	Innovation:	Yes	Social:	Yes
Evidence-based:	Yes	Experiential:	Yes	Final Exam:	No	Guest speaker(s):	Yes

COURSE SUCCESS SKILLS

Growth mindset; Curiosity; Analytical ability; Good interpersonal skills; Information mining skills; Interest in persuading and influencing people; Good Planning and Time Management; Effective Collaboration and Teamwork skills.

COURSE OBJECTIVE

The primary purpose of this course is to acquaint students with the essential concepts and practices in B2B buying and selling. Selling is about dealing with customers and their needs, and it has less to do with the product or service than is commonly believed. The course therefore has a focus on customer decision process and an influence approach for each stage of buying. It will be taught using a mix of classroom workshops, guest lectures and in class simulations. Role-plays will be used to give practice in analyzing customer types, solving typical sales problems, and developing a consultative selling approach.

COURSE CHALLENGES

1. Sharpen your ability to work thoughtfully in face-to-face interpersonal transactions.
2. Test your persuasion skills and presentation skills in role-play situations and refine your argumentation skills and `public speaking' confidence
3. Learn through self-critique and meaningful critique of peer ideas in class debates
4. Learn using the process of information search, information analysis and opinion development - also including disagreement / debate during all class discussions

LEARNING OUTCOMES

This course will help you to:
1. Understand the basics of professional selling practices, as they need to be applied today
2. Develop a strong foundation in the customer decision process for business buying and the related B2B sales process
3. Gain the knowledge and skills for a typical entry level sales position in the B2B environment

EVALUATION

Components and Weights

Participation in Class Discussions... .... 20% (*Individual*)
Video Recorded Role Plays …………………………………………………... 20%
Report on Practitioner Interviews ………………………………………….15%
Sales Role Play – Interim……………. 15%
Sales Role Play - Final... 30%

TOTAL 100%

IMPORTANT: STUDENT EVALUATION METHODS ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE

Course Delivery

LEARNING ACTIVITIES	DELIVERY	DESCRIPTION	TOOL(S)
Live Lectures / Discussions	Synchronous	Live discussion led by the professor and will include student led topic presentations	**On campus**
Practitioner Interviews	Asynchronous	Two Practitioner Interviews per Team. More than two interviews are acceptable.	**At your own pace based on defined timelines**
Readings	Asynchronous	Students will read and prepare for in-class discussions	**Required book**
Group Work	Asynchronous	Work in groups to complete a practitioner interviews report and role play practice assignments.	**At each group's discretion**

Required Book

'SELL THE WAY YOU BUY' by David Priemer

($20.79 for new paperback OR $16.63 for used on Amazon.ca)
Also available on Kindle and Audible.

Communication and Feedback

Students who wish to correspond with instructors or TAs directly via email must send messages that originate from their official McMaster University email account. This protects the confidentiality and sensitivity of information as well as confirms the identity of the student. Emails regarding course issues should NOT be sent to the Area Administrative Assistants. Instructors are required to provide evaluation feedback for at least 10% of the final grade to students prior to Week #9 in the term. Instructors may solicit feedback via an informal course review with students by Week #4 to allow time for modifications in curriculum delivery.

This lecture schedule is based upon current university and public health guidelines and may be subject to changes during the term. Any changes to the schedule or course delivery will be communicated on the course announcements section on Avenue to Learn. Please check the announcements prior to attending class.

A. CLASS CONTRIBUTION 20%

This course will rely heavily on `EMPOWERED LEARNING' – involving students in case discussions and in-class exercises on the topic of the day. As such it is imperative that you prepare for each class – this will determine the take home value of this course to you and impact your learning as well as that of your peers.

- Participation will be assessed through engagement in class discussion, attendance and active participation in asynchronous meetings if so offered.

- This is a shared learning environment with your peers and the professor, so please come prepared to engage in thoughtful dialogue about assigned readings, class content, work and personal experiences, as debate and active reflection are important to learning. Preparation for class will ensure deeper learning for you and allow for sharing of insights with your classmates, inviting and respecting your peer's perspectives – all in all to create a rich learning environment.

