

# IMPACT OF SALES TRAININGS ON SALES RESULTS OF A CROATIAN COMPANIES

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## ABSTRACT

At the time when most executives struggle with how salespeople should add value, especially in today's multi-channel environment, ever greater sales effectiveness is needed. An important indicator of an effective sales force training program is the evaluation of whether or not the training has directly impacted professional selling. Despite of spending significant resources on sales trainings, assessing the training effectiveness often seems to be a challenging task for the Croatian companies. The main goal of this paper was to investigate the existence of direct relationship between sales trainings and sales results in the Croatian companies. Using the four level model (1 reactions, 2 learning, 3 behavior, 4 results) developed by Kirkpatrick evaluation has been done for each level. Information from each prior level served as a base for the next level's evaluation. Thus each successive level represented a more precise measure of the effectiveness of the training program, but at the same time required a more rigorous and time consuming analysis. Research sample consisted of 200 sales professionals from different Croatian companies. Since there is little empirical work available as a guide in the design and implementation of sales training programs, research results offered direct implications for enhancing sales training programs on the Croatian market. The results provided empirical evidence of the importance of sales trainings investment as a means of increasing the sales performance.

**KEY WORDS:** Sales, Sales Training Evaluation, Croatia.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Training in wider sense can be defined as set of methods that are used in working with new or existing employees in order to transfer knowledge and skills necessary for successful completion of their work tasks. In sales, trainings are set of activities by which companies try to ensure business culture, knowledge, skills, attitude and behavior that will result in better sales results (Futrell, 1998, p. 216). Successful and growing organizations have recognized talents of their employees and actively work on development of those talents in order to secure its future business success. Employees learn and develop its competencies through acquiring experience while working but also through different types of educational programs and trainings. It is often necessary to upgrade experience gained from work by additional trainings (Futrell, 2004, p. 121). Johnston and Marshall (2009, p. 314) write that sales trainings are a "huge business" in the United States. According to the Training Magazine American companies spent 50 billion dollars in year 2006 on trainings and development of employees. According to The American Society for Training and Development, (Lask *et al.*, 2012, p. 2) American companies annually invest around 15 billion dollars in the sales trainings and educations alone. This means that 30% of budget for education and training goes into sales trainings. Average salesman in the U.S. spends about 33 hours on a training each year. In a tech based companies education of a sales representative or specialist often costs over 100.000 U.S. dollars and because of the high initial cost of developing salesperson companies might wait on return on investment in trainings for more than two years (Johnston & Marshall, 2009, p. 315). The main goal of this paper has been to find out to what extent sales trainings contribute to sales results and how the performance of sales trainings are measured in a Croatian companies.

## 2. PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT OF SALES TRAININGS

Importance and necessity of sales trainings are beyond question. However, one of the main challenges connected with this area is measurement of performance of delivered sales trainings (Futrell, 1981, p. 231). The main reason for evaluating is to determine the effectiveness of a training program." (Kirkpatrick, 1994, p. 3). It is highly important for organization to understand how will training help in rising efficiency and quality of salesforce's work. Companies more and more cooperate in designing specific sales trainings and need to know exact outcomes to be expected from it. The key question is to calculate financially return on investment of a sales training and to improve its efficiency. Training evaluations are quite often based on "soft" or qualitative variables such as change in behavior and what is learnt. However, companies need to know how to quantify such training outcomes through increased sales and profitability in order to calculate return on investment in sales trainings. Therefore, the best method would include both, qualitative and quantitative measures of performance (Palić, 2008, p. 278). There are two basic approaches to the evaluation of trainings. First is *internal approach* where companies evaluate efficiency of the training while it is still in an application phase. Internal approach is focused on training process itself. Key question is to learn

if the training goals and learned skills have been successfully applied into a business practice. Second is *external approach* which is focused on evaluating efficiency of the training after the application phase and observed results can be described through individual and group goals. In order to measure performance of the training it is necessary to systematically document results of the training activities and to observe the changes that took place. Tests and exercises that measure adopted knowledge and skills of participants before and after the training can be used for this purpose. Also a control group method can be used as well as a combined approach. Evaluation approach will depend on a resources available to the company, number of training groups and importance of training for the overall goals of a company. According to Cscio (1998, p. 279) trainers and investors of trainings should focus on answering the following questions when attempting to measure its performance:

1. Did participants acquire specific knowledge, skills or work performance?
2. Did change occur?
3. Has change been a result of a training?
4. Is change positively affecting reach of sales/corporate goals?
5. Will similar changes occur with new participants of the sales trainings?

Organizations that have the resources to measure training's performance according to scientifically and globally adopted methods usually choose between two standard models: Kirkpatrick's four levels training evaluation model and Phillips' The Fifth Level of Evaluation.

