

CONSIDERATIONS ON HUMAN CAPITAL AS A KEY ELEMENT OF IT PRODUCT SALES MANAGEMENT

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Abstract

Over the last two decades, Romania has developed into a true regional hub for IT services, becoming a point of reference in Central and Eastern Europe. A key factor is the availability of a well-trained workforce. The higher education system has consistently produced graduates with solid skills in areas such as computer science, software engineering, artificial intelligence or cybersecurity. The workforce in the information and communications technology sector represents one of the most valuable resources of the Romanian economy. Therefore, the coordinates of sales management in an IT organization represent the key elements that structure and guide the sales activity, so that it is efficient, customer-oriented and aligned with the strategic objectives of the company. The specifics of the technology market must also be taken into account, as it is dynamic, competitive and innovative. The main elements of interest are: sales strategy, sales team structure, sales processes, performance management, support technology, training and development, customer relationship.

Keywords: *sales management, sales strategy, workforce, sales process.*

JEL Classification: M41, M50.

1. Introduction

Sales activity involves establishing the ways, forms and methods by which products (goods and/or services) and markets of interest to the organization are to be sold.

Sales management is the subcomponent of commercial management that studies the processes and management relationships at the sales department level, in order to identify management methods, systems and techniques that will increase the efficiency and effectiveness of sales. The exercise of sales management functions covers both the activities of the sales department and the personnel dealing with sales.

Sales management is a component of the commercial function and has as its main objective the sale of products in safe conditions.

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Among the activities specific to sales management we find:

- Elaboration of marketing studies to ensure the portfolio of orders and commercial contracts, knowledge of demand and the competitive situation, the prices of new products that can be assimilated, the conditions to which they must respond in order to better satisfy the preferences of the customers they are addressed to;
- Collection of orders issued by customers and the establishment of their portfolio, the conclusion of commercial contracts in strict accordance with customer requests and available production/service capacities;
- Development of the strategic plan and delivery-sales programs of the contracted products;
- Organization of operational activities for the delivery-sales of the products, rhythmic serving of scheduled and unscheduled customers in accordance with their requests specified in the contracts, in the orders issued;
- Monitoring the operational progress of deliveries to customers;
- Traceability of the behavior of the products delivered to customers, monitoring their functionality, and prompt intervention for recalibration of the products or remedying the detected and reported defects, applying the suggestions from the customers.

The sales strategy represents a complex action established in the medium and long term that aims to achieve the objectives regarding the sale of products under certain conditions determined by various endogenous and/or exogenous factors.

The sales strategy must target two important aspects: the development of the sales process at normal parameters and the expansion of product sales. It must also take into account all the activities of the relevant department, as well as the interdependencies between them, from specific marketing activities such as: market research in order to determine the demands of future customers, studying sales forecasts, concluding contracts with product and service suppliers and tracking products to users. Among the sales strategies, we can identify: Market coverage strategies; Rationalization strategies; Corporate image promotion strategies; Internationalization strategies.

Market coverage strategies can be classified, in turn, depending on how they aim to achieve their proposed objectives in:

- Intensive distribution strategies – aim to achieve the highest possible sales volume for the best possible market coverage;
- Selective distribution strategies – distribution channels are chosen depending on: the quality of distributors' services, technical equipment, after-sales assistance, etc.;
- Exclusive distribution strategies – a single distributor is used, in a well-established area, within a determined period of time.

Rationalization strategies aim to streamline activities by performing tasks with minimal costs and by ensuring the best possible management possibilities.

Strategies for promoting the organization's image consider various forms of advertising, participation in fairs and exhibitions, etc.

Internationalization strategies aim to expand sales on foreign markets.

2. Specific elements of sales management in an IT organization

The coordinates of sales management in an IT organization represent the key elements that structure and guide the sales activity, so that it is efficient, customer-oriented and aligned with the strategic objectives of the company. The specifics of the technological market must also be taken into account, as it is dynamic, competitive and innovative. The main elements of interest are: sales strategy, sales team structure, sales processes, performance management, support technology, training and development, customer relationship.

- The sales strategy requires the organization to consider: alignment with the organization's overall strategy; market segmentation and choice of IT niche (software, hardware, cloud services, outsourcing, etc.); establishing commercial objectives: revenue growth, customer retention, geographical expansion; differentiating the offer from the competition.
- The structure of the sales team is based on defining roles: account managers, sales engineers, business development, ethnic support; team organization; collaboration with marketing, support and technological development teams.
- Sales processes are mainly based on: defining a clear sales funnel: lead - opportunity - proposal - negotiation - closing; use of sales methods: SPIN Selling, Solution Selling, Challenger Sales, etc.; CRM integration (e.g. Salesforce, HubSpot) for automation and visibility.

