

**Implementation of a CRM and the adoption of an Inbound / Inside selling methodology on a
multinational company**

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Author Note

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Abstract

This study investigates the implementation of a Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system and the adoption of inside selling and inbound methodologies in a multinational advertising company using a qualitative case study approach. CRM systems, inside selling, and inbound marketing are crucial components for managing customer relationships and driving business growth in the advertising industry. However, the implementation and adoption of these strategies in multinational companies present unique challenges and opportunities. The objective is to reveal the importance of aligning technology, processes, and human factors for successful implementation and adoption, and offer insights into the specific challenges faced by this process. This study contributes to the literature on CRM implementation, inside selling, and inbound marketing by highlighting the role of context in shaping outcomes and providing practical recommendations for multinational advertising companies.

Keywords: CRM success factors, CRM implementation, Inside sales strategy, Inbound marketing tactics, international sales, Integration challenges, Customer relations.

Introduction

The global business environment has undergone significant transformations due to technological advancements, globalization, and competitive pressures. Multinational companies are increasingly adopting inside selling and inbound marketing strategies to enhance their sales performance and customer satisfaction. Inside sales refers to the process of selling products or services remotely, typically by phone, email, or other digital channels (Sleep et al., (2020)), while inbound marketing focuses on attracting, engaging, and delighting potential customers by providing valuable content and experiences tailored to their needs and preferences (Vidal et al., (2021)).

This study investigates the implementation of a Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system and the adoption of inside selling and inbound methodologies in a multinational advertising company using a qualitative case study approach. CRM systems, inside selling, and inbound marketing are crucial components for managing customer relationships and driving business growth in the advertising industry. However, the implementation and adoption of these strategies in multinational companies will present challenges and most certainly bring unique opportunities. The objective is to reveal the importance of aligning technology, processes, and human factors for successful implementation and adoption, and offer insights into the specific challenges faced by the question “What are the strategies of inside selling and inbound marketing in multinational companies?”. This work is a contribution to the literature review on CRM, inside selling, and inbound marketing by highlighting the role of context in shaping outcomes for multinational advertising companies.

This literature review synthesizes five articles and books that provide insights into the implementation of these strategies in multinational companies. The analysis focuses on inside selling in multinational companies, inbound marketing strategies, the integration of marketing management, and the importance of brand reputation and customer satisfaction. This literature

review examines five references, selected based on their relevance to the topic, depth of analysis, and scholarly recognition.

Methodological Approach

By using the following keywords CRM, inside sales, Inbound, international sales and Customer relations, I then initiated wide research in multiple online platforms such as Google, Google Scholar, B-on and Research Gate that presented thousands of results. Because the given results were too many, by narrowing to more specific and complex keywords such as CRM success factors, CRM implementation, inside sales strategy, Inbound marketing, international sales, Integration challenges and Customer relations, the outcome was more suitable for creating this article and it was verified that there is not much information about these types of implementations in multinational companies.

The selection was guided by the need for understanding inside selling in multinational contexts, the effectiveness of inbound marketing strategies, the integration of marketing management principles, and the critical role of brand reputation and customer satisfaction. Each one was chosen for its contribution to these areas, by research of specific keywords.

In the current research, a systematic literature review approach is employed. A systematic review can be explained as a research method and process for identifying and critically appraising relevant research, as well as for collecting and analyzing data from said research. The aim of a systematic review is to identify all empirical evidence that fits the pre-specified inclusion criteria to answer a particular research question or hypothesis (Snyder (2019)).

This methodology allows a comprehensive and critical examination of the five references that provide insights into the implementation of CRM and Inbound/Inside selling methodologies in multinational companies. They are analyzed and synthesized based on their

relevance to the topic and scholarly recognition. This approach ensures an understanding of the identified literature and sets the foundation for future empirical investigation.

Although the articles provided are primarily qualitative and conceptual in nature, it will attempt to extract any relevant quantitative data available and provide an objective comparison of the results across the different studies.