The last model is actually a revised Kirkpatrick's model with added another level - the fifth level of evaluation which is developed by collecting level 4 data, converting the data to monetary values and comparing them to the cost of the program to represent the return on training investment. Organizations are taking a logical and methodical approach to developing ROI for a limited number of programs, using a sampling basis. Six trends have increased interest in, and use of, ROI measurement in training and development (Phillips, 1996):

- Training and development budgets are continuing to grow, which creates more pressure for accountability.
- Training and development are linked to the competitive strategies, which make them important areas for measuring program contribution.
- Many programs have failed to deliver what was expected; consequently, program sponsors have requested ROI calculations/justifications.
- The concern for accountability in all functions in an organization is increasing; thus, the training and development function becomes one of many support efforts under scrutiny.
- Top executives in a large number of organizations now require ROI information.
- To justify their contribution, trainers have increased their interest in the ROI process.

Previous research done in Croatia indicate that Croatian companies have relatively high education and training benefit awareness. Product knowledge and selling skills are the most represented topics in sales education and training programs in Croatia while Motivation and Time management seems to be underestimated. Research also showed that Croatian companies does not evaluate training programs systematically and consistently (Tomašević Lišanin, M, Palić, M., Ozimec, K., 2009, p. 109). Some of the variables commonly used for sales trainings evaluation can be seen in table 1.

**Table 1.** Most commonly used variables for evaluation of sales trainings in Croatian companies

TRAINING EVALUATION	NEVER		RARELY		SOMETIMES		OFTEN		ALWAYS		AVERA GE
	Coun t	Perce nt	Cou nt	Perce nt	Cou nt	Perce nt	Cou nt	Perce nt	Cou nt	Perce nt	Meon
Change in sales volume	10	13,0%	9	11,7%	23	29,9%	22	28,6%	13	16,9%	3,25
Change in sales value	7	9,1%	7	9,1%	23	29,9%	27	35,1%	13	16,9%	3,42
Change in market share	13	16,9%	10	13,0%	24	31,2%	19	24,7%	11	14,3%	3,06
Order taken per sales visit	21	27,3%	10	13,0%	23	29,9%	16	20,8%	7	9,1%	2,71
Order taken per call	24	31,2%	12	15,6%	19	24,7%	14	18,2%	8	10,4%	2,61
Number of new clients gained	11	14,3%	7	9,1%	23	29,9%	24	31,2%	12	15,6%	3,25
Number of old clients lost	19	24,7%	10	13,0%	25	32,5%	15	19,5%	8	10,4%	2,78
Territory coverage	23	29,9%	5	6,5%	22	28,6%	18	23,4%	9	11,7%	2,81
Post-training knowledge testing	18	23,4%	9	11,7%	21	27,3%	20	26,0%	9	11,7%	2,91
Sales target realization	15	19,5%	1	1,3%	19	24,7%	23	29,9%	19	24,7%	3,39
Time sales people stay with the company	28	36,4%	8	10,4%	20	26,0%	16	20,8%	5	6,5%	2,51

Source: Tomašević Lišanin, Palić, & Ozimec, 2009, p. 108

### 3. KIRKPATRICK'S FOUR LEVEL EVALUATION MODEL

The four levels represents a sequence of steps to evaluate sales training programs. As researcher moves from one level to the next the process becomes more difficult and time-consuming, but also provides more valuable information. The four steps in evaluation are; Reaction, Learning, Behavior and Results. Reaction as word implies, measures how participants in the sales trainings react to it. It is actually a measure of their satisfaction with training. Success of sales educations depend on a positive reaction. If participants do not react favorably, they will probably not be motivated to learn. Learning can be defined as the extent to which participants change attitudes, improve knowledge, and/or increase skills as a result of attending the program. In order to evaluate learning, the specific objectives must be determined. Learning did not happen if change in behavior did not occur. In this specific setting the learning has taken place when one or more of the following occurs: attitudes are changed, knowledge is increased, skills are improved, change of behavior is the next step. Behavior can be defined as the extent to which change in behavior has occurred because the participants attended the training program. Finally, results can be defined as the final results that occurred because the participants attended the program. The final results can include increased sales, reduced turnover, and higher profits and return on investment. It is important to understand that results are the ultimate reason for having the training programs. Therefore the final objectives of the training program need to be stated in these terms (Kirkpatrick, 1994). For the evaluation research a series of statements have been used that best fit the purpose of each level:

#### Level 1 – Reactions

- Trainings have been interesting
- Content of training have been relevant for my work
- Trainings have been adjusted to my business situations
- Trainers have been well prepared and competent
- Contents of training will be applicable in practice
- Training will be useful for better sales performance
- Overall perception about training is positive.

