

## Needs for Achievement, Affiliation, and Power: the Possible Sales Manager's Actions for Exceptional Salesforce Performance.

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### Abstract

The nature of the Sales job, the individuality of sales people, the diversity of company goals, and the continuing changes in the market place make motivating salespeople a particularly difficult and important task. Need theories which suggest that to motivate their sales force, sales manager should determine what needs Salespeople are trying to satisfy in organizations and then ensure that Salespeople receive outcomes that satisfy these needs when they perform at a high level and contribute to organizational effectiveness guided this study. A sample of 350 Sales people and managers in selected multinational firms in Nigeria was determined using a mean. The hypothesis was tested using the Friedman's Chi-square result of 26.684 values, which is greater than the critical Chi-square value of 5.991. This result is significant as P-value of  $0.000 < 0.05$ . Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected, indicating that salespeople with high need for achievement, affiliation and power can perform at a high level and contribute to organizational effectiveness when they receive outcomes that satisfy these needs. It is suggested that in order to trigger off a salesforce exceptional performance, sales managers should get to know what each Salesperson values and what each one is striving for (unrealized needs); be willing to increase the responsibility given to salespeople; realize that training can improve motivation as well as capabilities by strengthening the link between effort and performance; provide a challenge to salespeople; link rewards to the performance they want improved; recognize that rewards can be both financial and non-financial, and convince the sales people that the rewards for exceptional performance are worth the extra effort.

**Keywords:** Need for Achievement, Need for Affiliation, Need for Power, Hierarchy of Needs, Exceptional Performance, Salesforce Motivation, Multinational firms.

### Introduction

Actual Salesforce behavior is very important, but so are the reasons behind it. In most cases, the only way to know how motivated a salesforce is may be through the ways in which the salespeople behave. This includes what they say, their gestures, expressions, and instance. Finding an effective combination of motivators may be easier if a sales manager could understand some of the behavioural factors that affect Salesforce motivation. Therefore the behavioural factors that relate to the salesperson's needs and to the conditional links between performance and rewards and between effort and performance can be a significant study. Sales managers can know what salespeople's needs are before determining how to motivate them to satisfy those needs. Motivational programs can fail because they appeal to the wrong needs. Psychologist David McClelland has extensively researched the needs for achievement, affiliation and power. According to him, the need for achievement is the extent to which an individual has a strong desire to perform challenging tasks well and to meet personal standards for excellence. People with a high need for achievement often set clear goals for themselves and like to receive performance feedback. The need for affiliation is the extent to which an individual is concerned about establishing and maintaining good inter personal relations, being linked, and having other people around them get along with each other. The need for power is the extent to which an individual desires to control or influence others (McClelland, 1985).

Human beings have complex characteristics; hence human needs that condition human behavior are equally complex with a lot of variations. Because of these, motivation as part of the directing function in salesforce management is, equally complex for understanding and operation. The result is that salesforce motivation has faced a lot of thought and research as to how it operates in sales organizations. Many proposals made over time have ranged from the work of Fredrick Taylor to the Human Relation Movements, to Abraham Maslow, to Fredrick Herzberg, to Expectancy Theory by Vroom and to McGregor's theory X and Y. The nature of the sales job, the individuality of salespeople, the diversity of company goals, and the continuing changes in the market place make motivating salesforce a particularly difficult and important task. Salespeople experience a wonderful sense of exhilaration when they make a sale. But they must also frequently deal with the frustration and rejection of not making the sale. Even very good salespersons don't make every sale. Also, while many customers are gracious, courteous, and thoughtful in their dealings with salespeople, some are rude, demanding, and even

threatening (Uduji, 2013).

