A Contingency Approach to the Effectiveness of Agenda Sales Strategies

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Dissertation submitted to the Faculty of the

Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

IN

MARKETING

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July 1995

Blacksburg, Virginia

Key words: agendas, sales, strategy, expertise, relationship

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(ABSTRACT)

This dissertation investigated the effect of agenda presentations on selling effectiveness. In this context, agendas were salesperson-suggested constraints on the order of selecting or eliminating choice alternatives. A conceptual model compatible with Weitz's Contingency Model of Salesperson Effectiveness was developed and tested. It was hypothesized that the effectiveness of agenda sales presentations is moderated by buyer expertise, the buyer/seller relationship, and the relative competitive strength of the target product.

The study used an interactive computer questionnaire which was programmed in the format of sales calls for a simulated copier purchase. Two hundred and forty-eight (248) industrial buyers with actual copier-purchasing responsibility comprised the sample. The simulation included sales calls for

both target product and a market leader. The design for this field experiment varied the type of sales presentation (agenda and compensatory), the type of buyer/seller relationship (relational and discrete), and the relative competitive strength (stronger and weaker product) between subjects. Expertise was measured. Counterbalancing the order of the sales presentations allowed for examination of possible order effects. Selling effectiveness was measured by the inclusion of the target product in the buyer's consideration set, selection of the target product as the buyer's final choice, buyer perceptions of the target product, buyer perceptions of the choice and choice process, and by the buyer's perceptions of the seller.

Results support the notion of contingent decision making and Weitz's Contingent Model of Salesperson Effectiveness as evidenced by significant 4-way interactions for 6 of the 8 measures of selling effectiveness. In general, agenda presentations were shown to be more effective for use in getting the target product into the consideration set, improving buyers' perceptions of the seller's expertise, during discrete exchange, and for the weaker of the products. Counter to predictions, agendas were generally more effective when used with experts than novices. Future researchers may find it productive to further explore the effectiveness of agenda sales strategies. Finally, the promising results of this study demonstrate the potential use of this type of simulation for experimental research in sales.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to express my sincere thanks to committee members, Dr. Ruth A. Smith, Dr. James R. Brown, and Dr. Roseanne J. Foti, for their input to this dissertation. In particular, I extend special appreciation to my co-chairs, Dr. Noreen M. Klein and Dr. Janet E. Keith, for the very generous contribution of their time, expertise, and guidance throughout this project.

In addition, I wish to acknowledge the assistance provided to me by Dr. D. L. Hawkins at the University of Texas at Arlington as well as the support of my mother, Valarie Vehmeier, and that of other family members and friends.

