

Sales Process as a Service (SPAS): Development and Validation of an Extension to the Shortened Selling Orientation – Customer Orientation (SOCO) Score (SOCO-SPAS)

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Abstract

The association between selling orientation and customer orientation and sales success has been a matter of intensive research since the publication of the selling orientation-customer orientation (SOCO) score in the early 1980's. However, which attitudes predispose salespeople for high performance remains elusive. In addition, the association between customer orientation may be curvilinear and depend on the selling situation – and little research has been devoted to business-to-business (B2B) sales. This paper aims at starting to close those knowledge gaps through the development of a self-assessment tool for attitudes of salespeople. An extension of the 10-item SOCO score is developed through literature research in sales/business development and on service orientation in other settings. The score was subsequently validated through feedback by sales scholars. The extended score adds a dimension that tests whether professional salespeople consider the sales process as a service (SPAS) that should provide value beyond the identification of the best offering. Response rates by sales scholars was low, resulting in the need for further validation of the candidate SOCO-SPAS score. Business-to-business (B2B) relationships are an essential but understudied area of economics. The current paper provides a means to assess the relationship between attitudes and sales performance in modern B2B sales, by extending a scoring system that has originally been developed for B2C sales and many years in the past when market conditions were different than today.

Introduction

Sales and business development are a key function in organizations, as a reliable stream of income is essential to their long-term existence. As sellers are often the most important contact and primary source of communication between a company and its customers (Sharma et al. 1999, Sharma 1990), there is an important role for B2B salespeople to play.

Surprisingly, compared to B2C, there is relatively little research in B2B (Lilien, 2016), and compared to B2B marketing, research in B2B sales is underrepresented, with about twice as many publications on B2B marketing compared to B2B sales (Google Scholar, 2022a; Google Scholar, 2022b).

Customer orientation is among the more intensively researched topics in sales and B2B sales with more than 20,000 hits in Google Scholar when searching for “customer orientation” and “sales” for the decade of 2012-2021 (Google Scholar, 2022c). The literature about customer orientation in various settings, as well as scoring systems, will be extensively discussed in the following section. In this paper, a new concept that is related to, but is distinct from the classical definition of customer orientation is introduced: “Sales process as a service” (SPAS). In addition, a well-established scoring system, i.e. the selling orientation (SO) – customer orientation (CO) score, will be extended by a “sales process as a service” (SPAS) component. The resulting 15-item score which can be used to assess how salesperson attitudes around selling orientation (5 item sub-score), customer orientation (5 item sub-score) and SPAS orientation (5 item sub-score) associate with sales performance. Before discussing the development and validation of the extended scoring system, the theoretical foundations leading to the concept of SPAS shall be discussed.

Theoretical Foundations

SOCO: Theoretical foundations and key findings

One of the seminal papers on customer orientation in sales has been published by Saxe and Weitz (1982), who have introduced the “selling orientation, customer orientation (SOCO) score”, a self-assessment tool for salespeople across 24 items which help to find out whether a salesperson’s attitudes are rather towards finding the ideal solution for a customer, or towards seeking the sale under all circumstances, even if it is to the disadvantage of the customer.

Customer orientation, however, has been a topic in scientific inquiry for much longer, tracing back to Bursk (1947), who has discussed low-pressure selling. Since the introduction of the SOCO score, many researchers have discussed factors that mediate the association between customer orientation and sales performance. For example, Smith and Hunt (1987) reported that honestly discussing the disadvantages of an offering as well as the advantages, is associated with improved sales performance. Homburg, Müller and Klarmann (2011) reported that the association between customer orientation and sales performance is not linear but that there is an optimum level of customer orientation that depends on the respective sales situation – with situations where individualized or premium products are being sold having a higher level of optimum customer orientation. Bateman and Valentine (2015) have shown that customer orientation improves multiple dimensions

of customer evaluation of the salesperson (trust, assumed ethicality, and intention to purchase). Luthia and Strid (2020) have identified communication skills as a vital training element as antecedent of customer orientation. In an era in which many companies put a lot of emphasis on customer experience (Peñalba-Aguirrezabalaga et al., 2021) and social selling (Barney-McNamara et al., 2020), customer orientation has remained relevant. The proposed shorter 10-item form of the SOCO score (Thomas, Soutar and Ryan, 2001) will serve as a basis for the development of an extended version for B2B sales.