Salespeople spend a large amount of time by themselves calling on customers and travelling between accounts. This means that most of the time they are away from any kind of support from their peers or leaders, and they often feel isolated and detached from their companies. Consequently, they usually require more motivation than is needed for other jobs to reach performance level management desires. Salespersons have their own personal goals, problems, strengths, and weaknesses. Each salesperson may respond differently to a given motivating force. Ideally, the company can develop a separate motivational package for each salesperson; but a totally tailor-made approach poses major practical problems. In reality, management must develop a motivational mix that appeals to a whole group but also has the flexibility to appeal to the varying individual needs. A related point is that salespeople themselves may not know why they react as they do to a given motivator, or they may be unwilling to admit what these reasons are. Therefore, this study is prompted to explore the Maslow's hierarchy of needs and the possible sales managers' actions for exceptional salesforce performance. The term "exceptional performance" is not a fixed scientific measure for this study. It can vary from sales task to task, quota to quota, and target to target as per output fact used as evaluation base.

### Theoretical Framework

This study is examined in the light of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory and McClelland's needs for Achievement, Affiliation, and power (Maslow, 1970; McClelland, 1985). Maslow was a formative influence on motivation theory. Through clinical research, he developed an idea whereby human needs could be classified in terms of a hierarchy of five steps: Physiological needs, safety needs, social or love needs, ego or self-esteem needs and self-fulfillment or self-actualization needs. Maslow's ideas took motivation theory beyond the simpler model of scientific management and behaviourist practitioners. He developed a more dynamic model of changing needs and want, one which gave new emphasis to the role of unconscious motives. From 1943 when the theory was first published, until his death in 1970, Maslow dominated the field of motivation. Many later theories of motivation, Such as those of McGregor (1960), Herzberg (1966), Alderfer (1972), and McClelland (1985) were direct descendant of those of Maslow, and his theory forms the starting point for most subsequent reviews of the subject. Maslow's theories arise from a diverse range of influence, including biology, anthropology, Clinical Psychology and Psychoanalysis. The last was perhaps the most enduring. Maslow clearly linked his concept of love needs with the work of Freud (although he saw his work as contradicting several of Freud's main percepts), the concept of self-esteem needs with that of Alder, and the concept of self-actualization (and its implications at the level of society as whole) with that of From (although his main debt was to Goldstein, 1939).

Prio to Maslow, motivation theory took as its starting point the need to satisfy physiological drives, such as hunger, sex and thirst. Maslow argued these drives or needs could be used as 'channels' for other higher or more complex needs, they were relatively isolated and localized. Maslow's first crucial insight was that because physiological needs dominated when they were unsatisfied it did not mean that they continue to dominate once they had been satisfied. On the contrary, once satisfied, a need continues to exit potentially, with the emphasis moving to higher needs (Maslow, 1970; Alderfer, 1969; Herzberg 1966). This lead to a shift in the focus of motivation theory, from deprivation to gratification. Maslow was influenced by medical research findings of the 1930s concerning homeostasis and also the discovery that human appetites for different foodstuffs could be taken as reliable indicators of actual (unconscious) bodily needs. The logic of this process, whereby the gratification of each successive need served to activate another, drew Maslow inexorably towards, the idea with which his name is associated, that of the hierarchy of needs" as shown in figure 1.

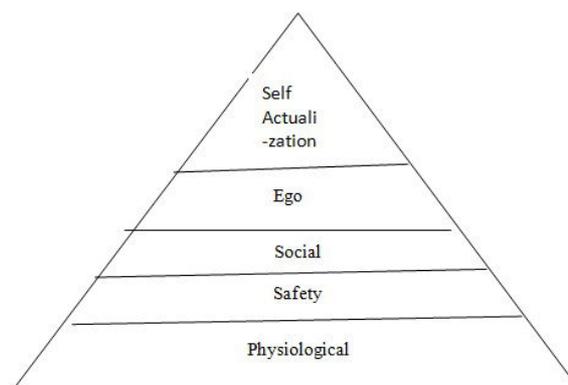


Figure 1: Maslow's Need Hierarchy

Source: Maslow, A. H. (1970) *Motivation and Personality*, New York: Harper and Bros.