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INTRODUCTION

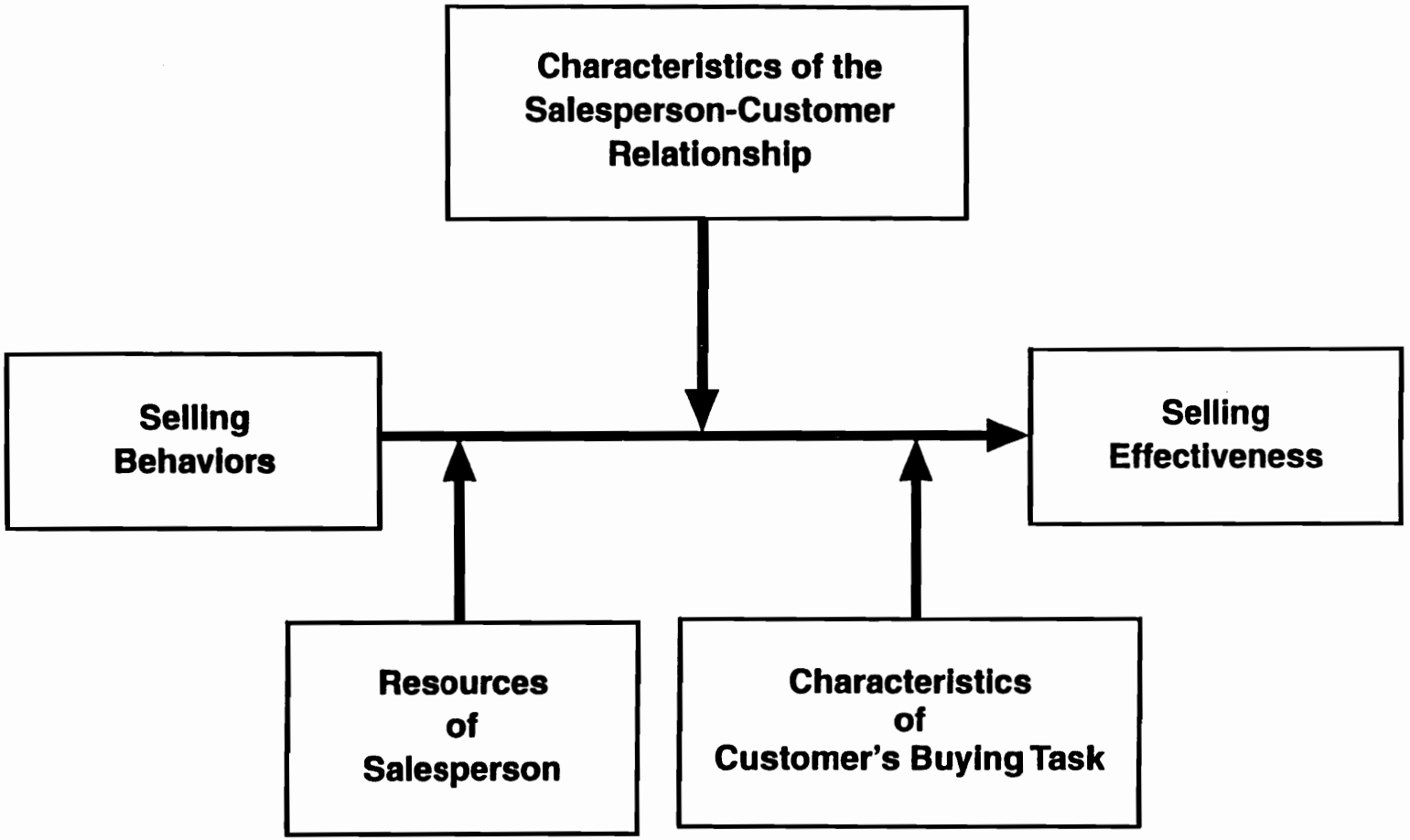
What determines salesperson performance? What makes one salesperson effective and another ineffective? Both academic researchers and marketing practitioners have long sought answers to these questions. This research investigates the impact of sales strategy selection upon salesperson effectiveness. Specifically, this research proposes that an integral part of sales strategy is how the salesperson shapes the buyer's decision process. This influencing of the buyer's agenda may be accomplished in many ways. For example, the salesperson may help to shape the decision criteria, guide the buyer through the addition or deletion of product alternatives from the consideration set, or prompt the buyer to modify the choice rule that is used. The degree of salesperson success in shaping the decision process impacts selling effectiveness.

Salesperson performance has been investigated with such interest and frequency that a meta-analysis uncovered 116 articles and 1,653 reports of associations between salesperson performance and its various determinants (Churchill, Ford, Hartley, & Walker, 1985). Early sales research was characterized by the attempt to identify the one all-important salesperson

personality trait or the one best sales presentation type that would dictate success. Weitz's Contingency Framework (1981) addresses the futility of this search for universal determinants of effective selling. Weitz suggests that sales effectiveness be studied by looking at the interactions between sales behaviors, the nature of the buying task, the resources of the salesperson, and aspects of the buyer/seller relationship (Figure 1).

One way to characterize salesperson behaviors is by the degree to which they are adapted to specific selling interactions (e.g., canned presentation vs. a needs satisfaction approach). The type of influence base, influence technique, specific message and formats, and degree of control necessary for selling effectiveness varies across customers. Combining these ideas, Weitz proposes that the salesperson most skilled at adapting selling behaviors to match the needs of specific selling situations will have increased chances of making the sale.

The actual practice of adaptive selling is defined as "the altering of sales behaviors during a customer interaction or across customer interactions based on perceived information about the nature of the selling situation" (Weitz, Sujan, & Sujan, 1986, p. 175). The Adaptive Selling Framework (Weitz, et al., 1986) and the Adaptive Selling scale (Spiro & Weitz, 1990) more fully developed ideas concerning the importance of adaptive selling behaviors.