Fully discussing the historic developments and changes in this field and related fields of research is beyond the scope of this article and are discussed more comprehensively in Ledinger and Attila (2022, in print). Further comprehensive reviews on the relationship between customer orientation and sales success have been published by Ohiomah, Benyoucef and Andreev (2020), as well as by Goad and Jaramillo (2014). A meta-analysis by Jaramillo et al. (2007) has confirmed SOCO as a significant predictor of sales performance.

Weaknesses of SOCO in B2B and definition of SPAS

Compared to B2C settings, sales literature in the B2B setting is scarce. However, the revised SOCO score has been shown to be applicable to B2B selling (Periatt, LeMay and Periatt, 2004). As the authors point out, the SOCO score, as well as the revised version have originally been developed with a focus on B2C selling. Although with conflicting results between studies, the original SOCO score has also been used in selected B2B studies (Jaramillo et al., 2007, 302-303).

Due to the inherent differences between most B2C selling situations and most B2B selling situations, this leaves the original or revised SOCO scores sub-optimal to investigate the association between salesperson attitudes and sales performance.

Most importantly, the structure of B2B sales discussions is characterized by a much higher complexity, typically involving multiple participants and relationships that evolve over a long period of time. Consequently, relationship value is a topic of intense interest in B2B sales research (Hohenschwert & Geiger, 2015; Boles et al., 2000).

Salespeople are often tasked with also providing service, thus the concept of sales being not just a business development function but also a service function is not foreign to sales scientists. However, as de Ruyter, Keeling and Yu (2019) point out in their comprehensive review on sales-service

ambidexterity, the focus point is typically the performance of sales tasks by service employees or the performance of service tasks by salespeople, but always in the provision of the key organizational activity and in association with the direct pursuit of new business opportunities (i.e. the provision of a service might help uncover new sales opportunities). However, as Güneş et al. (2010, p. 168) have shown, using service activities as a means to find new sales opportunities can annoy customers and thus backfire.

This is where the concept of “sales process as a service” (SPAS) comes in. While the concept of sales-service ambidexterity assumes that the service interaction helps to uncover new business opportunities, the idea behind SPAS is that the sales process itself is a service that should provide value to the customer, as this might make the potential customer more inclined to take part in the sales process, enable and reduce customer and prospect resistance. Sales process as a service (SPAS) orientation in B2B sales shall be defined as an attitude that understands the sales process as a form of service that should itself be of value for the customer beyond helping the customer make the right purchasing decision. SPAS considers the sales process as an offering for the prospective client that should be designed like other types of product or service offerings, rather than simply a means to an end [i.e. making a sale].

Several authors have previously discussed the need to provide value to prospective clients in the sales process, which is a cornerstone of content marketing. As Jutkowitz (2014) states, “... corporations today can and should participate in the dynamic exchange of innovative ideas, unique knowledge, and expertise”. This implies that the sales process must provide value to the client, without immediately creating an obligation to purchase. Providing value in the sales process may occur, among other things, through the documentation and/or customer perception of competence (Zerbini, Golfetto & Gibbert, 2007; Belonax, Newell & Plank, 2007; Kaski et al., 2017). The knowledge of how to create customer value has also been discussed by Koponen, Julkunena and Asaib (2019), who consider it as a sub-competence of business acumen, which is as an essential component of communication competence. Value co-creation has also been described as a process that involves knowledge sharing and can provide improved outcomes through emotional factors such as inspiration, shared experience or alignment and reflection (Johnson et al., 2021). Besides these scientific studies, the demonstration of expertise is intuitive to B2B sellers who are used to working with references or case studies, and to marketers who run corporate blogs, podcasts and alike at an increasing rate.