Human Motivation, in McClelland's Perspective, is the arousal of particular motives in a specific setting. A motive is a recurrent concern for a goal state or condition as measured in fantasy which drives, directs and selects the behaviour of the individual" (McClelland, 1985). Building on the work of Maslow (1970), McClelland stipulated that three particular motives are useful in understanding most work-related behavior. They are the need for achievement, the need for affiliation and the need for power. The need for achievement is an unconscious drive to do better and to aspire to a standard of excellence (McClelland, 1975; Stahl, 1983). People with strong need for achievement often assess themselves as a way to measure progress towards various ends. They set goals: strive to take moderate risks (that is to say challenging, but realistic); prefer individual activities; prefer recreational activities during which a person can get a 'score' (like sales target ); and prefers occupations where performance data are clearly available, such as sales positions (McClelland and Burnham, 1976; Hines, 1973). The need for power is an unconscious drives to have impact on others. According to Winter (1973), people with strong needs for power often assert themselves against or in the presence of others in various ways. They seek and obtain leadership positions in social groups, professional associations, and work, they gamble, drink alcoholic beverages and commit aggressive acts; they tend to have high blood pressure and prefer interpersonally competitive sports such as tennis or football; they like to collect prestige possessions and prefer occupations in which they can help or have an impact on others; such as teaching, religious ministry and management positions (Alderfer, 1972; Herzberg, 1966).

The need for affiliation is an unconscious drive to be part of warm, close relationships and friendships (McGregor, 1960). People with strong need for affiliation often choose to spend time with close friends or significant others rather than be in any other setting. They regularly write letter or make long-distance telephone calls to for friends or family; they prefer to work in groups and are sensitive to others' reactions to them, they prefer collaborative, non-competitive activities (such as picnics) and occupations in which they work closely with others, such as teaching young children and counseling (Herzberg, Mansner and Snyderman, 1959). The work of McClelland and his colleagues established the importance of a person's 'pattern' of these motives- everyone has some level of each motive, but the relative dominance varies. It is the pattern of a person's motive strength that is often the most indicative of occupational performance and success. In addition to studying motives at the individual level, McClelland initiated a series of studies on motivational trends at national and societal levels. McClelland studies established an empirical link between motivational themes in cultural modes of expressions (Locke, 1968; Lancaster and Massingham, 2001; Kotler and Kelly, 2006)

### Research Methodology

The study involved 350 salespeople and mangers in selected multinational firms in Nigeria. The Sample Size was determined using a mean formula of:

$$n = \frac{S^2 Z^2}{e^2}$$

Where n = the Sample Size

z = the level of confidence (indicated by the member of standard errors associated with it)

s= variability indicated by an estimated standard deviation

e = the amount of precision or allowance error in the sample estimate of the population.

Therefore: the formula determined the sample Size Simply by multiplying the Squares of the variability (s) and the level of confidence (z) and divided the product by the square of the desired precision value (e) to arrive at:

$$n = 350$$

Since the study is concerned with specific predictions, narrations of facts and characteristics, a descriptive/diagnostic design was adapted. The research design ensured enough provision for protection against bias and maximized reliability, with due concern for the economical completion of the research study. Both secondary and primary sources were used to gather information for the study. Questionnaire was the principal source of the primary data; however, interview serves as Complementary. In designing the data-collection procedure, adequate safeguards against bias and unreliability was ensured. Questions were well examined against ambiguity; interviewers were instructed not to express their own opinion. They were trained so that they would uniformly record a given item of response. The data collection instruments were pre-tested before they were finally used for the study. To ensure that the data obtained were free from errors, the researcher closely supervised the research assistants as they collect and record information. Also, checks were set up to ensure that the data collecting assistants performed their duty honestly and without prejudice. A miniature trial survey of the study was carried out at Ilupeju Industrial estate and Agbara Industrial estate in Nigeria to test the validity, reliability and practicality of the research instruments and operations. Thirty salespeople and twelve sales managers of four multinational firms in the Industrial estates were used for the test-run. The pre-test provided the researcher the good ground to train assistants for the main inquiry. It also provided the researcher with the opportunity to come out with the final version of the research instruments. The pilot survey enabled the

investigator to estimate the cost component of the main study.