#### Level 2 – Learning

- I have gained new or improved existing theoretical knowledge about the sales
- I have gained new or improved existing practical sales skills
- I have learned and improved question techniques for defining customer needs
- I have learned and improved product presentation skills
- I have learned and improved customer's objections solving techniques
- I have learned and improved sales approach based on assisting customer to make solution for his needs
- I have learned more about sales closing techniques
- Overall, I have learned knowledge and skills for professional sales work

#### Level 3 – Behavior

- After sales training I am interested to try in practice new knowledge and skills
- Good elements of training will be immediately applied
- Old sales methods will be rejected after learning about the better ones
- I adjust or change my work with customers in accordance with useful suggestions from training
- My superiors encourage me to apply new knowledge and skills
- My company formally follows and periodically evaluates my sales performance
- My company financially rewards good sales results
- Overall, in my company there is a real possibility of application of sales knowledge and skills that have been subject of trainings.

**Level 4 - Results**

- I have found new customers as a result of sales trainings.
- I have increased or kept the same level of sales volume.
- Trainings helped me in achieving my sales plan/quota
- I have improved personal contacts with customers
- I have increased level of customer satisfaction with my company
- Trainings brought attention to certain elements that I can improve in my work
- Overall, trainings directly and indirectly contributed to my sales results and quality of my sales performance.

**4. RESEARCH GOALS AND METHODOLOGY**

Based on Kirpatrick's four level training evaluation model, which is still the most commonly used evaluation model (Dubinsky, A.J., Mehta R., Anderson, R. E., 2001, p. 30), the following hypothesis have been proposed:

H1: There is direct connection between intensity of sales trainings and sales results of salesmen in Croatian companies.

H2: There is a direct connection between sales trainings and level of sales knowledge of sales force in a Croatian companies.

H3: Management in Croatian companies does not show enough interest for a real application of sales trainings which makes sales trainings less effective in a business practice.

The specific goals of the research were to explore and measure the impact of sales trainings on:

- Sales results
- Sales personnel work performance
- Sales knowledge and skills
- Satisfaction and motivation of sales force

**5. SAMPLE**

Questionnaire has been sent by e-mail to 950 addresses during April and May 2011 and after two additional reminders 200 correctly filled questionnaires have been collected which is response rate of 21.05%. In order to be eligible for filling the questionnaire respondents had to participate in at least one sales training (education) during their employment. The sample had some more requirements; respondents had to be currently employed on a sales positions in a companies and engaged in a business to business type of sales. Considering assumption that observed sales processes are relatively homogeneous in a research population results are formally indicative but actually representative for the Croatian market.

Collected data has been processed in SPSS 17 and analyzed through descriptive statistics as well as inferential statistics.

## 6. RESEARCH RESULTS

Research results have been presented according to each evaluation level. Demographic characteristics of the sample are given in Table 2.

**Table 2.** Demographic variables of respondents

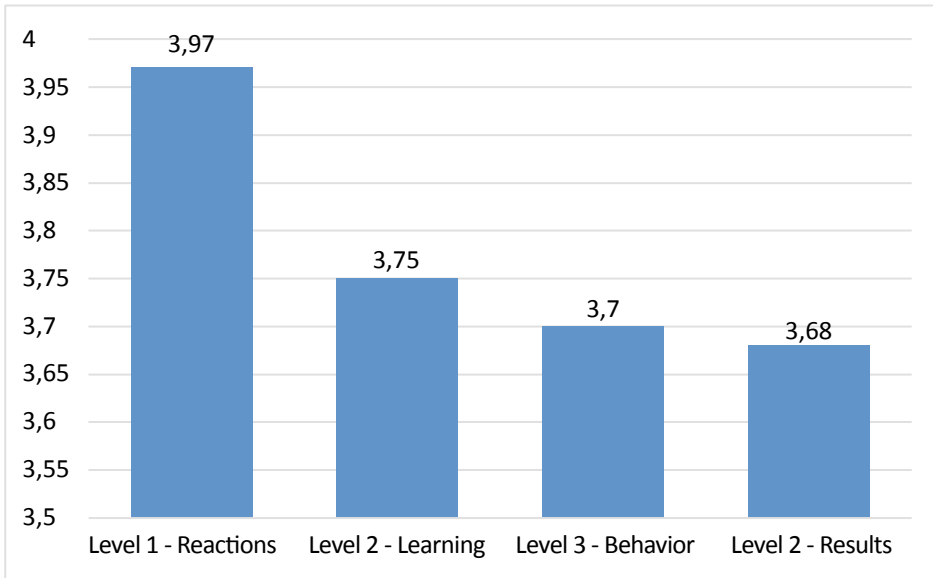
		Frequency (n)	Percent (%)
Age	< 25 years	2	1,0
	25 - 32 years	61	30,5
	33 - 45 years	119	59,5
	46 - 60 years	17	8,5
	> 60 years	1	,5
Gender	Male	118	59,0
	Female	82	41,0
Education level	Postgraduate degree	38	19,0
	University degree in business field	92	46,0
	University degree of some other field	37	18,5
	High school	33	16,5
Years of experience in sales	Up to 1 year	8	4,0
	from 1 to 3 years	26	13,0
	between 4 and 8	57	28,5
	between 9 and 15	74	37,0
	more than 15 years	35	17,5
Employment position	Sales manager/specialist selling on field	33	16,5
	Sales manager/specialist in telesales	4	2,0
	Sales support	122	61,0
	Other sales positions	41	20,5
Personal sales plan	Yes	148	74,0
	No	52	26,0