The understanding of the sales process as a service is also

in line with the Unified Service Theory (UST), which defines a service not as much through its intangibility but through the need for the customer to contribute significantly to the performance of the service (Sampson & Froehle 2006, p. 334). This requirement is certainly met in complex B2B sales processes.

In summary, although value creation in sales is a well-established concept, publications that discuss value creation in the sales process usually do not specifically address value that can be created and provided outside of the core offerings of a company.

Differentiation of SPAS and related concepts

Several other concepts that have drawn scientific attention need to be mentioned as related to the concept of SPAS. While a comprehensive review of these concepts is beyond the scope of this paper, selected publications from these shall briefly be discussed.

Table 1 gives an overview of publications in adaptive selling, (customer) service orientation, service-dominant logic and value-based selling. Those concepts discuss the need to provide value, adapt to the specific customer situation and provide value to the customer and/or to define an offering broadly by the value the customer receives. All of those are relevant to the development of the SOCO-SPAS score, but the concept of SPAS is distinct from either of the concepts. The similarities and differences between those concepts and SPAS are briefly discussed in the table 1.

Methodology and Data

This paper discusses the development and validation of an extended version of the selling orientation – customer orientation (SOCO) score. While the original SOCO score (Saxe & Weitz, 1982) consisted of 24 items, the revised SOCO score (Thomas, Soutar & Ryan, 2001) consisted of 10 items to test for selling- and customer orientation. With the current paper, the revised score is extended with 5 items that test for service orientation in the B2B sales process (SPAS). The development and validation of the SOCO-SPAS score has consisted of three phases:

1. Development of the candidate score items. For this purpose, the author has drawn from publications from sales research as well as about service orientation in other settings (drawing from and extending concepts as discussed in Chapter 1). Potential SPAS score items

have also drawn from extant literature about customer orientation of service workers (especially the personality trait assessment used in Brown et al., 2002). Score items have been adapted as necessary to be potentially suitable to the professional sales situation, where needed. In order to have a balance between items that may be as-associated with a high service orientation, and items associated with low service orientation and thus avoid a potential social desirability bias, negatively-stated items have been included that would be negatively scored. This is similar to the strategy chosen by Saxe and Weitz (1982). The 21 items selected as potential measures for SPAS are shown in Appendix 2, Table A2.1.

2. A questionnaire has been developed to test which items are most suitable to comprehensively test for the concept of understanding the sales process as a service, with as little correlation between the items on this dimension of the score, and the other dimensions of the scoring system. The questionnaire has been sent to

525 scholars, which consisted of authors of the papers about the original and revised SOCO scores (n=16), as well as researchers who have cited the respective publications (n=414). Finally, leading sales researchers globally have been asked for their feedback (n=95) with the same questionnaire. Different links have been sent to the respective groups of researchers. The main intention was to validate the potential score items in a similar way to how the original SOCO score has been validated. Respondents were first asked to rate whether the potential items were “clearly”, “somewhat”, or “not” related to SPAS. In addition, they were asked which items they would or would definitely not choose among the 5 items to represent SPAS in the final score. In addition, respondents were asked to state whether any items were considered to strongly correlate, and to give any additional feedback. This approach was chosen in order to ensure nomological validity and to obtain responses von scholars who could be assumed to have a clear understanding of the intention behind the SOCO score.