- Participation also includes contributing to other students learning by creating a respectful space where people can openly explore, test, and challenge ideas. Thus, you are expected to contribute to the creation of a constructive learning environment. This includes active participation in large and small group discussions, asking questions, sharing experiences, reflecting on links to practice and challenging your preconceptions and stereotypes. Important to remember that constructive contributing does not mean dominating the discussion.

- We will engage in problem solving conversations related to best practices in selling, current buyer behaviour and the emerging identity of a sales professional for today / tomorrow. We will work towards enabling productive conversation and classroom community building.

Interim contribution marks will be available through the TA EVERY TWO WEEKS throughout the term. Come to see me then if your mark is low, or well before if you are concerned that it might be low. The key to high participation grades is making a quality contribution to every class. Marks will be awarded on both quality and consistency.

Absence from class is a serious matter, since you obviously cannot participate if you're not there. If there are legitimate reasons for you to miss class, you need to provide documentation to the Academic Programs Office.

GROUP WORK

- Groups will consist of two students. Please note that <u>80% of your mark in this course is based on teamwork so choose your partner wisely</u>. On or before January 23rd, 2023, you are required to advise the TA of your team details
- They will operate as buyer and seller for Interim Role Play Exam and as a sales team of two for the Final Role Play Exam (this may change based on student needs or instructor choice given the nature of exam).
- Practitioner Interviews OR Job Shadowing assignment will be completed as a team – **so even though you will interview practitioners individually, you will submit one report comparing the two interviews and drawing insights.**

OBJECTIVES OF THE GROUP

The purpose of asking you to work in teams is to allow you to experience the process of addressing sales problems and tasks with a partner – this is a reality you may be faced with in the field. Given the complexities encountered in selling, most technology and industrial product companies encourage teams to work on key/major accounts. Sometimes these teams are a combination of sales specialist and technical specialist, other times they may be a business development rep and an account executive. Today, I believe the sales professional and his or her buyer work as a team too. In the real-world team formations have many different objectives. This classroom partnership will allow you to learn how to manage this process more easily, when you are faced with it in the working world. It will help you in areas like relationship building, communication, building trust, division of tasks, respect, handling conflict and motivating others to meet mutually agreed upon `win-win' goals.

Using Role Play Simulations

This is most unique to and a strength of the sales course. It is used as an examination tool too. It is the reason students self-select themselves out of the course and it is also the reason many students are motivated to take this class. Role-plays are fun, competitive, LIVE problem-solving challenges that you can embrace. Depending on the stage of the course each aspect of the business-to-business sales process is role-played independently and cumulatively. I try to minimize risk by assigning you into teams of buyer-seller-observer. You can get instantaneous feedback using tools validated by practitioners. In preparation we review, understand and analyze case studies of buyer seller interactions, and discuss the power of words, tone, body language and more. These cases help us solve the small mysteries of human interaction. The ongoing Q&A keeps you thinking on your feet, arguing, debating, referencing intuition but then exploring the science.

B. TEAM VIDEO ASSIGNMENTS 20%

You will complete THREE recordings as a team of two. First, decide on a simple product or service (B2B) you wish to demonstrate as being bought and sold. Focus on products / services that are somewhat transactional in nature and do not require involved decision making or more than one/two people involved in the buying journey. **All your recordings will depict the buying / selling journey for the same product and same custome**r. These recordings are a depiction of a SEQUENTIAL conversation, and you can tie it together by picking up where you left off or referencing past meetings. Due dates will be announced on Avenue.