**Table 3.** Characteristics of companies respondents work for

		Frequency (n)	Percent (%)
Number of employees	Less than 10	35	17,5
	11 - 50	38	19,0
	51 - 100	21	10,5
	101 - 250	33	16,5
	251 - 500	15	7,5
	More than 500	58	29,0
Ownership type	Private domestic ownership	108	54,0
	Private foreign ownership	69	34,5
	Government/public ownership	12	6,0
	None of the above	11	5,5
Sector	industry	37	18,5
	trade	28	14,0
	financial	26	13,0
	education	8	4,0
	IT & telecom	15	7,5
	Tourism & hospitality	27	13,5
	rest	59	29,5

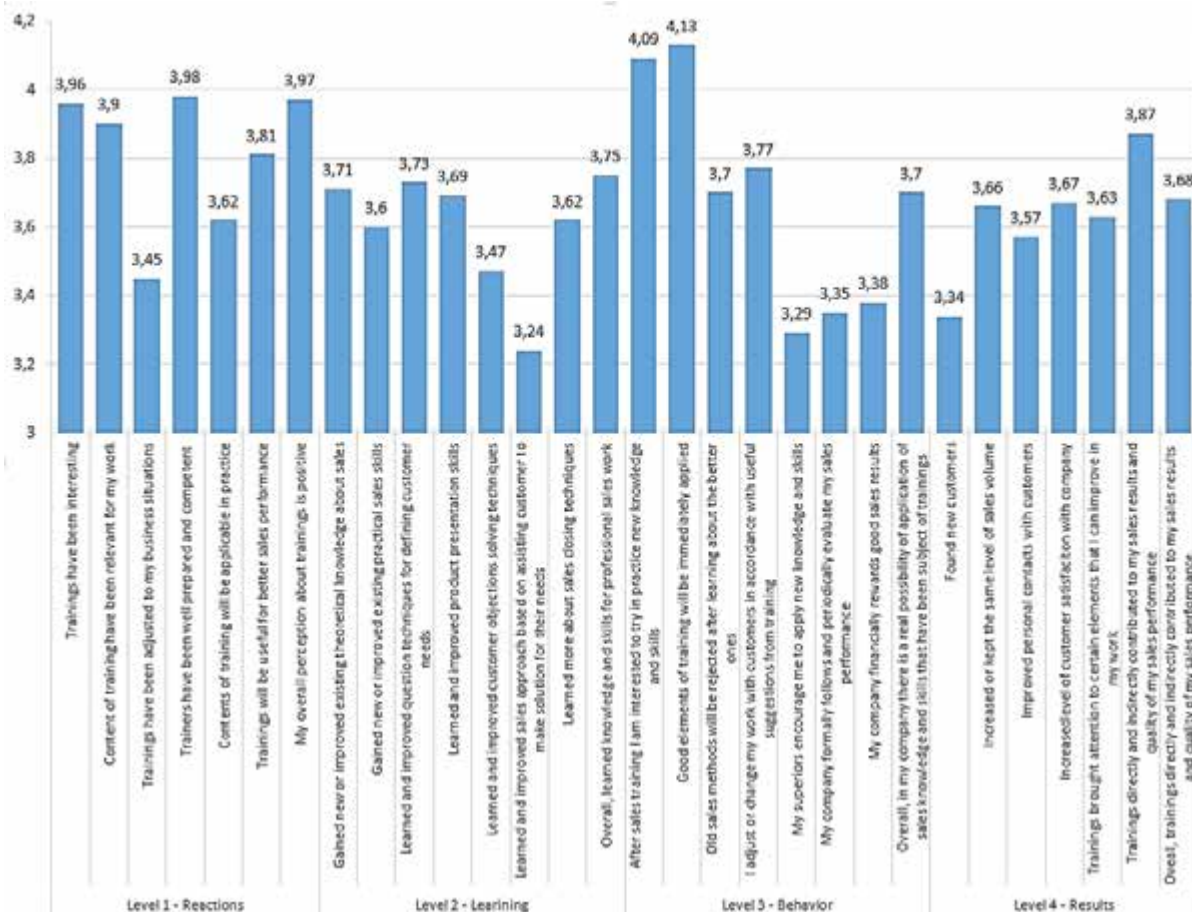
In general terms it is possible to display a summarized results for all four levels. From the comparison of all four levels it is apparent that trend line shows decline as levels go up. This is consistent with the observations of other authors. As evaluation becomes more substantial grades go down as results (level 4) are harder to obtain than merely positive reaction (level 1) with the training after its ending. However, on a long run good sales results will result in a satisfied training participants but sometimes it takes long time for results to show in a sales of complex products and it is not always easily distinguished what and in which amount contributed to them. Graph 1 shows the summarized results for all four levels of sales training evaluation.