Table 1

Theoretical framework: concepts related to SPAS, and their differentiation from SPAS

Concept	Key findings	Differentiation SPAS
Adaptive selling		
Spiro and Weitz (1990)	Adaptive selling acknowledges that different customers and customers' situations require different sales approaches, as well as the competencies to engage in adaptive behaviours. Development of a self-assessment questionnaire to measure adaptive selling behaviours.	Adaptive selling addresses which selling style can be successful based on customer personal factors. SPAS may also require adaptation to the customer's situation but does not test for adaptive-ness specifically.
Guenzi, De Luca and Spiro (2016)	Adaptive selling together with selling orientation are negatively associated with customer trust.	SPAS may conceptually overlap with the wider concept of adaptiveness in providing value beyond the core transaction.
Walter and Ritter (2003)	Adaptive supplier behaviour can lead to direct value creation (e.g. profit, sales volume) and/or direct value creation (e.g. innovation).	
(Customer) service orientation		
Hogan, Hogan and Busch (1984)	Application of a personality trait assessment (Hogan score) to adjustment, sociability, and agreeableness as major dimensions related to service orientation.	Service orientation may be defined differently depending on context, but generally considers positive interactions between companies (and/or its employees) and its customers, eventually leading to customer value or as a personality trait.
Hennig-Thurau (2004)	Customer orientation of service employees as a key determinant of customer satisfaction in service businesses.	
Homburg, Hoyer and Fassnacht (2002)	(Value-added) services as a strategic differentiator in retail business strategy.	
Wright, Pearce and Bus-bin (1997)	Customer service orientation as an implementation of the marketing concept is associated with operational performance.	SPAS is clearly considered as an attitude of salespeople rather than an organizational value. SPAS may be related to personality but may as well be trained and/or shaped by experience.
Lytle, Hom and Mokwa (1998)	Development of a ten-item score of service orientation, understanding service orientation as a strategic organizational goal for service excellence	

Table 1*Theoretical framework: concepts related to SPAS, and their differentiation from SPAS (cont.)*

Concept	Key findings	Differentiation SPAS
Service-dominant logic		
Vargo and Lusch (2004)	Service-dominant logic as a new paradigm in marketing, from a goods-centric perspective to a view focused on the value created by a product (or service).	Service-dominant logic primarily considers the service aspect of a company's core offering. SPAS acknowledges that buying organizations might benefit from a business relationship in multiple ways, i.e. the service provided by SPAS may be disconnected from the core offering.
Le Meunier-FitzHugh et al. (2011)	Need for salespeople to consider value in an extended context and extended timeframe, from co-creation of a solution until the end of the usage period.	
Value-based selling (VBS)		
Töytäri et al., 2011	Sellers need to provide proof of financial advantage provided with an offering. VBS demands a customer-centric sales process, focussing on the creation, quantification and demonstration of value. This involves the use of reference cases and demonstrating the price of an offering in relationship with the achievable monetary benefit.	VBS calls for the co-creation of value for the customer, but primarily focusses on the creation of value with the core offering. SPAS has similar goals (e.g. reducing resistance to the salesperson's influence attempts) and may also benefit from quantifying the benefit, but the SPAS-related benefit may be difficult to quantify as it is not necessarily related to the core offering alone. The importance of personality traits discussed for VBS may even be more important for SPAS than for VBS. While VBS focusses on future value provided with a solution and may require elements of SPAS to be successful, SPAS focuses on a benefit achieved already in the process.
Liu and Zhao (2021)	Development of a conceptual framework for successful VBS, including organizational and individual requirements (personality traits such as proactivity, motivation, ability to explore and implement new or improved solutions).	
Terho et al. (2012)	VBS as an extension of the customer value concept in marketing. VBS = crafting and communication of customer value based on the knowledge of the buyer's business model.	

3. Preliminary choice of the five items for the SPAS component of the extended SOCO-SPAS score.

Results

In total, 22 out of >500 scholars (of which 5 responses by leading scholars, 17 by authors with previous publications on SOCO) have filled at least the question that rated candidate items as "clearly", "somewhat" or "not" related to SPAS, for a total response rate of 4.2 %. In addition, several researchers, have provided feedback in writing. Due to the low response rate, complex statistical analyses e.g. to test for correlation of responses have not been performed. For the choice of items

in the preliminary score, three types of ranking have been created:

1. A ranking of the percentage of respondents to score an item as "clearly" related to SPAS (with the percentage of respondents considering it as "somewhat" related as secondary criteria). With this score, the items that most researchers considered as clearly related with SPAS should be selected.
2. A point score in which an assessment as "clearly" associated accounted two points and an assessment as "somewhat" related with SPAS one point. With this measure, the total assessment of suitability is considered while strength of suitability remains considered.