Dakouan (2019): This article is primarily a qualitative study comparing inbound and outbound marketing strategies. There is no explicit quantitative data, such as sample sizes or effect sizes, presented in this study.

Halligan and Shah (2014): This book provides a comprehensive overview of inbound marketing strategies and their implementation. It is a conceptual work and does not present quantitative data or empirical findings.

Javalgi (2014): This article presents a conceptual framework for understanding the factors that influence international sales performance in the Business-to-Business (B2B) setting. While the authors propose research propositions, the paper does not include actual quantitative data or empirical results.

Kotler and Keller (2016): This marketing management book, offers a broad perspective on marketing strategies and best practices, including inside selling and inbound marketing. It is a conceptual work and does not provide specific quantitative data or empirical findings.

Sengupta (2015): This study examines the relationship between service failure, brand reputation, and customer satisfaction. The authors report quantitative data from a survey of 206 respondents. Key findings include a significant positive relationship between brand reputation and customer satisfaction, as well as a significant negative relationship between service failure and customer satisfaction. Also provides empirical findings with quantitative data, highlighting the relationships between service failure, brand reputation, and customer satisfaction. The other sources primarily contribute conceptual frameworks, strategies, and best practices for inside selling and inbound marketing in multinational companies.

Integrating the findings from the qualitative content analysis and the limited quantitative analysis, we can compare the selected sources in terms of their arguments and methodologies.

Regarding the arguments, the references give focus on various aspects of inside selling and inbound marketing not only in multinational companies, with an emphasis on customer-centric strategies, synergies between them, organizational learning and adaptation, managing service failures, and successful implementation.

Synergies between Inside Selling and Inbound Marketing	Dakouan (2019) and Halligan and Shah (2014) both emphasize the complementary nature of inbound and outbound marketing strategies and provide insights into how inbound marketing can align with inside selling.
Customer-centric Strategies	Javalgi (2014) and Sengupta (2015) highlight the importance of customer-oriented selling, corporate entrepreneurship, and the role of brand reputation and customer satisfaction in managing service failures.
Organizational Learning and Adaptation	Javalgi (2014) and Kotler and Keller (2016) discuss the role of absorptive capacity, organizational learning, and the adaptation of marketing strategies.

About methodologies, employ various, primarily qualitative and conceptual.

Qualitative content analysis	Dakouan (2019) and Halligan and Shah (2014) use this type of analysis to discuss inbound marketing and inside selling strategies.
Conceptual framework	Javalgi (2014) present a conceptual framework for understanding factors that influence international sales performance in B2B settings.
Textbook	Kotler and Keller (2016) provide a broad overview of marketing strategies and best practices, including inside selling and inbound marketing.
Quantitative analysis	Sengupta (2015) uses a survey-based quantitative approach to examine the relationship between service failure, brand reputation, and customer satisfaction.

The selected sources provide insights into the challenges and opportunities associated with implementing inside selling and inbound marketing strategies in multinational companies.

Dakouan (2019) and Halligan and Shah (2014) suggest that organizations can benefit from integrating inbound marketing and inside selling strategies with trying to pick up the interest of customers, by sharing creative and useful content that it is shared through multiple online channels, including search engines and social media.

Javalgi (2014) emphasize the importance of customer-oriented selling and corporate entrepreneurship for improving international sales performance.

Sengupta (2015) highlights the role of managing service failures in enhancing customer satisfaction and brand reputation.

These references have limitations and influences:

a. Limited empirical evidence: Most are qualitative and conceptual, which limits the availability of quantitative data and empirical evidence to support their arguments, because

often they focus on understanding the reasons, opinions, and motivations related to a particular phenomenon. They provide insights into the problem or help to develop ideas or hypotheses for potential quantitative research.

b. Potential influence towards inbound marketing: Halligan and Shah (2014) are advocates of inbound marketing, which may introduce more interest in their presentation of the benefits of this approach.

c. Generalized: The Sengupta (2015) study is based on a survey of 206 respondents, which may limit the findings to other contexts or industries.