**Graph 1.** Summarized results of training performance by levels, Likert 5 degree scale.



Graph 2 displays evaluation of trainings by respondents in more detail. Average grading was done on 5 degree Likert’s scale, 1 completely disagree – 5 completely agree.

**Graph 2.** Results of Kirkpatrick’s 4 level evaluation model of sales trainings



It is interesting to observe that highest average score received statements from level 3 regarding immediate application of good elements of the trainings (M=4.13) and “after sales training I am interested to try in practice new knowledge and new skills” (M=4.09) as well as a general statement from level 1 about overall positive perceptions with the trainings (M=3.97). Most negative grades are connected with learning skills how to make solution for specific customer needs (M=3.24), about lack of encouragement by managers for application of new knowledge and skills (M=3.29) and as a result of inability to find a new customers as a result of a sales trainings (M=3.34). Such results have dramatic implications for the efficiency of sales which will be further discussed in the concluding remarks at the end of this paper.

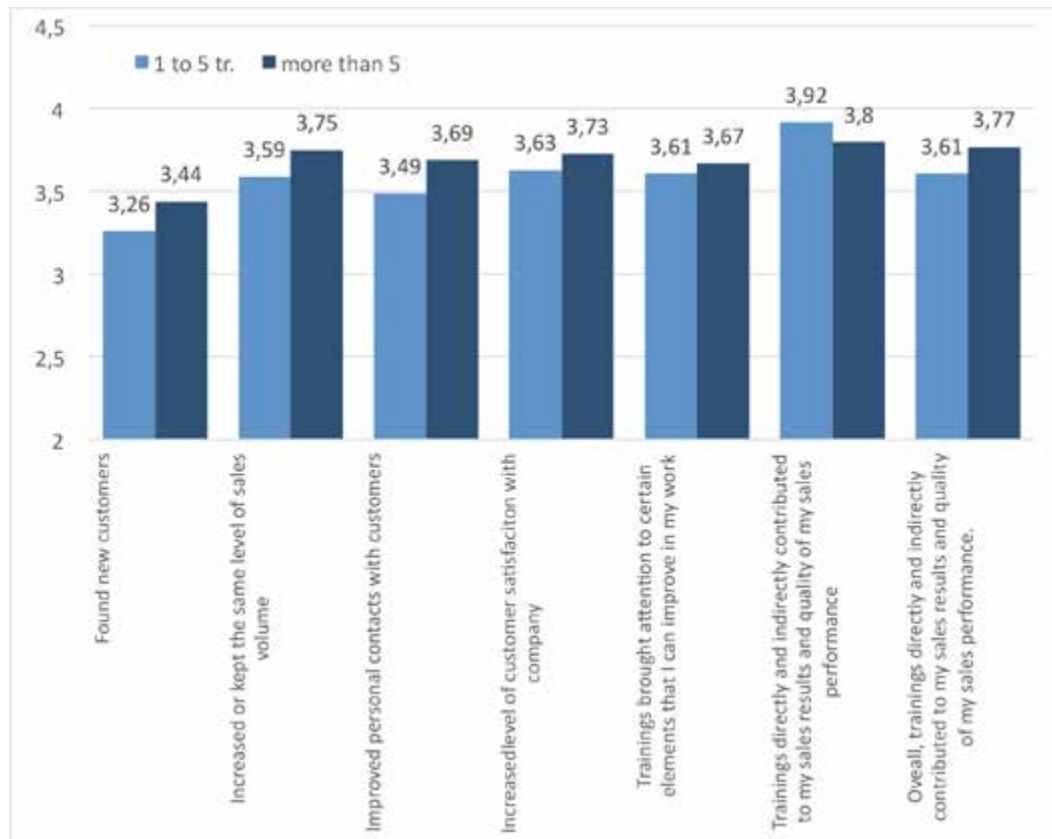
*H1: There is direct connection between intensity (frequency) of sales trainings and sales results of salesmen in Croatian companies.*

Kirkpatrick’s evaluation methodology’s Level 4 – Results have been used for testing of the hypothesis H1 combined with questions regarding types of sales trainings and frequency of sales trainings. In order to check for direct connection the correlation analysis has been used between level 4 variables and frequency of sales trainings. The results showed there was no statistically significant correlation between any level 4 variables and frequency of sales trainings as shown on table 4.

