

SALES FORCE PERFORMANCE EFFECTIVENESS TRAINING IN SMES

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Abstract

Achieving good sales performance will result from the performance of the sales force. Sales force performance is an evaluation of the sales force's contribution to achieving organizational goals. The purpose of the activity is to conduct a performance assessment of SMEs. Partners who become the place of activity are culinary creative product businesses in Jambi city. In improving business performance, through provision of knowledge on how to assess business performance that has been run. Based on the analysis of partner problems, there is still weak knowledge of performance appraisal so that it has not been able to achieve competitive advantage. The method offered in this activity is to implement a performance assessment instrument in the form of socialization and assistance to business owners. The outcomes of the exercise indicate that the salesperson performance training has been successful. By evaluating business performance, partners are now aware of areas for improvement to enhance business competitiveness and tackle growing competitive challenges effectively.

Keywords: Performance, Sales Force, Training, SMEs

INTRODUCTION

The role of the workforce is purely to mediate customer contact with the company however, in recent years, the role has evolved beyond that, and it has become essential for salespeople to create value for both consumers and organizations (Badrinarayanan & Becerra, 2019). In light of these changes, the importance of sellers as well as the interest in gaining more knowledge about the factors that influence sales performance is growing simultaneously (Bagozzi et al., 2016). Recent studies confirm this relationship but emphasize certain dimensions such as self-efficacy, coworkers, buyers and situational factors and ethical issues (Herjanto & Franklin, 2019). Cooperation between business actors is something that needs to be done to continue to increase productivity and survive in business competition. The success of the company is highly dependent on the performance of the sales force. Salespeople play an important role in interacting directly with their customers to introduce their products. In an effort to improve sales force performance, companies continue to find

new approaches to selling. Parties that deal directly with customers and strong relationships will make a high contribution to the prosperity of the organization (Graciafernandy et al., 2022).

Achieving good sales performance will result from the performance of the sales force. Sales force performance is an evaluation of the contribution of salespeople to achieving organizational goals (Pradita, 2017). Sales force performance can take various forms of indicators including sales volume, sales growth rate and customer growth. According to Graciafernandy et al., (2022) companies with salesforce that have the ability to innovate have the potential to improve sales performance. Customer-oriented companies can outperform their competitors by anticipating and developing the needs of customers and responding through goods and services that consistently have superior value and provide more satisfaction to consumers.

Performance is one of the measurement tools for achieving organizational goals. Performance is defined as a description of the level of achievement of the implementation of a program, activity or policy in realizing the goals, objectives, mission, and vision of the organization as stated in the strategic planning of an organization (Erlianti & Fajrin, 2021). Sales force performance is an evaluation of the sales force's contribution to achieving organizational goals. Performance measures are often associated with the success and failure of the company in achieving the company's main objectives, including making a profit, increasing the number of sales and maintaining its survival.

The culinary snack business, which serves as the site of the activity, is currently operated by a partner. Although the production takes place at home, the partner sells their delicious tempoyak sticks at stalls and souvenir shops. Furthermore, there are plans to establish their own shop in the future. The partner demonstrates great cooperation in creating various snack products and possesses the necessary skills to transform raw materials into valuable products. Additionally, there is a high demand for the partner's offerings, and they have numerous potential sources of partnership. After conducting thorough observations and discussions with Mrs. Thiur, the business owner, it has become evident that the partner's performance appraisal issues primarily revolve around four key areas: 1) strategies for assessing performance, 2) insufficient knowledge about performance, 3) a lack of proficiency in performance assessment, and 4) competition. Considering the partner's overall challenges, it is crucial to introduce effective performance appraisal methods to enhance their performance evaluation process.

RESEARCH METHOD

Partners encountering challenges can benefit from solutions such as creating presentations, training sessions, or engaging in socialization activities. The socialization activities aim to educate partners on various aspects of business growth, such as sales, employment, income, and market share growth, to enhance their competitive edge. The process of implementing PKM involves several stages, including preparation, implementation, and achieving final results.

Preparation Phase: This phase involves initial steps to establish collaboration. The chief executive of PKM initiates contact with partners to discuss collaboration opportunities. Concurrently, observations are conducted to understand the specific challenges partners face. Partners affirm their commitment to collaboration through formal statements of willingness.

Implementation Phase Activities: This phase focuses on executing the planned activities. Implementers, in coordination with partners, establish a detailed schedule for socialization efforts. PKM prepares necessary materials for dissemination to partners and seeks permission to proceed with planned socialization activities. Tasks are delegated among PKM implementers and students assisting in activities. Socialization materials are delivered through lectures, discussions, and interactive sessions. Partners are encouraged to seek clarification through questions, fostering a comprehensive understanding. Implementers gather partner feedback, evaluate material comprehension, and assess the effectiveness of the socialization efforts.