1. **<u>3%</u> Up to a THREE-minute recording of: DUE February 6th, 2023**
   a. Your opening statement and early interaction
   b. Rapport building with the buyer
   c. Transition from rapport to discovery questions.
2. **<u>10%</u> Up to a SEVEN-minute recording of: DUE March 6th, 2023**
   a. Needs analysis,
      i. Focus on discovery to understand current situation
   b. Problem exploration
      i. Identify gaps / unmet needs
      ii. Uncover one or more underlying problems
   c. Implication questions.
      i. Pose 1 or 2 implication questions
      ii. Use quantitative metrics.
3. **<u>7%</u> Up to a Five-minute recording including: DUE March 27th**
   a. Summarizing of past meeting and related agreement to NEED questions
   b. Presenting a value proposition / solution.
   c. Include overcoming customer resistance to advance the commitment to buying / purchase

Notes:

- You will lose grades if you are reading off a script.
- If you have any questions about the role play, a Q&A session should be scheduled well in advance to the due date.
- The principles learned in this course and from the course text should be directly incorporated into the role plays.

Practitioner Interview Report (15%) DUE February 27th by 2:30pm: No more than ten pages plus any appendices that you choose to include. In terms of appearance, your objective is to write reports using business standards. That means, your submissions should be typed and double-spaced, should have one-inch margins all around and should employ a font size of no smaller than twelve points *<u>Good English grammar and spelling count</u>* so edit carefully.

<u>Each team member</u> will conduct an interview with a sales executive. As a team you will choose sales executives at TWO different firms. You will then develop a report that offers insights by comparing these findings with content covered in class and that proposed in the recommended book. Please use the following interviewing guidelines –

1. Why did you choose a career in selling? What attracted you to it and what university or work experiences prepared you for it?

2. What have you found to be the most satisfying element of your job in sales? What is the most dissatisfying element that you've experienced in this role?

3. In talking about the customers, you sell to can you help me understand how they make their purchase decisions? What are their decision criteria and decision process?

4. What is the role of advertising, direct marketing, social networking, social media, direct customer contact, or other media in your sales strategy? Please share examples.

5. How do you prospect for new customers? Is cold calling a common practice using customer lists or databases? Please give examples of techniques that you use to find new customers. If it's more common for your customers to seek you out, why do you believe this is the case?

6. Before making a sales call, what steps do you take to prepare yourself for the meeting?

7. How do you conduct NEEDS Analysis? Please share one customer case study.

8. Given the products / services that you sell, what are the most important reasons why people buy your product (service)? What problems do you solve for your customers?

9. What type of resistance do you face from customers? At what stage of selling is this most common and how do you overcome it?

10. Every salesperson has his/her own selling style. What techniques do you use that you believe sets you apart from other salespersons?

11. If you could change anything to make your job easier, what would it be?

REFERENCE – Adapted from MAR 3400 Professional Selling Syllabus at Lutgert College of Business. Instructor – Norm Stern

PLANNING YOUR PRACTITIONER INTERVIEWS

1. Think about domains of interest to you. Do you want to work in the technology space? In B2B retail sales / CPG? In the finance industry including banking and insurance?
2. Use LinkedIn to connect with sales professionals in the industry of interest. Avoid senior sales leaders instead focus on individuals with less than five years' experience. This is your chance to build your network and overcome fears of connecting with others. If you need assistance, ask the professor or your TA for introductions OR use alumni. INTERVIEWS WITH FAMILY MEMBERS OR FRIENDS ARE DISCOURAGED.
3. Arrange a first meeting to talk about your interest, the course, the project and your learning goals. At this time, you should be able to schedule your first interview. It is suggested that you try and arrange three 30-minute meetings, a week apart from each other. This will help you build rapport, reflect on findings in consultation with your team member and prepare for your follow up interviews using classroom learnings.
4. Your goal is to learn by dissecting the journey and professional experiences of the individual you are interviewing. You will find it easier to achieve this by focussing on learning from examples they can share to support their opinion
5. Take time to research the industry and organization plus products / services sold. This will help you ask more insightful questions

GUIDELINES FOR THE REPORT – With written permission from those interviewed you can choose to post your writing as an opinion piece / blog on LinkedIn

1. Why did you choose this individual / business? How did you connect with them? Start with a backgrounder on the individual, the company, their current market position and an overview of their industry.