**Table 4.** Correlation between statements (variables) in level 4 and frequency of sales trainings

As a result of sales training		Freq. of trainings
1 – I have found new customers.	Pearson Correlation	,132
	Sig. (2 - tailed)	,065
	N	197
2 – I have increased or kept the same level of sales volume.	Pearson Correlation	,070
	Sig. (2 - tailed)	,327
	N	197
3 – Trainings helped me in achieving my sales plan/quota.	Pearson Correlation	,086
	Sig. (2 - tailed)	,231
	N	197
4 – I have improved personal contacts with customers.	Pearson Correlation	,047
	Sig. (2 - tailed)	,513
	N	197
5 – I have increased level of customer satisfaction with my company.	Pearson Correlation	,015
	Sig. (2 - tailed)	,839
	N	197
6 – Trainings brought attention to certain elements that I can improve in my work.	Pearson Correlation	-,083
	Sig. (2 - tailed)	,245
	N	197
7 – Trainings directly and indirectly contributed to my sales results and quality of my sales performance.	Pearson Correlation	,061
	Sig. (2 - tailed)	,393
	N	197

However, when respondents who participated to at least 5 trainings were compared with those whose frequency was less than 5 trainings then it was obvious that on average more frequent participants gave on average higher marks to all but one statement from level 4 as shown on graph 3. Analysis of variance (ANOVA) also did not show any statistically significant differences between respondents that had different intensity of sales trainings.

**Graph 3.** Difference in average grade on level 4 according to frequency of training

**Table 5.** Average grade on Likert's 5 scale for Level 4 variables divided by source of sales training

	Total	Source of training	
		Specialized sales consulting/training company	In house sales training
I have found new customers.	3,34	3,37	3,30
I have increased or kept the same level of sales volume.	3,66	3,80	3,53
Trainings helped me in achieving my sales plan/quota.	3,57	3,61	3,54
I have improved personal contacts with customers.	3,67	3,66	3,68
I have increased level of customer satisfaction with my company.	3,63	3,63	3,64
Trainings brought attention to certain elements that I can improve in my work.	3,87	3,95	3,81
Trainings directly and indirectly contributed to my sales results and quality of my sales performance.	3,68	3,69	3,66

Regarding source of training, participants that received training from specialized sales consulting companies on average gave higher average scores to the statements from level 4. However, ANOVA test did not show existence of statistically significant differences between those two groups.

Considering all of the above the hypothesis H1 surprisingly has been rejected. Respondents who participated in more trainings did not consider them more useful than those who barely attended one or few trainings in their professional life. There has not been established direct statistical link between sales results and intensity of sales trainings.

*H2: There is a direct connection between frequency of sales trainings and level of sales knowledge of sales force in a Croatian companies.*



Level 2 – learning statements have been used for testing of hypothesis 2 also combined with question regarding frequency of sales trainings and types of educations. According to the ANOVA test there are statistically significant differences between respondents that attended different number of educations in a three different statements shown in table 6.

**Table 6.** Level 2 – One-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) according to variable frequency of trainings

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Learned and improved product presentation skills	Between Groups	7,819	2	3,909	4,284	,015
	Within Groups	178,865	196	,913		
	Total	186,683	198			
Learned and improved customer objections solving techniques	Between Groups	9,664	2	4,832	4,646	,011
	Within Groups	203,873	196	1,040		
	Total	213,538	198			
Learned and improved sales approach based on assisting customer to make solution for his needs	Between Groups	11,364	2	5,682	4,401	,014
	Within Groups	253,058	196	1,291		
	Total	264,422	198			

Respondents that attended 5 and more sales trainings had higher marks for the above three variables from level 2 than the respondents that attended fewer sales trainings.

Average grade on Likert's scale also showed that respondents attending more than five sales trainings gave higher score for all level 2 statements as shown in table 7.

**Table 7.** Level 2 Learning statements according to frequency of training – average grade on Likert's 1-5 scale.

	Total average	Frequency of trainings	
		1 - 5 times	More than 5
Gained new or improved existing theoretical knowledge about sales	3,71	3,64	3,80
Gained new or improved existing practical sales skills	3,60	3,52	3,72
Learned and improved question techniques for defining customer needs	3,73	3,69	3,78
Learned and improved product presentation skills.	3,69	3,54	3,90
Learned and improved customer objections solving techniques	3,47	3,29	3,72
Learned and improved sales approach based on assisting customer to make solution for his needs.	3,24	3,09	3,45
Learned more about sales closing techniques	3,62	3,51	3,78
Overall, learned knowledge and skills for professional sales work	3,75	3,63	3,91