- a. **Lead (Initial Contact)** = a person or company that might be interested in the product. It is obtained through digital marketing, event participation, website forms, cold-calling, email campaigns. Example: someone fills out a form for a software demo.
- b. **Opportunity (Qualified Lead)** = the lead has demonstrated real interest, has a clear need and is open to discussions, which involves exploratory meetings, questions about business challenges, starting a consultative relationship. The BANT method (Budget, Authority, Need, Time) is used for evaluation. Example: An IT startup needs a scalable cloud hosting solution and requests a quote.
- c. **Proposal (offer)** = the sales team makes a personalized offer (technical proposal, commercial offer, live demo, free trial, POC -proof of concept)

that directly responds to the customer's needs. Example: sending a quote to a customer.

- d. **Negotiation** = the stage where financial, legal, technical terms, schedule, etc. are discussed. Example: The customer requests certain volume discounts or flexible terms for data migration.
- e. **Closing** = signing the contract, granting licenses, launching the implementation, onboarding, invoicing, integration into the client's systems. An essential role falls to those who deal with Account Management/Customer Success to maintain the long-term relationship. Example: A 1-year contract for an IT project management platform and training is provided to the client's team.

In principle, a sales process can be presented as follows:

Lead →	Opportunity →	Proposal →	Negotiation →	Closing
100%	60%	40%	20%	10%

Fig. no.1: The sales process

At each stage, a percentage of potential customers "fall" out of the funnel for various reasons; thus, optimizing each stage is essential to maximize conversion.

- Sales methods such as SPIN Selling, Solution Selling, and Challenger Sales are essential tools in IT companies, where selling is often complex, consultative, and solution-oriented.

A. SPIN Selling is a method focused on consultative questions to discover the customer's real needs.

Situation	→ understanding the client's context (technologies used, team, processes).
Problem	→ identifying current challenges (e.g. frequent downtime, lack of scalability).
Implication	→ what risks the respective problem produces (e.g. loss of revenue, user dissatisfaction).
Need	→ creating an urgency and orientation towards your solution/sold by you.

Fig. no.2: The SPIN Selling method

B. Solution Selling focuses on selling a customized solution to a specific problem, not a generic product, and involves several steps: identifying latent or explicit problems; co-creating a solution with the client; aligning the solution

with business objectives. It is very useful in the IT field, where the client needs consulting for the integration of several products and works very well when the solution offered also involves services (customization, training, onboarding, etc.).

C. The Challenger Sale is based on the idea that salespeople who challenge the customer's status quo and bring insights are the ones who close the most sales. The method has 3 components: Teach the customer something new about their business; Personalize the message according to role and industry; Control the sale, especially in the negotiation phase. It is an indicated method for IT products because many customers do not know exactly what they want – but they know what problem they have. In this way, Challengers can lead the conversation and educate the customer (e.g. about AI, automation, cybersecurity, etc.).

- Performance management aims to establish KPIs (performance indicators): number of qualified leads, conversion rate, revenue/agent, lifetime value. Periodic evaluations, feedback sessions and coaching are another important component. Bonus policies and incentives for results are dependent on the indicators achieved, fulfilled.
- Support technology aims at: CRM and integrated ERP systems; automation for outreach (email, LinkedIn, cold calling); business intelligence and predictive reports based on AI.
- Training and development is another equally important aspect in sales management, as it aims at aspects such as: continuous training in sales, but also in technology; workshops for developing soft skills (negotiation, storytelling, active listening); simulations and role-playing for real scenarios.
- Customer relationship or focusing on Customer Success and the value brought to the customer, not just on the product sold; long-term relationship management; collecting feedback and adapting solutions.

3. Human capital in the Romania IT sector – a key driver of quality of performance and sales management

Over the past two decades, Romania has developed into a true regional hub for IT services, becoming a reference point in Central and Eastern Europe in terms of business process outsourcing (BPO), software development and the provision of technological solutions. This rise is due to a combination of factors that offer Romania significant competitive advantages in an increasingly digitalized global economic context.

A first essential factor is the availability of a well-trained workforce. The higher education system has consistently produced graduates with solid skills in areas such as computer science, software engineering, artificial intelligence or

cybersecurity. This quality human resource is highly valued on the domestic and international labor market.