By integrating the findings from the content analysis and (in this case only from Sengupta (2015)), we can observe that the articles provide valuable insights into the challenges and opportunities associated with implementing inside selling and inbound marketing strategies. However, there are limitations in terms of the availability of direct evidence and potential tendencies in the studies, which should be considered when interpreting the findings.

Literature Review

Kotler (2016) refer the need for integrating marketing management principles into inside selling efforts in multinational companies. Their work highlights the importance of a customer-centric approach to sales and marketing, focusing on understanding customer needs, preferences, and behaviors to deliver value and build lifelong relationships. They argue that adopting such an approach can enable them to navigate the complexities of diverse international markets, achieving success in inside selling.

Regarding inside selling, Javalgi (2014) conducted a study on the factors that influence international sales performance in B2B settings. B2B refers to a type of transaction that occurs between businesses, such as between a manufacturer and a wholesaler, or between a wholesaler and a retailer. It involves the sale of products or services from one business to another and often involve more complex processes and larger transaction volumes (Laudon

(2022)). They identified corporate entrepreneurship, customer-oriented selling, and the capacity to learn, as the critical components for multinational companies to achieve success in inside selling across different countries. Corporate entrepreneurship makes more simpler the identification and exploitation of new market opportunities, fostering innovation and adaptability. Customer-oriented selling requires a deeper understanding of customer needs and preferences, tailoring products, or services accordingly. Capacity to learn on the other hand, refers to a company's ability to acquire, assimilate, transform, and explore external knowledge, essential for adapting to the demands of different markets.

The success of inside selling in multinational companies also depends on the integration of technology, data-driven decision-making, and collaboration between sales and marketing teams. Aligning inside sales efforts with inbound marketing strategies can enhance lead generation, lead nurturing, and customer engagement (Laudon (2022)).

For Inbound marketing strategies, this thematic has become increasingly important as companies look to create meaningful connections with their target audience and build long relationships (Dakouan (2019)). Halligan and Shah (2014) mention the key components of a successful inbound marketing strategy, which include content creation, search engine optimization (SEO), social media marketing, lead generation and nurturing, data analytics and measurement.

To implement an effective inbound marketing strategy in a multinational company, it is essential to develop tailored content and messaging for each target market, considering cultural differences, language barriers, and local preferences (Halligan and Shah (2014)). In addition, they should leverage marketing automation tools, such as CRM systems and email marketing platforms, to improve their inbound marketing processes and ensure consistency across different regions and channels (Kotler (2016)).

Dakouan (2019) investigated the relationship between inbound and outbound marketing strategies. It suggested that these strategies can be implemented as independent or

complementary approaches, depending on the specific context and objectives of a company. Inbound marketing put emphasis on attracting, engaging, and delighting customers through the creation and sharing of valuable content. This approach is particularly relevant in the digital era, where online channels play a critical role in customer acquisition and retention.

Halligan and Shah (2014) make a more comprehensive guide to inbound marketing principles and practices, focusing on strategies to attract, engage, and delight customers online. Their work provides practical guidance for these companies, looking to implement inbound marketing strategies across various countries and cultures. They demonstrate the importance of leveraging digital channels and technologies to build strong customer relationships, their satisfaction and drive sales performance and brand reputation.

For brand reputation and customer satisfaction, Sengupta (2015) investigated the relationship between brand reputation and customer satisfaction in the context of service failure. Their research suggests that a strong brand reputation can help companies moderate the negative effects of service failure on customer satisfaction. This finding is particularly relevant for multinational companies operating in diverse markets, where the potential for service failure may be higher. By focusing on building and maintaining a robust brand reputation, multinational companies can enhance customer satisfaction and improve their inside selling efforts.