Final Results Stage: At this concluding stage, efforts culminate in outcomes and documentation. Implementers compile both essential and supplementary outcomes achieved through the collaboration. Research related to PKM activities is documented in relevant journals. Progress and final reports are compiled, detailing the project's evolution and achievements. Financial reports are also prepared, providing a comprehensive overview of resource allocation and utilization throughout the project lifecycle.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Partner Business Profile

The partner who is the place of activity is aksena snack, which is a business engaged in snack sticks. The business owner is Mrs. Thiur Maita Lubis. Her business has been established for 4 years. Starting from Mrs. Thiur saw that tempoyak sticks are still rarely found and in the city of Jambi tempoyak is usually processed into chili sauce and side dishes,

no one has processed it into tempoyak sticks and Mrs. Thiur also thought of being the first to process tempoyak sticks that are easy to consume anywhere. The business idea started from being bored with the usual souvenirs such as pempek. So Mrs. Thiur wanted to make a snack that was different from the competition. Some samples of partner products are:



Figure 1. Partner Products

Model of Science and Technology Transferred to Partners

This community service activity is related to the provision of knowledge about the performance of salespeople delivered to partners.

1. Empirically, the factors of sales force performance are:
 - a. Personal factors
 - b. Organization.
 - c. Coworkers,
 - d. Buyer/Surrounding environment
 - e. Situational factors.
2. Personal Factors

Workforce performance investigates the influence of workforce personal factors on their performance. It refers to an individual's internal factors that help him or her achieve his or her best performance. This shows that salespeople's personal factors are not only one of the most investigated categories in workforce performance, but also considered a key ingredient in building good relationships with buyers, coworkers and other stakeholders. To do their jobs effectively, salespeople must effectively manage their social intelligence and social competencies..

3. Organizational Factors

The indicators of the distributive justice variable are the development of Jelinek including (Greenberg, 1986):

- a. The organization values the work of employees.
- b. There is a match between what employees receive and the challenges of the work performed.

c. There is a match between the results received and the contribution to the organization.
The indicators of procedural justice variables are the development of Jelinek's include (Greenberg & Tyler, 1987):

- a. Managers treat employees well
- b. Managers consider employee opinions.
- c. Managers show concern for employee rights.

Intrafirm competition in this study the indicators of intrafirm competition variables are the development of Jelinek which includes:

- a. There is a lot of sales person competition in the workplace.
- b. The culture in the workplace is very competitive.
- c. There is a ranking system in the workplace based on results.

The indicators of the sales person organization fit variable are the development of *Jelinek* which includes:

- a. There is a match between personal values and the organization where you work.
- b. The workplace organization has the same values that employees do when dealing with others.
- c. The workplace organization has the same values that employees do when it comes to honesty.
- d. The workplace organization has the same value that employees do when it comes to fairness

4. Coworker factor

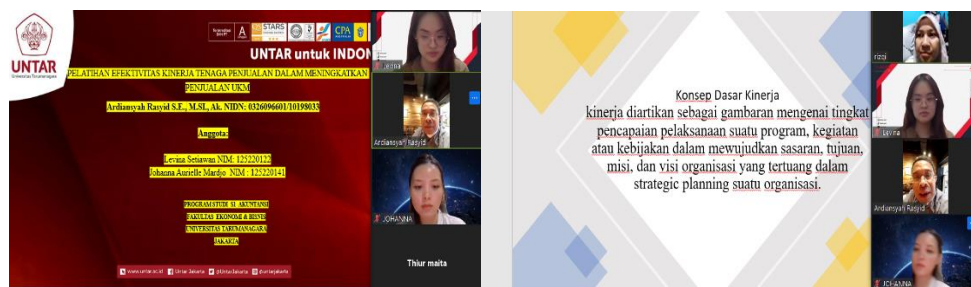
The level of collaboration between coworkers improves relationship quality and sales performance. The quality of such relationships enhances the ability of the sales workforce (the tendency to seek interdepartmental collaboration) to coordinate different types, and levels, of expertise. Such high levels of coordination enhance team spirit, service and create a sense of familial bonding between team members. To maintain strong bonds, salespeople help each other by sharing buyer information and any sales-related information (i.e., competition, trends, etc). In short, the success of the sales force depends on synchronized efforts across related departments and among colleagues.

5. Buyer Factors

Buyers play an important role in determining the performance of salespeople. Buyer satisfaction represents a positive overall evaluation of the product and results in a positive attitude towards the seller. Such satisfaction encourages the buyer to exercise vulnerability, allowing the seller to access the buyer's available resources (i.e., finances, expertise and information or ideas) for better engagement, resource integration, and relationship development (Karpen & Kleinaltenkamp, 2018). In short, buyer satisfaction is considered a key component in building a healthy company and salesperson performance and a fruitful buyer-seller relationship and serves as the key to company success.