Table 2*Selected items for the SPAS dimension of SOCO-SPAS*

	% clearly related	Rank % clearly related	Points score	Rank points score	Net score top five	Rank - top five
I try to provide useful and new information to the customer with every contact.	77.27%	1	39	1	5	8
I enjoy working with customers to develop new or creative solutions.	63.64%	7	34	7	8	1
I work diligently to fulfil any commitments made during the sales process, including those not directly related to business opportunities.	72.73%	2	38	2	6	5
I discuss the sales process as part of our offering and why it is of interest for the potential customer to participate in it.	63.64%	6	35	4	6	5
I actively seek feedback from customers, colleagues and superiors about how I could serve them better.	68.18%	4	34	6	6	4

3. A ranking of items based on simple addition of respondents considering the item as one of the five most suitable items, after subtraction of respondents considering the item not suitable, in order to create a net score.

In addition, the author considered feedback about which items respondents considered to correlate with other items. Given the low number of responses regarding correlation of items, the feedback must be considered anecdotal, but was considered relevant nonetheless.

The five selected items scored among the top 8 in either of the ratings and are described in Table 2 (the sorting of the items is in the order of the score items in the questionnaire sent to sales scholars).

The 15-item SOCO-SPAS score is intended for self-assessment by salespeople. It can be found in its entirety in Appendix 1. However, it is recommended that for routine use questions are mixed between the dimensions, or provided in random order if performed as an online questionnaire.

Table A2.2 in Appendix 2 shows eight draft score items that have scored within the top five in at least one of the scores but not been used in the SOCO-SPAS score. These items may also be well-suited to represent SPAS, but have been excluded because of their overall performance (i.e. respondents have rated the items as slightly less relevant than those eventually

chosen), or because respondents have considered the item as closely related to an item chosen for the eventual score.

Discussion

With this paper, an extension of the (revised) SOCO score (Thomas, Soutar and Ryan, 2001) for complex B2B sales situations is suggested. The criticism by Schwepker (2003) that SO-CO does not provide insights into what is needed to perform activities successfully, however, will not be solved by this new scoring system. However, future research might show that this scoring system will be more informative about the antecedents of selling success in the sale of complex solutions, primarily in business-to-business sales encounters, compared to the original SOCO score (Saxe & Weitz, 1982). The new dimension in the SOCO-SPAS score addresses factors that are relevant in B2B that are not sufficiently covered in existing scoring systems. For example, the fact that B2B sales cycles are typically longer than in B2C sales is considered by SPAS score items that refer to multiple touch points and communication about the value of participating in the sales process. The need for co-creation is acknowledged by a score item around the development of novel and creative solutions.

The concept of SPAS draws from several concepts that have received considerable attention in sales research as well as related areas such as service orientation. It hypothesizes

that (prospective) customers are more likely to engage in a company's sales process, and eventually make a purchase, if they perceive an added value in doing so, even if eventually no sale comes to fruition. The concept further lends from content marketing where it is a key concept to attract new customers by providing content that is valuable, frequently with content that is not or only loosely related to the product or service offering of the company.

Several strengths and weaknesses of the present research need to be discussed.