The stratified sampling technique was used to ensure a fair representation of the selected multinational firms, using proportionality ratio formula:

$$Q = \frac{A}{N} \times \frac{n}{1}$$

Where:

Q = the number of questionnaires to be allocated to each segment

A = the population of each segment

N = the total population of all the segments

n = the estimated sample size of the study.

The items were selected in the ratio of one sales manager to three sales people from each of the selected firms. This offered a good representation of all the segments in the population of study. Each respondent from the stratum was selected in order of their years of experience in the sales job. Data from the study were analysed using descriptive tools. For hypothesis testing, Fredman's Chi-Square test statistics was used to judge the significance of the result obtained.

### Data Presentation, Analysis and Interpretation

Attempt is made to present, analyze and interpret the data collected in accordance with the objectives, questions and hypotheses of the study. A total of 350 copies of the questionnaire were printed and distributed, and 342 copies were properly filled and returned. Problem found in the uncompleted forms was that eight managers preferred to talk than to write. Hence, the eight forms were taken back to the respondents by the researcher, and filled while they were being interviewed from the questionnaire. This complementary effort ensured that the returned copies are 350 completed.

#### Scale:

- Definitely Disagree (DD) - 1**
- Generally Disagree (GD) - 2**
- Somewhat Disagree (SA) - 3**
- Generally Agree (GA) - 4**
- Definitely Agree (DA) - 5**

**Table 1: Sales people high need for achievement and attainment of high level performance and organisational goals (n = 350)**

Questions	DD (%)	GD (%)	SA (%)	GA (%)	DA (%)	Mean	Std. Dev.
Reorganising the sales person's achievement personally and publicly through title changes, commendation letters and promotion has a strong influence on him to perform challenging tasks well and to meet personal standards for excellence	13 (3.7)	16 (4.6)	25 (7.1)	187 (53.4)	109 (31.1)	4.037	0.949
Use of team selling, social functions, distributing salespeople newsletters, holding sales meetings and mentoring has a strong influence on a salesperson who is concerned with need for affiliation to perform higher	17 (4.9)	18 (5.1)	34 (9.7)	169 (48.3)	112 (32.0)	3.974	1.031
Offer for advanced training, assignments to special sales projects, more responsibility and authority who desire to control of influence others to meet sales targets	12 (3.4)	17 (4.9)	42 (12.0)	177 (50.6)	102 (29.1)	3.971	0.957

Source: Analysis of Field Data, 2013

With 13 respondents (3.7%) definitely disagreeing, 16 respondents (4.6%) generally disagreeing, 25 respondents (7.1%) somewhat agreeing, 187 respondents (53.4%) generally agreeing and 109 respondents (31.1%) definitely agreeing as well as the mean response value of 4.037, the study respondents are of the view that reorganising the sales person's achievement personally and publicly through title changes, commendation letters and promotion has a strong influence on him to perform challenging tasks well and to meet personal standards for excellence.

As put by 17 respondents (4.9%) who definitely disagree, 18 respondents (5.1%) who generally disagree, 34 respondents (9.7%) who somewhat agree, 169 respondents (48.3%) who generally agree and 112 respondents (32.0%) who definitely agree, and represented by the mean response score of 3.974, it is the view of the respondents that use of team selling, social functions, distributing salespeople newsletters, holding sales meetings and mentoring has a strong influence on a salesperson who is concerned with need for affiliation to perform higher.