2. Comment on their target customer, overall `sales strategy', the recommended sales process and the external /internal factors that impact the sales cycle.

3. Use the sales history of the individual, their `sales style' to draw learning for the new salesperson from an experienced hand. Comment on success factors, typical problems encountered and other market experiences.

Grading will be based on the following parameters:

Background Info on Person, Company and Product / Service represented: 10%
Understanding of the B2B sales process and best practices: 30%
Analysis of findings – contrast of practices given product, customer needs and buying: 40%
Correlation to classroom / book (include references): 15%
Format and Creativity: 05%

C. ROLE PLAY EXAMS 45%

Interim Role Play Exam (in the week of March 13th)
Within your groups you will be required to form a buyer-seller team and develop a scenario for a selling situation depicting steps like introduction/opening, needs analysis, basic discussion around a solution and close of meeting.

DETAILED GUIDELINES

This selling situation role-play will give you an opportunity to demonstrate your understanding of the buying and selling process and apply the key skills required for sales success. Please design your role-play using the following suggestions:

1. Develop a scenario of a business-to-business selling situation <u>lasting no more than 20 minutes</u>. Use simple products or services, for example – selling televisions to a university; selling cellular phone plans to a small business for their team; selling computers to a small business owner; selling a commercial cleaning service to a doctor's office; selling the services of a chartered accounting firm to a small business.

2. You should assume that you are meeting this buyer for the first time, for a pre-arranged meeting. Cold calls are also acceptable. It is fair to assume elements like you are meeting this buyer based on an inquiry made by him/her or their firm, and that the person you are calling on is a decision-maker. **All assumptions must be mentioned in a briefing sheet - a one page summary of the situation you are going to demonstrate** to the TA/instructor. See attached prep document.

3. The role-play should demonstrate the essential early steps in the sales process including, *opening, questioning to identify needs and a very basic product proposition*. If you see time as a constraint, it is possible to close the call with agreement on the next proposed action; however, such sales calls must <u>thoroughly</u> demonstrate effective opening and needs analysis early in the buying process / sales process.

4. Please use appropriate product exhibits in the role-play. For example, use an online demo about the product or brand accessible on their website. You are also allowed to develop your own professional presentations or other supporting documents / resources. NOTHING SHOULD BE LEFT TO OUR IMAGINATION.

5. <u>You should not be reading from or referring to a script.</u> The role of the buyer should be well defined, and the process should demonstrate a two-way interaction in which the buyer is participating actively. Otherwise, both members of the group will lose marks.

6. Please dress for business and know that the role-play is assessed as a professional business meeting. Any `un-business like' behaviour will have a negative impact on your marks. Ideas that do not appear logical or realistic will not be accepted.

7. You will be judged on your ability to apply sales skills learnt in class, this includes - demonstration of a good understanding and adeptness at the buying and selling steps, communication/presentation skills, usage of sales tools, effort put in developing such tools and realism of the business situation.

Final Role Play Exam (in the week of April 17th) unless otherwise arranged given exam schedule)

The situation, product / service and guidelines will be provided at least two weeks prior to the scheduling of the final exam. It is typical in this test that you undertake a team selling effort to the buyer (played by the instructor or an external representative). Your skills will be tested on each stage of the buying and selling process and you must demonstrate a good ability to apply / execute all selling steps. As a team you will have up to 45 minutes (subject to change) face-to-face with the buyer. In most instances the buyer will be quite cooperative, easy to deal with and interested in what you represent.

CAUTION - You will be evaluated as a team and as individuals; so, it is quite possible that if equal distribution of sales effort is not evident then you will not earn the same mark. Please keep in mind the grading will change if it is observed that parts of your pitch are not realistic or not professionally executed. For example, a poor opening / introduction or an unexpected illogical argument during the process could earn you a FAIL even though other elements are properly executed. Besides the overall grading, your mark will also be adjusted using a scale of 0-10 with zero representing `highly unlikely to buy' and ten as being `motivated to purchase'.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

You are expected to exhibit honesty and use ethical behaviour in all aspects of the learning process. Academic credentials you earn are rooted in principles of honesty and academic integrity. Academic dishonesty is to knowingly act or fail to act in a way that results or could result in unearned academic credit or advantage. This behaviour can result in serious consequences, e.g., the grade of zero on an assignment, loss of credit with a notation on the transcript (notation reads: "Grade of F assigned for academic dishonesty"), and/or suspension or expulsion from the university.