Strengths

This paper improves the applicability of the SOCO scoring system for B2B sales. It can be assumed that such an extended scoring system is especially pertinent to complex sales situations and especially for markets where there is a polyphony on the supplier side (i.e. many companies offering a solution) as well as on the demand side. In such a situation, there might be a long selling cycle and, due to the high number of potential customers, a sales organization might have difficulty maintaining close relationships with prospects while there is only a latent demand for an offering. In such a situation, it might be of benefit for a supplier if the sales process provides value to the potential buyers, irrespective of the value of the core offering itself. In such a situation, it might be more likely for a buying organization to draw from the supplier's expertise and have a relationship with the supplier (or even just a mere memory) when the need for a solution becomes current. In providing a scoring system with a total of 15 items, in spite of the complexity of B2B the questionnaire is simple for salespeople to fill, and simple for sales leaders as well as sales researchers to work with and interpret.

This paper adds to the extant sales literature by providing a new perspective on customer orientation 40 years after the original publication of the SOCO score and 20 years after the publication of the revised score. This is well overdue, given how strongly the sales profession has changed in the years since, from technology (internet, mobile phones, videoconferencing) to market structures and buyer-seller dynamics (a wealth of information is now readily available for buyers, which eliminates the need for salespeople to provide the most basic information to customers), profoundly changing the role of the salesperson as intermediary between the customer and the company. Although the association between the SPAS score and sales performance is yet to be established, conceptionally the newly introduced concept of SPAS may reflect attitudes required to succeed in modern-day industrial sales, and to integrate sales and marketing activities for superior organizational performance.

Limitations and Future Research

The response rate of sales scholars to the questionnaire has been low with only some 20 responses having been received. The fact that all candidate items have scored >60 % as at least somewhat related to SPAS makes statistical analysis difficult to perform. It is thus unclear whether all candidate items have been similar in their capability to represent SPAS, or whether a larger sample set would have provided clearer insights.

As separate questionnaire links have been sent to scholars with different backgrounds (to citing authors, authors of key publication, and other sales scholars, respectively), there is a reason to believe that the results are balanced and thus valid. However, there are methodological weaknesses. First, there has been overlap between the groups of researchers who have received the questionnaire (i.e. a sales scholar may also be author of key publications in his/her field, and/or have cited such publications), which limits the value of assessing responses according to type of scholar. Second, the sample may be biased by the intentional selection of questionnaire recipients – although requests to participate have been sent to re-searchers from all continents, it may be assumed that the vast majority of responses might have been received from scholars in affluent, western countries. Extension of the validation to create a larger and more balanced respondent cohort might increase validity in an international setting. Third, participation links were not fully personalized nor have demographic questions been asked, limiting information about who has responded. Fourth, many respondents may not have correctly understood the negatively-stated items as such, and thus considered them “not” related to SPAS when they would have considered the concept relevant had it been formulated positively. Consequently, none of these items have been included in SO-CO-SPAS. However, several researchers have provided feedback that those statements are related to Selling Orientation, rather than SPAS, which suggests results on these items are valid. Fourth, the SOCO-SPAS score does not consider that different stages in a sales cycle might be governed by different factors or that the ideal value of SPAS may be situation- and customer dependent. Finally, several written responses suggested that there was sub-optimal clarity about the definition of the scoring dimension that will be tested. As the original questions of the revised SOCO score have been included in the instruction of the questionnaire, as well as a verbal explanation of how service orientation in the B2B sales process shall be defined, the author believes that this apparent lack of clarity is, at least in part, due to the novelty of the concept.

This paper confirms validity of the SPAS concept through feedback from sales scholars. It also enables researches and

practitioners alike to assess how SOCO, together with SPAS, mediates sales performance in complex selling situations in B2B sales. Nonetheless, validity needs to be further validated through research in actual sales settings. For example, the dependency of outcome on SOCO-SPAS elements could be tested according to stage of sales process, industry, gender, age, and other factors that could influence the outcome. Also, the SOCO-SPAS score does not explain how attitudes that predispose salespeople for higher performance translate into trainable behaviours and/or a repeatable sales process.