Having a mean response score of 3.971 and 12 respondents (3.4%) who definitely disagree, 17 respondents (4.9%) who generally disagree, 42 respondents (12%) who somewhat agree, 177 respondents (50.6%) who generally agree as well as 102 respondents (29.1%) who definitely agree, the respondents agree that offer for advanced training, assignments to special sales projects, more responsibility and authority who desire to control of influence others to meet sales targets.

### Test of Hypothesis

*Sales people with high need for achievement, affiliation and power often set clear goals for themselves and like to receive outcomes that satisfy these needs when they perform at a high level and contribute to organisational goals*

To test this hypothesis, the respondents' responses to the three questions presented in table 1 were tested using the Friedman's Chi-Square Test statistics.

**Table 2: Non-Parametric Tests Descriptive Statistics**

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
q1	350	4.0371	.94931	1.00	5.00
q2	350	3.9743	1.03072	1.00	5.00
q3	350	3.9714	.95712	1.00	5.00

Source: Analysis of Field Data, 2013

**Table 3: Friedman's Test Ranks**

	Mean Rank
q1	2.06
q2	1.97
q3	1.97

Source: Analysis of Field Data, 2013

**Table 4: Friedman's Chi-Square Test Statistics**

N	350
Chi-Square	26.684
df	2
Asymp. Sig.	.000

a. Friedman Test

Table 3 in ranking the mean responses to the three questions presents responses to question 1 with the highest mean rank (2.06) followed by questions 2 and 3 (with a mean ranks of 1.97 each).

Upon testing this hypothesis, a calculated Chi-square result of 26.684 was obtained. This value is greater than the critical Chi-Square value of 5.991. This result is significant as p-value of  $0.000 < 0.05$ . Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected. Therefore Salespeople with high need for achievement, affiliation and power often set clear goals for themselves and like to receive outcomes that satisfy these needs when they perform at a high level and contribute to organisational goals.

### Discussing of Research Result

The findings of this study suggest that effective motivation is based on a deep understanding of salespeople as individuals, their personalities and value systems as shown in figure 2.



*Figure 2: Salespersons Need for Achievement, Affiliation, and Power*

**The need for Achievement** is the extent to which a salesperson has a strong desire to perform challenging tasks well and meet personal standards for excellence. Salespeople with high need for achievement often set goals for themselves and like to receive performance feedback. The finding of the study indicates that the need for achievement in an organization can be an unconscious drive to do better and to aspire to a standard of excellence. Therefore, salespeople with strong need for achievement often assess themselves as a way to measure progress towards their sale performance. They set goals; strive to take moderate risks (that is to say challenging but realistic sales accomplishments); prefer individual activities (such as specific sales quota); prefer recreational activities during which a person can set a score, and prefer sales task where performance data are clearly available. The motive behind need for achievement can be fulfilled through food, shelter, clothing, healthcare, job security, safety, income security. Therefore, examining this need in the light of Maslow's hierarchy of needs and the findings of this study, it is suggested that the possible sales managers' actions should be to provide/offer adequate income and good benefits package, provide safe work environment set mutually agreed-up performance standards, communicate job performance expectations and consequences of failure to perform.

**The need for Affiliation** is the extent to which a salesperson is concerned about establishing and maintaining good interpersonal relations, being liked, and having other people around them get along with each other. The finding of this study indicates that the need for affiliation is an unconscious drive to be a part of warm and close relationships and friendships. Salespeople with strong need for affiliation often choose to spend time with close friends or significant others rather than be in any other setting. It is indicated that they regularly write letters or make long-distance telephone calls to friends or family; also the study shows that they prefer to work in groups (team selling) and are sensitive to others' reactions to them; they prefer collaborative, non-competitive activities (such as cross – functional selling teams) and sales task in which they work closely with other sales people, encouraging joint selling effort of several people from different functional areas within the firm. This finding suggests that these need can be fulfilled through social, friendships and acceptance programs. Therefore examining these needs in the light of Maslow's hierarchy of needs and the result of this study, it is suggested that the possible sales managers' action for exceptional salespeople performance should include the use of team selling, holding social functions, distribution of salesforce newsletters, holding sales meeting and mentoring the sales people in the firm.