**Table 8.** Correlation analysis of variables from Level 2 with frequency of trainings

		Frequency of trainings
Gained new or improved existing theoretical knowledge about sales	Pearson Correlation	,106
	Sig. (2 - tailed)	,138
	N	199
Gained new or improved existing practical sales skills	Pearson Correlation	,092
	Sig. (2 - tailed)	,196
	N	199
Learned and improved question techniques for defining customer needs	Pearson Correlation	,071
	Sig. (2 - tailed)	,322
	N	199
Learned and improved product presentation skills.	Pearson Correlation	,157*
	Sig. (2 - tailed)	,027
	N	199
Learned and improved customer objections solving techniques	Pearson Correlation	,211**
	Sig. (2 - tailed)	,003
	N	199
Learned and improved sales approach based on assisting customer to make solution for his needs.	Pearson Correlation	,212**
	Sig. (2 - tailed)	,003
	N	199
Learned more about sales closing techniques	Pearson Correlation	,166*
	Sig. (2 - tailed)	,019
	N	199
Overall, learned knowledge and skills for professional sales work	Pearson Correlation	,120
	Sig. (2 - tailed)	,091
	N	199

There is a weak intensity correlation (under 0,3) between frequency of trainings and “Learned and improved customer objections solving techniques” and “Learned and improved sales approach based on assisting customer to make solution for his needs” and very weak correlation with statement “Learned and improved product presentation skills” ( $r=0,157$ ). From the all of the analyses above it is evident that respondents that have attended larger number of sales trainings consider them helpful at boosting their level of sales knowledge and skills. Therefore hypothesis H2 is valid.

*H3: Management in Croatian companies does not show enough interest for a real application of sales trainings which makes sales trainings less effective in a business practice.*

The hypothesis will be tested through some of the variables from Level 3 – behavior statements and questions connected with specifics of sales expectations in a respondent’s company. As seen from the graph 2 from the level 3 the lowest scores had statements regarding behavior of sales managers in application of the learned sales skills; “My superiors encourage me to apply new knowledge and skills” ( $M=3.29$ ), “My company formally follows and periodically evaluate my sales performance” ( $M=3.35$ ), and “My company financially rewards good sales results” ( $3.38$ ). ANOVA test showed statistically significant differences between certain groups of respondents:

- Respondents on sales support positions have better average scores on variables “My company financially rewards good sales results” and “Overall, in my company there is a real possibility of application of sales knowledge and skills that have been subject of trainings” than respondents on different sales jobs;
- Respondents from larger companies have statistically significantly higher scores than respondents from smaller companies for statements: “After sales training I am interested to try in practice new knowledge and skills”, “I adjust or change my work with customers in accordance with useful suggestions from the training” and “My company formally follows and periodically evaluate my sales performance”.
- Employees of foreign owned companies evaluate almost all variables from level 3 with higher score than employees of domestically owned companies.

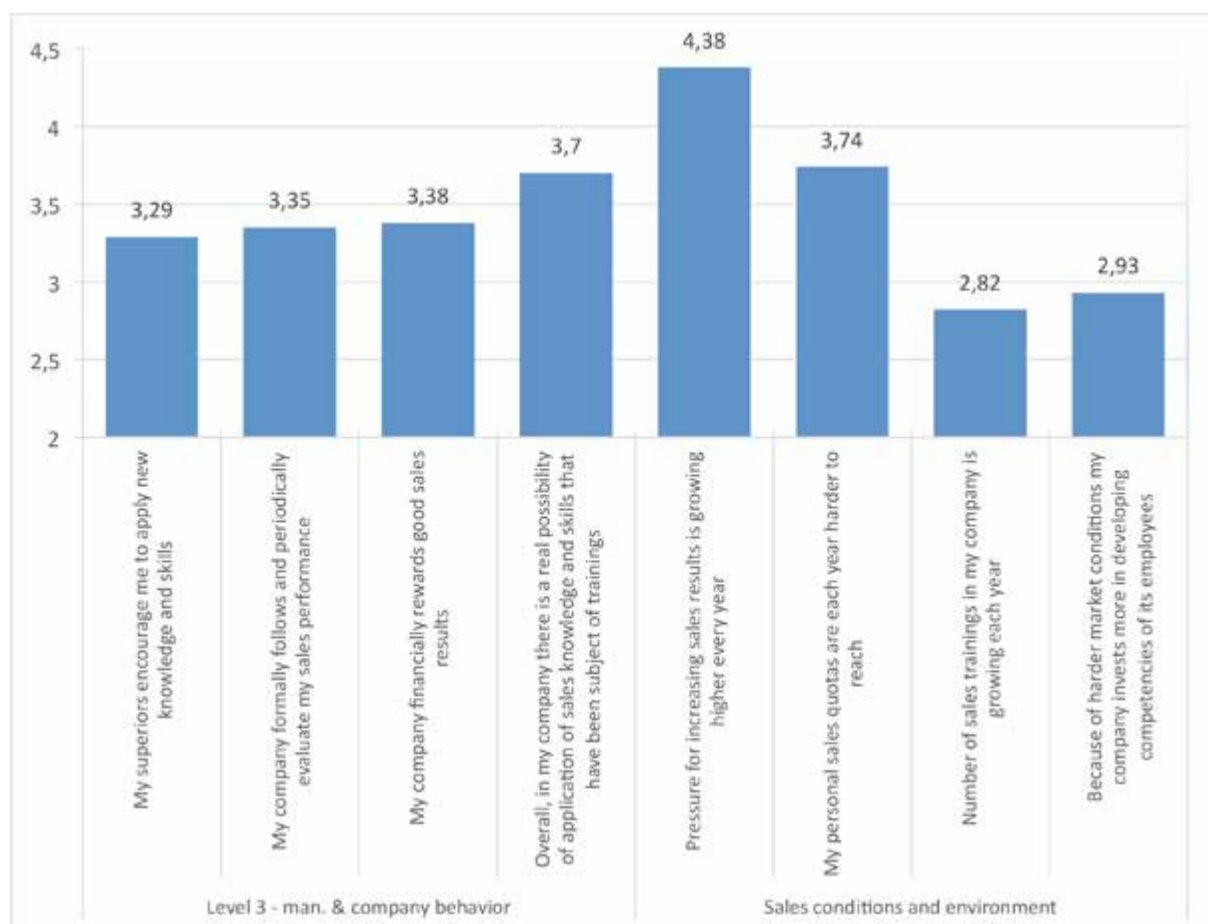
Question regarding sales and market conditions and pressures also provides an important insight into the behavior of companies regarding interest in application of sales trainings. Table 9 shows that pressure of management for sales results is very high (M=4.38) while at the same time companies are not willing to invest into sales trainings and provide their employees with the tools to reach more ambitious results.