Source: Weitz (1981, p. 90)

FIGURE 1

WEITZ'S CONTINGENCY MODEL

Although the ideas presented in the Contingency and Adaptive Selling Frameworks are quite widely accepted, there have been few empirical tests of most of the propositions set forth therein. It is particularly important to note for the purposes of this research, that neither the contingency nor adaptive framework nor the adaptive scale focuses on the specific strategy formulation activity necessary in adaptive selling. None provide guidelines as to how and under what circumstances.

A sales presentation might be altered to increase selling effectiveness. Further, the selling literature has not investigated the effect of influencing buyers' decision strategies. This research begins to answer the question of what form salesperson adaptivity may take by explaining the effects of shaping the buyer's choice strategy.

While the sales literature offers little information about specific strategy formulation, the consumer decision making literature offers more help. This body of research has described and classified various decision strategies. Work in consumer decision making is a natural starting point for a study of sales strategy effectiveness because the implicit goal of personal selling is to influence a buyer's decision process and final choice. In addition, one of the more recent research streams in consumer decision making has focused on the nature and degree of adaptivity that decision makers themselves exhibit (Payne, Bettman, & Johnson, 1993).

Early decision making research focused upon the description of different kinds of choice rules. Recent consumer decision work has studied the circumstances under which specific rules or strategies are used by consumers. The findings of this accumulating body of research emphasize the contingent nature of consumer decision making. An answer to the question of which strategy will be used in a specific situation is complex. The selection or construction of a decision strategy is greatly influenced by the characteristics of the specific decision problem, the characteristics of the individual decision maker, and the characteristics of the social context in which the decision is made (Bettman, Johnson, & Payne, 1990). In other words, consumers adapt their choices of decision strategies to these factors.

In addition to emphasizing the importance of a contingent approach to understanding a buyer's decision strategy, the consumer decision literature also provides descriptions of commonly used choice strategies. These suggest a means for investigating how salespeople can influence buyer's choice processes. Specifically, the consumer decision literature has found that buyers often create agendas. An agenda is defined as "a sequence of constraints on the order of selecting or eliminating choice alternatives" (Hauser, 1986). This sequence of constraints simplifies or organizes the decision for the consumer. For example, a purchaser of a copying machine may quickly reduce the number of alternatives by constraining the consideration set to models priced lower than the budgeted amount of

$12,000. A further constraint could eliminate all models that make fewer than 40 copies per minute. In this particular instance, the use of an agenda simplifies the decision with price and copy speed constraints. The important aspects of an agenda are the criteria it incorporates, the order in which they are addressed, and where the consumer places a constraint on each criteria (e.g., 40 versus 30 copies per minute). Decision research has shown that changes in agendas have important effects on the probability of a product being chosen (Hauser, 1986; Tversky & Sattath, 1979).

Given that buyers often use choice agendas, it is possible for a salesperson to create and suggest agendas for the customer's use. In fact, one article on consumer agendas (Hauser, 1986) drew the analogy between an agenda and a sales presentation. The idea of a salesperson suggesting an agenda to a customer is compatible with Weitz's concept of adaptive selling behaviors. The construction of a particular agenda represents the salesperson's decision of how to attempt to control the interaction and how to initiate structure in a specific sales situation (Weitz, 1981). If the salesperson's agenda suggestion is accepted by the decision maker, the result could be greater selling effectiveness.

Research Questions

Weitz's 1981 Contingency Framework suggests that sales effectiveness can be best understood by investigating the interactions between selling behaviors, salesperson resources, the nature of the buying task, and

characteristics of the buyer/seller relationship. With these contingencies in mind, it seems logical to explore the conditions under which some selling behaviors are more favorable to selling effectiveness than others. This dissertation provides the first investigation of agenda strategies and their impact on selling success. The first research question which this work addresses is therefore:

1. How does proposing agendas to buyers impact selling effectiveness?

Also, in accordance with Weitz's focus on the contingent nature of the association between selling behaviors and selling effectiveness, this research attempts to answer the question:

2. How is the relationship between agenda strategies and selling effectiveness moderated by the effects of buyer expertise, the buyer/seller relationship, and the relative competitive strength of the product?

Importance of Research Questions

A greater understanding of the above topics is important and potentially useful to both academicians and practitioners. In particular, this research integrates theory from the areas of sales and consumer decision making in an effort to answer important questions relating to both streams. Few studies have actually investigated the effectiveness of particular sales strategies, or the conditions under which that effectiveness changes. However, such studies are critical to testing adaptive selling.

