

**ORGANIZING MARKETING AND SALES:
MASTERING CONTEMPORARY B2B
CHALLENGES**

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Contents

About the Authors	<i>ix</i>
Foreword	<i>xiii</i>

PART I INTRODUCTION: ORGANIZING MARKETING AND SALES

1. Contemporary Developments and Challenges in Sales Organizations: Some Observations <i>Björn Axelsson</i>	<i>3</i>
2. Marketing Reorganization in a Globalized Market: The Case of ABB Robotics <i>Per Andersson, Björn Axelsson, Kristoffer Jönsson and Ebba Laurin</i>	<i>23</i>
3. Marketing Organization Research and Ideas Revisited <i>Per Andersson</i>	<i>43</i>

PART II SALES MANAGEMENT AND ORGANIZATION REVISITED

4. Value-based Selling in the Service-dominated Business Landscape: Creating, Acting, and Organizing to Improve Customer's Profits <i>Björn Axelsson and Mats Vilgon</i>	<i>77</i>
5. Organizing for Sales in VUCA Contexts: The Transformation Process from Products to Solution Sales <i>Ebba Laurin</i>	<i>95</i>

6. Business Maneuvering: A Dynamic View of B2B Selling Processes
Lars-Johan Åge 113
7. Organizational Balancing: An Integrated View of Sales Management
Lars-Johan Åge 125

**PART III
ORGANIZING INTERACTIONS WITH CUSTOMERS**

8. The Other Side of the Coin: On Developments in Procurement Practices and Their Implications for Sales
Björn Axelsson 141
9. Successful and Value-creating Interplay between Buyer and Seller: Organizing Mutuality
Björn Axelsson 157
10. Potential Business Improvements when Utilizing CRM Tools: and Challenges in Making It Happen
Dariusz Osowski 177
11. The Next Generation CRM Tools: Bridging the Gaps between Sales Needs and CRM Tools Architecture
Sarah Wikner 195

**PART IV
ORGANIZING FOR BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT AND
EXTENDED CUSTOMER OFFERINGS**

12. Outside in — To Capture the In-betweens: Organizing the Sociotechnical Embedding Process of New Technology
Min Tian 209
13. Creating and Delivering Sustainable Customer Solutions: On Organizing Capabilities in the Era of Servitization
Lei Huang 223

14. Marketing and Sales in Ambidextrous Organizations:
Organizational Challenges from Digitalization?
Per Andersson, Ebba Laurin and Christopher Rosenqvist 241

PART V

NEW PERSPECTIVES ON MARKETING ORGANIZING PROCESSES

15. Toward a Conceptual Model for Analyzing Marketing
Reorganization and Transition Processes
Per Andersson, Christopher Rosenqvist, and Daniel Grenblad 255
16. Organizing Marketing and Sales in a Networked Business World
Per Andersson and Björn Axelsson 269
17. Brand Orientation as a Method to Inspire, Change Culture, and
Lead the Implementation of Solutions Business
Cecilia Cederlund 285
18. Future Studies of Marketing and Sales Organization
Per Andersson, Björn Axelsson, and Christopher Rosenqvist 307
- References 317
- Index 333

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Sarah Wikner earned her PhD at Jönköping International Business School, Sweden. The thesis is about value cocreation between suppliers and customers. Her interest lies in improving marketing and sales through processes, tools, and corporate strategy. She has been part of the research group Value-In-Sight at the marketing department of Stockholm School of Economics. She now combines teaching and

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Foreword

This book is the outcome of a number of PhD-theses and other research projects. It has been under way for several years and has served as a catalyst for knowledge generation within a research team of around 12 people at the Stockholm School of Economics. The leading theme of the research has been “value creation in business-to-business operations,” or Value in Sight (VIS), as we have named our group. When we had forged out a number of texts based on our research, we had around 70 percent of the chapters of the book. We as editors then took a different stance by asking ourselves what was missing in order to make this into a holistic book on organizing marketing and sales. We identified a number of themes that were important but not covered. The exercise resulted in the following step in the remaining 30 percent of the content (chapters).

Our ambition has been to arrive at a presentation that would capture contemporary challenges and thinking around them, specifically addressing sales. This means that we rely quite a lot on empirical findings, especially regarding what firms try to achieve and what seems to be problematic in making it happen. We have also been guided by two main ideas: (1) that sales and marketing are essentially about organizing and (2) that business firms are gradually moving toward the so-called solutions business. But it seems to be a tricky journey with a lot of challenges, not least regarding sales. Sales and marketing, nevertheless, need to be aligned when looking at solutions businesses. This could be considered a third main guiding idea. These background thoughts are more or less explicitly addressed in all chapters.

It is clear that the book is based on research and should be an interesting read for scholars in the field. But as it is rather close to “real-world” illustrations and problems, we think it should appeal to people in business too. We know that many of the challenges presented are deeply sensed problems also in practice. Many years of experience in executive training has taught us that most of the challenges managers perceive are related to organizational issues and are often internally oriented. When asking sales and marketing managers about what kind of challenges are on top of their minds and, thus, the ones they would like to explore in development projects, roughly four out of five tend to be about organizational challenges: How to coordinate our sales-force? How to connect sales and R&D? and so on. One challenge out of the four organizationally oriented tends to be outward-looking, specifically addressing challenges in managing customers and/or competitors. All the rest are primarily internally oriented. This is a strong indicator to us of the topical relevance of the book.

We also think of master-courses and similar contexts as potential target audiences. Much of the content presented in the book has contributed to our courses in the SSE Master in Management Programs. Some of it has also been utilized in the school's Bachelor Programs, especially in courses addressing business-to-business marketing.

We as editors want to thank all our contributors and especially all members of the VIS group for their expertise and patience in allowing this process to take some time and also to willingly contribute and to adapt their texts step-by-step based on our criticisms. Several of the research projects underlying these texts have had financial support from the Torsten Söderberg Fund (Cederlund, Laurin, Huang, Tian, Åge) and also from the Research Foundations at the Handelsbanken (Grenblad, Jönsson, Vilgon, Wikner). We are thankful for that. Thanks also to Kalin Taylor who skillfully helped us correct the language. We also want to thank the publisher, Emerald Insight, for their acceptance of our manuscript and for their great work, including the comments by the two reviewers. We hope the reader will find this book an interesting and up-to-date read.

Stockholm, March 2018