Managerial Implications

As the SOCO-SPAS score or the SPAS concept have not been tested in actual sales settings, the managerial implications remain speculative. Possible benefits for sales management are benchmarking of a company's sales team, identification of training needs, or use for the implementation of content marketing and customer service strategies. In addition, the scoring system might be used in salespeople hiring, in order

to make sure that a new hire is naturally inclined to work in a way that jibes with the company's sales, marketing, and customer service strategies.

Conclusions

This paper describes the development of an extended version of the SOCO-SPAS Score, improving the relevance of the SOCO scoring system for complex B2B selling situations. The extended version adds a component that tests whether salespeople consider the sales process as a service that needs to add value (SPAS). The 5 items to represent the new SPAS dimension has been chosen following feedback from sales scholars on 21 candidate items. The novel score with 15 items across three dimensions will enable researchers and practitioners to test which attitudes are associated with high sales performance. Further research is needed to prove the relevance of SOCO-SPAS in different settings of professional sales.

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Prodajni proces kot storitev (SPAS): razvoj in potrditev razširitve skrajšane lestvice usmerjenosti v prodajo - usmerjenost k strankam (SOCO) (SOCO-SPAS)

Izvleček

Povezava med prodajno usmerjenostjo in usmerjenostjo k strankam ter prodajnim uspehom je predmet intenzivnih raziskav vse od objave ocene prodajne usmerjenosti in usmerjenosti k strankam (SOCO) v začetku osemdesetih let prejšnjega stoletja. Vendar pa je še vedno težko ugotoviti katera naravnost prodajalce predisponira k visoki uspešnosti. Poleg tega je povezava med usmerjenostjo k stranki lahko ukrivljena in odvisna od prodajne situacije - in malo raziskav je bilo posvečenih prodaji med podjetji (B2B). Namen tega prispevka je začeti zapolnjevati te vrzeli v znanju z razvojem orodja za samoocenjevanje stališč prodajalcev. Razširitev 10-stopenjske ocene SOCO je razvita na podlagi raziskav literature s področja prodaje/poslovnega razvoja in usmerjenosti k storitvam v drugih okoljih. Ocena je bila naknadno potrjena s povratnimi informacijami strokovnjakov s področja prodaje. Razširjena ocena dodaja razsežnost, ki preverja, ali poklicni prodajalci obravnavajo prodajni proces kot storitev (SPAS), ki mora zagotavljati vrednost, ki presega opredelitev najboljše ponudbe. Odzivnost strokovnjakov s področja prodaje je bila nizka, zato je bilo treba kandidatno oceno SOCO-SPAS dodatno potrditi. Odnosi med podjetji (B2B) so pomembno, vendar premalo raziskano področje ekonomije. Pričujoči članek zagotavlja sredstvo za oceno razmerja med stališči in uspešnostjo prodaje v sodobni prodaji B2B z razširitvijo sistema točkovanja, ki je bil prvotno razvit za prodajo B2C in več let nazaj, ko so bile tržne razmere drugačne kot danes.

Ključne besede: prodajni process, prodaja B2B, usmerjenost k strankam, usmerjenost k storitvam, samoocenjevanje

Appendix 1 : Dimensions of the SOCO-SPAS Questionnaire

The statements below describe ways a salesperson might act with customers (for convenience, the word "customer" is used to refer to both customers and prospects). For each statement, please indicate the proportion of your customers with whom you act as described in the statement. The meanings of the numbers are:

- 1 - True for NONE of your customers-NEVER
- 2 - True for ALMOST NONE ...
- 3 - True for A FEW ...
- 4 - True for SOMEWHAT LESS THAN HALF ...
- 5 - True for ABOUT HALF ..
- 6 - True for SOMEWHAT MORE THAN HALF ...
- 7 - True for a LARGE MAJORITY ...
- 8 - True for ALMOST ALL ...
- 9 - True for ALL of your customers-ALWAYS

For example, if you choose 6 below, you indicate that you enjoy developing solutions with your customers in somewhat more than half of the time.