It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes academic dishonesty. For information on the various types of academic dishonesty please refer to the *Academic Integrity Policy*, located at: www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity The following illustrates only three forms of academic dishonesty:

1. Plagiarism, e.g., the submission of work that is not one's own or for which other credit has been obtained.
2. Improper collaboration in group work.
3. Copying or using unauthorized aids in tests and examinations

Authenticity/Plagiarism detection

All In this course we will be using a web-based service (Turnitin.com) to reveal authenticity and ownership of student submitted work. Students will be expected to submit their work electronically either directly to Turnitin.com or via Avenue to Learn (A2L) plagiarism detection (a service supported by Turnitin.com) so can be checked for academic dishonesty. Students who do not wish to submit their work through A2L and/or Turnitin.com must still submit an electronic and/or hardcopy to the instructor. No penalty will be assigned to a student who does not submit work to Turnitin.com or A2L. All submitted work is subject to normal verification that standards of academic integrity have been upheld (e.g., on-line search, other software, etc.). To see the Turnitin.com Policy, please go to: www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity.

Requesting Relief for Missed Academic Work

Students may request relief from a regularly scheduled midterm, test, assignment or another course component. Please refer to the policy and procedure on the DeGroote website at the link http://ug.degroote.mcmaster.ca/forms-and-resources/missed-course-work-policy/

Extreme Circumstances

The instructor and university reserve the right to change the dates and deadlines for any or all courses in extreme circumstances (e.g., severe weather, labour disruptions, etc.). Reasonable notice will be given with explanation and the opportunity to comment on changes. Changes will be communicated through regular McMaster communication channels such as McMaster Daily News, Avenue to Learn, and/or McMaster e-mail. It is the responsibility of the student to check these channels regularly during the term and to note any changes.

Online Course Components

In this course we will be using Zoom, email for communication, Avenue to Learn and LinkedIn. Students should be aware that when they access the electronic components of this course, private information such as first and last names, usernames for their McMaster University e-mail accounts, personal email account ID and program affiliation may become apparent to all other students in the same course. The available information is dependent on the technology used. Continuation in this course will be deemed consent to this disclosure. If you have any questions or concerns about such disclosure, please discuss this with the course instructor.

Academic Accommodation for Religious, Indigenous, or Spiritual Observances

Students requiring academic accommodation based on religious, indigenous or spiritual observances should follow the procedures set out in the RISO policy. Students requiring a RISO accommodation should submit their request, including the dates/times needing to be accommodated and the courses which will be impacted, to their Faculty Office normally within 10 days of the beginning of term or to the Registrar's Office prior to their examinations.

Students should also contact their instructors as soon as possible to make alternative arrangements for classes, assignments, and tests.

COPYRIGHT AND RECORDING

Students are advised that lectures, discussions, presentations, and any other course material provided by an instructor include copyright protected works. The Copyright Act and copyright law protect every original literary and analytical work, **including** lectures and discussions by university instructors.

The recording of lectures, discussions, presentations, or other methods of instruction WILL occur during this course. Recording may be done by either the instructor for the purpose of authorized distribution, or by the TA. It can be shared when relevant for the purpose of personal study. Students should be aware that their voice and/or image may be recorded by others during the class. Please speak with the instructor if this is a concern for you.