Also, the low operational costs, compared to those in Western Europe, have attracted numerous multinational companies that have chosen to outsource their IT activities to Romania. This economic efficiency, combined with a high level of productivity, offers an advantageous quality-price ratio for investors.

Knowledge of foreign languages is another important asset. A significant proportion of Romanian IT specialists are fluent in English, and many of them also know other foreign languages, such as French, German or Italian, which facilitates interaction with international clients and contributes to efficient integration into cross-border projects.

The continued development of digital infrastructure – especially in terms of high-speed internet networks and data centres – supports Romania's transition to an advanced digital economy. Public and private investments in this area have led to competitive connectivity at European level, providing the necessary technical conditions for large-scale IT operations.

Thus, Romania's positioning as a regional hub in the IT services sector is the result of a favourable combination of economic, educational and technological factors, and maintaining and consolidating this position depends on continued investment in education, digital infrastructure and innovation.

The workforce in the information and communications technology (IT&C) sector represents one of the most valuable resources of the Romanian economy, contributing decisively to the country's positioning as a relevant regional player in the technology field. In 2024, the total number of employees in this sector exceeded the threshold of 230,000, reflecting a sustained growth compared to previous years, both in terms of volume and diversification of skills.

This evolution is influenced by several structural factors: the development of the educational infrastructure in the IT field, the constant demand from the international market, as well as the tendency of multinational companies to locate their development and technological support centers in Romania.

Regarding the geographical distribution of the IT workforce in Romania, it is mainly concentrated in the large university and economic centers, especially in cities that offer infrastructure, access to educational resources and developed entrepreneurial ecosystems. Bucharest concentrates approximately 45% of the total IT&C employees, benefiting from the largest number of companies and a diversified educational offer in the technical field. Cluj-Napoca, often considered the "Silicon Valley of Romania", attracts approximately 15% of the IT workforce, especially in the areas of software development, artificial intelligence and outsourcing services. Cities such as Iași, Timișoara and Brașov are also experiencing a steady increase in the number of IT specialists, becoming emerging centers

with booming local technology ecosystems, thanks to investments in educational infrastructure, technology parks and public-private partnerships.

In terms of remuneration, the Romanian IT&C sector offers some of the most competitive salaries in the economy. In 2024, a junior programmer had an average net salary of between 1,200 and 1,500 euros, depending on the technologies used, the city of residence and the specifics of the employer (start-up vs. corporation). At the same time, the salaries of senior programmers generally vary between 3,000 and 5,000 euros net per month, especially in cases where they hold advanced certifications, expertise in niche technologies or technical leadership roles (tech lead, software architect, etc.).

This competitive salary policy contributes to maintaining talent on the domestic market, although the international mobility of IT specialists remains a significant phenomenon. At the same time, the salary differences between major cities tend to fade, amid the generalization of remote work and the increase in demand for global projects.

4. Conclusions

The structure of the Romanian IT services market reflects the maturity of the sector and its capacity to cover the entire spectrum of technological needs of the modern economy. The diversification of service segments and the increasing complexity of delivered projects attest not only to the competitiveness of the local IT industry, but also to its potential to become an essential driver of innovation and digitalization at regional and European level.

The Romanian IT workforce is in a continuous process of consolidation and sophistication, being one of the main factors supporting the accelerated development of the sector. Through its qualified human capital, expanding geographical distribution and competitive salary packages, Romania manages to maintain its attractiveness to international investors and to actively contribute to European technological innovation.

The IT sector is in a continuous transformation, marked by emerging technologies, new work models and increasingly complex requirements from users and organizations. Adapting to these trends is no longer an option, but an essential condition for long-term competitiveness and relevance.

The challenges facing the IT sector in Romania concern aspects such as: legislative stability, talent retention policies, ensuring a sustainable and resilient development of this strategic sector of the economy.

Romania is at a strategic moment in which it can leverage a wide set of financial, institutional and entrepreneurial instruments to support the transition from an outsourcing model to one focused on innovation and sustainable development. The prospects for the Romanian IT market are favorable, but

realizing its full potential requires a paradigm shift – from execution to innovation, from outsourcing to intellectual property, and from traditional training to adaptive digital education. By capitalizing on human capital, through smart public policies and by supporting the entrepreneurial ecosystem, Romania can become not just a provider of IT services, but a generator of technology with regional and global impact.

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