	Never							Always	
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
I enjoy working with customers to develop new or creative solutions.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

Customer Orientation

	Never							Always	
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
I try to figure out what customer needs are.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
A good employee has to have the customer's best interest in mind.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
I try to bring a customer with a problem together with a product/service that helps solve that problem.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
I offer the product/service that is best suited to the customer's problem.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
I try to find out what kind of products/services will be most helpful to a customer.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

Selling Orientation

	Never							Always	
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
I try to sell as much as I can rather than to satisfy a customer.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
It is necessary to stretch the truth in describing a product to a customer.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
I try to sell a customer all I can convince them to buy, even if I think it is more than a wise customer would buy.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
I try to find out what kind of products/services will be most helpful to a customer.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
I paint too rosy a picture of my product/service to make them sound as good as possible.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
I decide what product/service to offer on the basis of what I can convince customers to accept, not on the basis of what will satisfy them in the long run.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

Sales Process as a Service (SPAS) Orientation

I try to provide useful and new information to the customer with every contact.

I enjoy working with customers to develop new or creative solutions.

I try to provide a better customer experience than the customer will reasonably expect.

I discuss benefits of working with my company beyond the solutions that my company sells.

I actively seek feedback from customers, colleagues and superiors about how I could serve them better.

Never**Always**

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

Appendix 2: Candidate Items for the SPAS Component

Table A2.1

The 21 candidate items for the SPAS dimension. Items with (-): reverse scaled items

Potential item for the SPAS dimension	
I try to help the customers also in areas where my company's solutions can't.	I enjoy working with customers to develop new or creative solutions.
I want to be perceived as an industry expert and let customers draw from my broad expertise.	During the sales process, I always think of how to reach my goals and company sales goals. (-)
I will do my customer a favor only if I am confident that it will pay off in the short term. (-)	The primary goal in my interaction with the customer is to uncover needs. (-)
I try to engage with the customer only as long as it takes to find information required to make the sale. (-)	I try to provide useful and new information to the customer with every contact.
I work diligently to fulfil any commitments made during the sales process, including those not directly related to business opportunities.	I work diligently to fulfil any commitments made during the sales process, including those not directly related to business opportunities.
I feel like the sales process has a greater influence on the customer decision than the objective fit of the solution.	I discuss the sales process as part of our offering and why it is of interest for the potential customer to participate in it.
I try to provide a better customer experience than the customer will reasonably expect.	I try to understand the customer's situation as thoroughly as possible.
I discuss benefits of working with my company beyond the solutions that my company sells.	I try to create an atmosphere where customers can be trustful enough to talk about any topic on their mind.
I show my customers that I care for them even when I am busy.	I try to make interactions as convenient for the client as possible.
I actively seek feedback from customers, colleagues and superiors about how I could serve them better.	I acknowledge and appreciate that the customer needs to contribute to a fruitful sales process.
I am keen on learning and applying new competencies in the sales process.	

Table A2.2*Items to score in top 10 in either ranking, not chosen for final score*

Potential item for the SPAS dimension	% clearly related	Rank % clearly related	Points score	Rank points score	Net score top five	Rank - top five	Reason to not pick
I try to help the customers also in areas where my company's solutions can't.	59.09%	12	33	12	7	3	Performance
I want to be perceived as an industry expert and let customers draw from my broad expertise.	63.64%	7	34	7	4	11	Performance
I try to provide a better customer experience than the customer will reasonably expect.	59.09%	13	32	13	8	2	Performance
I show my customers that I care for them even when I am busy.	68.18%	3	35	4	2	16	Corr. item 12
I acknowledge and appreciate that the customer needs to contribute to a fruitful sales process.	63.64%	5	36	3	5	9	Corr. item 3
I discuss benefits of working with my company beyond the solutions that my company sells.	63.64%	9	33	10	5	9	Performance
I try to make interactions as convenient for the client as possible.	59.09%	11	34	9	3	14	Performance
I am keen on learning and applying new competencies in the sales process	63.64 %	9	33	10	6	5	Performance