Results

By combining the results and findings from all the chosen and compared articles, we can develop a comprehensive understanding of inside selling and inbound marketing strategies in multinational companies. Based on those insights, the following points are the most important, because are common between them:

- a) Synergy between Inside Selling and Inbound Marketing: Companies can benefit from the integration of inside selling and inbound marketing strategies. By

leveraging the complementary nature of these approaches, organizations can create a unique customer experience that focuses on attracting, engaging, and delighting customers throughout the sales process.

- b) **Customer-Centric Strategies:** The success of inside selling and inbound marketing strategies is highly dependent on adopting a customer-centric approach. By understanding customer needs and preferences, companies can tailor their marketing and sales efforts to better address these requirements and foster long-term customer relationships.
- c) **Organizational Learning and Adaptation:** The ability to learn from marketing efforts and adapt strategies accordingly is crucial for multinational companies implementing inside selling and inbound marketing. By cultivating absorptive capacity, organizations can continually refine their strategies, ensuring their ongoing relevance and effectiveness.
- d) **Managing Service Failure and Enhancing Customer Satisfaction:** Ensuring customer satisfaction is essential for maintaining a strong market position. By effectively managing service failures and focusing on enhancing brand reputation, companies can reduce the negative impact of service failures and ultimately improve customer satisfaction.
- e) **Implementation Challenges and Success Factors:** Successfully implementing inside selling and inbound marketing strategies in multinational companies requires addressing potential barriers and facilitators. Identifying critical success factors, such as organizational structure, resources, and cultural fit, can help companies navigate these challenges and drive successful implementation.

Discussion

This article provides an interpretation of the findings focusing on the following question “What are the strategies of inside selling and inbound marketing in multinational companies?”.

The qualitative content analysis identified the following key themes: Synergies between Inside Selling and Inbound Marketing; Customer-centric Strategies in Multinational Companies; Organizational Learning and Adaptation; Managing Service Failure and Enhancing Customer Satisfaction and Successful Implementation of Inside Selling and Inbound Marketing.

These themes indicate the importance of integrating inside selling and inbound marketing strategies, adopting customer-centric approaches, encourage organizational learning, managing service failures, and implementing these strategies effectively.

About quantitative analysis, it was limited due to the dominant qualitative and conceptual nature of the selected sources. Only Sengupta (2015) provided quantitative data, which revealed a significant positive relationship between brand reputation and customer satisfaction, as well as a significant negative relationship between service failure and customer satisfaction.

The comparative analysis highlighted similarities and differences in the arguments, methodologies, and conclusions while communicating potential limitations. The key facts include: Emphasis on the synergy between inside selling and inbound marketing strategies; Importance of customer-centric approaches and managing service failures; Need for organizational learning and adaptation to improve marketing strategies; Different methodologies, with a predominance of qualitative and conceptual approaches and Potential limitations in terms of empirical evidence and tendency in the studies.

Conclusion

Implementing inside selling and inbound marketing in multinational companies presents unique challenges, such as crossing cultural differences and adapting strategies to local markets. However, by leveraging technology, developing cultural competence, and integrating digital

marketing efforts, they can engage with more effectiveness with customers across different regions and channels, build strong brand reputations, and enhance customer satisfaction, ultimately contributing to long-term success. It is essential to regularly assess and analyse the performance of their inside selling and inbound marketing efforts.

The presented literature review demonstrates that implementing inside selling and inbound marketing in multinational companies requires a strategic approach that considers the complexities and nuances of diverse international markets. By adopting these approaches, leveraging digital channels, and building strong brand reputations, they can achieve success in inside selling and inbound marketing.

Limitations of the literature review include the limited number of studies that specifically address the implementation of inside selling and inbound marketing in multinational companies. Additionally, there is a shortage of empirical research that examines the impact of these strategies on sales performance and customer satisfaction across diverse international markets.

Future research in this area should focus on these gaps by conducting more empirical studies that investigate the impact of implementing this type of selling and methodology.

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