6. Situational Factors

Situational factors are external aspects that can affect the performance of salespeople. Such factors cannot be controlled and exist in any sales situation. One of the biggest situational factors is the characteristics of the sales territory. Each territory is different and requires different measurements, products and approaches. Moreover, this market is not static but dynamic and volatile. Therefore, sellers working in such markets are required to respond to rapid changes, and from ten unpredictable changes, to the needs and requirements of their buyers. Moreover, effective sellers must be able to predict these upcoming changes without experiencing high role ambiguity and role conflict. Thus, to anticipate such dynamic market changes, sellers must be more adaptable and work smarter in an effort to improve job satisfaction and downstream sales performance. The implementation of the activity is presented in the form of PPT through ZOOM, the sample socialization material is documented in the following photo:



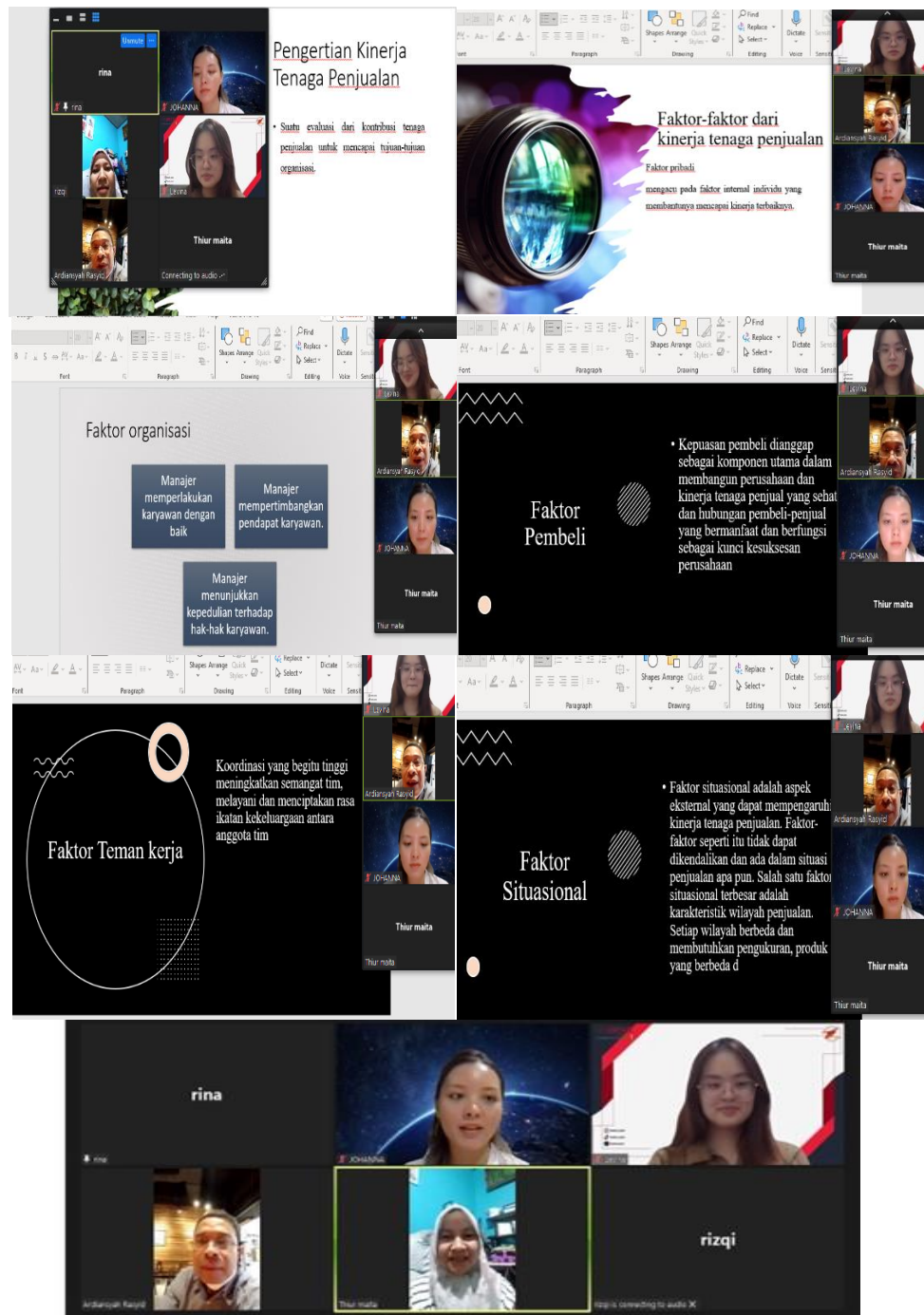


Figure 2. Documentation of the Activity

CONCLUSION

As for some points that can be concluded from the results of the activities that have been carried out, the first is that training on debriefing on sales force performance is provided by conducting training presented in the form of PPT, including: basic concepts of performance, understanding sales force performance, factors of sales force performance, and so on. Furthermore, the training has been carried out online and runs smoothly. And finally,

partners received the information and materials presented with enthusiasm, and asked questions during the activity process.

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