

## **Sales Force Management and Personal Selling**

### **Track Overview:**

Sales organizations are being reshaped by major technological and geopolitical disruptions. For example, AI is changing how firms prospect, manage pipelines, and engage customers.

Geopolitical volatility and supply chain fragmentation are redrawing buyer–seller boundaries across industries and regions. And as remote and hybrid selling have become permanent features of the commercial landscape, organizations are redesigning their sales structures and processes. In this context, the track invites research that reimagines selling and sales organization design for a world in flux.

This track encompasses two interconnected sub-tracks, Sales Force Management and Personal Selling. Submissions are welcome across all methodological traditions and levels of analysis, from large-scale field studies and archival data to qualitative and experimental approaches.

### **Sub-Research Track #15.1:**

#### **Sales Force Management**

#### **Definition (short):**

Sales Force Management studies how firms design, lead, and optimize their sales organizations amid technological disruption and geopolitical uncertainty to drive customer acquisition, development, and retention while enhancing firm performance. It examines salesperson motivation, training, incentives, technology-enabled selling, and the marketing–sales interface to link individual and team actions to revenue growth and customer relationship quality.

#### **Definition (long):**

Sales Force Management is the marketing research domain concerned with the design, direction, and optimization of a firm’s personal selling function and sales organization to drive customer acquisition, development, and retention while contributing to firm performance.

Sales Force Management research integrates organizational behavior, human resource management, behavioral economics, psychology, and marketing strategy to address:

- Salesperson motivation, incentive design, and compensation
- AI-augmented selling and the human–machine interface
- Hybrid and inside sales models: structure, performance, and management
- Territory design, resource allocation, and sales forecasting
- Key account and customer portfolio management amid geopolitical volatility
- Marketing–sales alignment and cross-functional collaboration
- Sales force well-being, diversity, equity, and inclusion
- Global sales force management under trade uncertainty and regulatory fragmentation
- Sales leadership, coaching, and organizational culture
- Ethical governance of sales practices in technology-enabled environments

## **Sub-Research Track #15.2:**

### **Personal Selling**

#### **Definition (short):**

Personal Selling examines the interpersonal, adaptive interactions between salespeople and buyers that influence purchase decisions and build long-term relationships. As technological and geopolitical disruptions offer new opportunities (e.g., automation) and challenges (e.g., deglobalization), this sub-track investigates what remains distinctly human in the selling encounter, and how salesperson behavior, buyer trust, and relational processes are evolving in response.

#### **Definition (long):**

Personal Selling is the marketing research domain that investigates the interpersonal, adaptive, and value-creating interactions between salespeople and buyers aimed at influencing purchase decisions and building long-term relationships.

Personal selling research integrates consumer psychology, organizational behavior, communication theory, and relationship marketing to explain:

- Salesperson behaviors (e.g., adaptive selling, consultative selling, solution selling)
- Buyer perceptions and trust formation
- Dyadic interaction processes
- The human advantage in selling: empathy, emotional intelligence, and relational depth
- AI-assisted selling conversations: support tools, scripting, and their limits
- Negotiation, persuasion, and closing in cross-cultural and geopolitical contexts
- Ethical selling behavior, dark side dynamics, and manipulation
- Salesperson resilience, stress, and well-being
- The contextual influences of technology, culture, and sales management systems.