EXPECTATIONS ON STUDENT CONDUCT

As a McMaster student, you have the right to experience, and the responsibility to demonstrate, respectful and dignified interactions with all our living, learning, and working communities. These expectations are described in the ***Code of Student Rights & Responsibilities*** (the "Code"). All students share the responsibility of maintaining a positive environment for the academic and personal growth of all McMaster community members, ***whether in person or online.***

It is essential that students be mindful of their interactions online, as the Code remains in effect in virtual learning environments. The Code applies to any interactions that adversely affect, disrupt, or interfere with university functions on online platforms (e.g., use of Avenue to Learn, Zoom, etc.) will be taken very seriously and will be investigated. Outcomes may include restriction or removal of the involved students' access to these platforms.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COURSE POLICIES

Your enrolment in Commerce 4ME3 will be an implicit acknowledgement of the course policies outlined above and as follows, or of any other that may be announced during lecture and/or on A2L. **It is your responsibility to read this course outline, to familiarize yourself with the course policies and to act accordingly.** Lack of awareness of the course policies **cannot be invoked** at any point during this course for failure to meet them. It is your responsibility to ask for clarification on any policies that you do not understand.

STUDENT ACCESSIBILITY SERVICES

Students with disabilities who require academic accommodation must contact Student Accessibility Services (SAS) at 905-525-9140 ext. 28652 or sas@mcmaster.ca to make arrangements with a Program Coordinator. For further information, consult McMaster University's *Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities* policy.

Class Schedule

Date	Topic	Readings	Methodology
Week 1	Participant Introductions and course success skills. Discuss course outline and projects		
Week 2	The Personal Buying Process and Selling Process to facilitate effective buying	Chapter 1 and 2	
Week 3	Organizational Buying. Buying Centres in Organizations	Chapter 3	In-class case study
Week 4	Relationship Management in Selling.	Chapter 4	
Week 5	Prospecting and Pre-Sale Preparation. The Sales Approach – Opening and Developing a Sale		In-class practice role plays on Opening a Sales Meeting (First Buyer Seller interaction) NOTE: These role plays are not graded
Week 6	Methods for Needs Analysis The Questioning Approach - SPIN Selling	Chapter 6	
Week 7	SPIN Method for Needs Analysis		In-class practise role plays. NOT GRADED.

Week 8	The Sales Presentations, Product Demonstration and Persuasion through Effective Feature Benefit Analysis	Chapter 5	
Week 9	Meeting and overcoming customer objections	Chapter 7	
Week 10	Sales Negotiation Process		
Week 11	In class practice role plays (peer feedback – NO GRADES)		
Week 12	Closing a sale and Post – sale support		
Week 13	Decision making with objectivity		*IN CLASS EXERCISE*

NOTE: THE COURSE SCHEDULE IS SUBJECT TO CHANGE. FLEXIBILITY WILL BE APPLIED TO BRING IN INDUSTRY SPEAKERS AND DEFINE TOPICS BASED ON PARTICIPANT LEVELS AND INTEREST.

Proposal for Interim Role Play

Names of Your Team Members (Two members per team – One Buyer and One Seller)

I. Type of firm / the company you will be representing and nature of its industry:

II. Product or service you will be selling (include a brief description so I can understand what you are selling—don't just list a brand name):

III. Type of firm / the company you will be selling to and nature of its industry.

IV. Details on the buying situation – type of buyer, nature of purchase, buyer familiarity with this product / service etc.:

V. What do you hope to accomplish in this **20-minute** interaction?

V. What key assumptions should we be aware of?

NOTE: You may choose almost any B2B product or service to sell. After you submit your proposal, I will then either approve or disapprove your product/service. Please note that my approval does not mean that you have chosen a particularly great product or that you will have no trouble presenting it. Approval simply indicates that you are allowed to proceed.

UNDERSTANDING MY GOALS, MY APPROACH TO LEARNING AND THIS COURSE

Why am I here? What is my motivation and goal in taking this course?

Do I believe that learning to sell will add to my portfolio of qualifications to succeed in life? How so?

What responsibility am I willing to take to have a meaningful learning experience?

What part must I play to ensure that my peers have a positive learning experience and contribute effectively to our classroom environment?

How do I propose to act on being an active, engaged, self-directed and collaborative learner?