**Table 9.** Average score on specifics of sales conditions in your company.

	Total	Company oriented on	
		Domestic market	Foreign market
Pressure for increasing sales results is growing higher every year.	<b>4,38</b>	4,41	4,32
My personal sales quotas are each year harder to reach.	<b>3,74</b>	3,89	3,45
Number of sales trainings in my company is growing each year.	<b>2,82</b>	2,72	3,02
Because of harder market conditions my company invests more in developing competencies of its employees.	<b>2,93</b>	2,93	2,92

In order to test for validity of the hypothesis part of the level 3 statements regarding activities of management and company for encouraging application of sales skills and variables from the question regarding sales conditions and environment have been displayed on graph 4.

**Graph 4.** An average score of relevant variables regarding hypothesis 3



From the graph above it is possible to conclude that management and corporate behavior regarding encouragement of application of new sales skills are scored low comparing with the other variables in level 3. At the same time sales environment and management’s demand for sales results are increasing while companies are not prepared to invest into more sales trainings but rather decrease frequencies because of budget restrains brought about by economic crisis in Croatia. From the obtained research results hypothesis H3 is accepted.

## 7. CONCLUSION

Main research findings have been focused on connecting sales trainings and educations with sales competencies that are directly responsible for the sales results. Primary research showed some interesting and unexpected results. It appears that there are no direct statistical connection between intensity of sales trainings and sales results. It seems that sales trainings participants had the least help from the trainings in finding a new customers while they recognized at the same time that trainings did help them with their sales work. Across four levels of performance there is a decrease in score as evaluation progresses toward higher levels. It is easier for trainers to get positive reactions from the participants than the actual sales results. Participants did learn new sales knowledge and skills and they seem eager to apply it in everyday work. However, there is an apparent lack of support in their organizations regarding stimulation and application of new sales knowledge and skills. At the same time companies expect from their sales personnel higher sales results while not providing adequate trainings or encouragement of its application into the business practice. Obviously, there is a gap that adversely affects effectiveness of sales trainings. Suggestion for managers based on this findings is that there is a profound need that higher management understand importance of trainings and provides the managerial support needed for its successful application into the business practice. On the other hand, sales trainers have to do better research regarding their customer's needs as some respondents did have problems with getting desired results from the trainings, such as inability to "find a new customers as a result of sales training", and specific "adjustment of sales trainings to the needs of participants" – both statements received a well below average score. Respondents that participated in more than 5 trainings on average gave higher scores, that is their sales performance evaluation as a result of training is a bit higher comparing to the participants of the fewer sales trainings. Furthermore, sales trainings provided by professional consultants had a stronger positive impact on sales results than any other source of sales training. However, those are the most expensive. Research also showed that there are differences between domestic and foreign companies and large and small. Foreign and large companies are better structured for sales trainings, have better understanding and application and therefore better results than smaller and domestically owned companies. Taking into consideration research results it is obvious that field of development of sales personnel through educations and trainings is quite challenging and complex. There are numerous variables that impact sales performance and some of those could be positively impacted by sales trainings. Sales consultants priority are to develop and deliver custom made effective trainings and organizations priority should be to provide positive organizational attitudes toward application of new sales skills. Only then will sales trainings show its full potential and truly add value for its participants.

Suggestion and challenge for the future research is to connect Kirpatrick's four level performance evaluation model with quantification measures in order to calculate return on investment in sales trainings therefore providing full answer for ever lasting cost-benefits question regarding exact value of sales educations and trainings.

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