**The Need for power** is the extent to which a salesperson desire to control or influence others. The findings of this study indicates that the need for power is an unconscious drive to have impacts on others. Salespeople with strong need for power often assert themselves against or in the presence of others in various ways. They seek and obtain leadership positions in social groups, professional associations, and in the sales team. The study suggests that this need can be fulfilled through status, recognition, self development and challenges for the salesperson. Therefore, examining these need in the light of Maslow's hierarchy of needs and the findings of this study, it is suggested that possible sales managers' actions for exceptional salesforce performance should include recognizing salesperson achievements personally and publicly through changes, commendation letters, promotions, providing/offering advance training, assignments to special projects, more responsibility and authority.

While each of these needs is present in each of the sales person to some degree, their importance in the salesforce motivation depends upon the position the salesperson occupies in the firm. The result of this study has established the importance of a salespersons' pattern' of these motives – every salesperson in a firm has some level of each motive, but the relative dominance varies. It is the pattern of a salesperson's motive strength that is often the most indicative of the salesforce performance and exceptional output. For example, high needed for achievement, low needed for affiliation and moderate need for power is characteristic of successful salespeople in the multinational firms in Nigeria. High need for power, moderate to low need for affiliation, moderate need for achievement and high activity inhibition (a measure of self control) is characteristic of effective and middle-level sales managers. Moderate need for achievement, need for affiliation and need for power is characteristic of effective salespeoples for exceptional performance in the multinational firms in Nigeria.

### Conclusion and Recommendation

Effective moderation for exceptional salesforce performance is based on a deep understanding of salespeople as individuals, their personalities and value system. In one sense, sales managers do not motivate salespeople, they provide the enabling conditions in which sales people motivate themselves. Motivation can be understood through the relationship between needs, drives and goals. Uduji (2013) states that 'the basic process involves needs (deprivation) which set drives in motion (deprivations with direction) to accomplish goals (anything which alleviates a need and reduces a drive)' for example, the need for more money may result in a drive to work harder in other to receive increased pay. Some of the important findings of this study are summarized as follows:

1. Once a need is satisfied, it no longer motivates.
2. Different salespeople have different needs and values.
3. Increasing the level of responsibility/jobs enrichment, giving recognition for achievement, and providing monetary incentives work to increase motivation for some sales people.
4. Salespeople tend to be motivated if they believe that effort will bring results, results will be rewarded and the rewards are valued.
5. Elimination of disincentives (such as injustice or unfair treatment) raises motivational levels of the salespeople.
6. There is a relationship between the performance goals of sales managers and those of the salespeople they lead.

The implication of these findings is that sales managers should:

1. Get to know what each salespersons values and what each one is striving for (unrealized needs)
2. Be willing to satisfy the need for power, by increasing the responsibility given to salespeople in the sales jobs.
3. Realize that training, social activities, and mentoring can improve the motivates of salespeople with need for affiliation, as well as capabilities by strengthening the link between efforts and exceptional performance.
4. Provide targets that are believed to be attainable, yet provide a challenge to salespeople with need for achievement.
5. Link the salespeople rewards to the exceptional performance the firm want improved.
6. Recognize that sales people rewards can be both financial and non-financial (Uduji, 2013).

Sales Mangers can induce the salespeople to perform exceptionally when they convince salespeople in the firms that they can perform exceptionally by working harder or being trained to work smarter. They should also convinced the salespeople that the rewards for exceptional performance are worth the extra effort. This implies that sales managers should give rewards that are valued, and attempt to sell the worth of those reward to the salesforce. The higher the sales salesperson's motivation, the greater the effort resulting in exceptional performance. Exceptional performance should lead to greater rewards and job satisfaction for the sales force.

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