This work incorporates ideas from consumer decision making into a study of agenda sales presentations made to industrial customers. It adds to our knowledge of how and when the decision processes of industrial buyers might be influenced. Additionally, this research furthers understanding of the uses and consequences of agendas and extends the investigation of contingent decision making to the industrial sales environment.

Practitioners can benefit from this research as they recognize the potential which agendas offer for increasing sales effectiveness. In today's dynamic selling environment, companies require strategies for dealing with changing competitive positions, new customer types, and the heightening importance of buyer/seller relationships. This research provides managers with valuable information on how and when agendas might be used effectively to meet today's selling challenges.

The procedural and declarative knowledge necessary for adapting selling strategies by proposing agendas can be taught to salespeople. Because agenda construction can be developed as a skill, managers can incorporate agenda topics in their sales training programs. As a firm's sales force is better able to identify situations in which agendas can be effective, the organization will become more successful in reaching its sales goals.

Agenda sales presentations hold promise for effectively dealing with perhaps the most difficult selling situation which an out supplier faces, the straight rebuy. Here, the buyer already possesses well developed buying

criteria and the existing means for securing the desired product. In these cases, the out suppliers' product usually receives little, if any, consideration. Because an agenda sales presentation can lead the buyer through a reinterpretation of decision criteria, the result may be that old product solutions offered by the previous supplier may no longer seem best. Indeed, an agenda sales presentation may allow an out supplier's product to enter the buyer's consideration set for the first time. Happily for the out supplier, the buyer may no longer classify the purchase as a straight rebuy and may now be open to new alternatives.

Summary

In conclusion, this dissertation examines the impact of agenda sales presentations on selling effectiveness. Paralleling Weitz's attention to the contingent nature of selling effectiveness, this research examines how the agenda sales presentation/selling effectiveness relationship is altered by buyer expertise, the relative competitive strength of the product, and the buyer/seller relationship. This research contributes to existing knowledge and work in the areas of decision making, adaptive selling, and buyer/seller relationships, as well as helping to specify contingencies under which agenda strategies work well.

Chapter 2 of this manuscript discusses the conceptual development of this dissertation. A model compatible with Weitz's 1981 Contingency Model of Salesperson Effectiveness is presented, and the method of measuring selling

effectiveness for this research is explained. Chapter 2 also includes a review of relevant literature for the constructs in the new model. Finally, hypotheses are developed pertaining to a hypothesized direct relationship between salesperson strategy type (agenda vs. compensatory) and selling effectiveness. Hypotheses relating to possible moderating effects on this relationship by buyer expertise, the buyer/seller relationship, and the relative competitive strength of the product are also presented. Chapter 3 explains the methodology which was developed for this dissertation. Chapter 4 details the methods of analysis, the results of the study, and a summary of support for the hypotheses. The final chapter, Chapter 5, discusses the major findings of this research, the limitations of this study, and some directions for future research.

CHAPTER 2

CONCEPTUAL DEVELOPMENT

Overview

This chapter provides the conceptual development for this dissertation which investigates the impact that agenda sales presentations have on selling effectiveness and how that relationship is modified by buyer expertise, the nature of the buyer/seller relationship, and the relative competitive strength of the product. This conceptualization integrates literature relating to behavioral decision theory, personal selling, and channel relationships in an effort to explain the hypothesized effects on selling effectiveness resulting from a salesperson's use of agenda sales presentations.

The first section of this chapter presents a conceptual model which is the foundation for hypothesis development. The second, third, fourth, and fifth sections develop the portion of the model focusing on presentation type, buyer expertise, buyer/seller exchange, and the relative competitive strength of the product, respectively. The text in each of these four sections follows the same sequence. First, conceptual definitions are presented. Next, relevant literature is reviewed. Finally, a number of hypotheses relating to the particular construct are developed and discussed.

Conceptual Model

The conceptual model for this proposed research is illustrated in Figure 2. It depicts a direct relationship between salesperson strategy type (agenda vs. compensatory) and selling effectiveness. As the model shows, this direct relationship is believed to be moderated by buyer expertise, the buyer/seller relationship, and the relative competitive strength of the product. The proposed conceptual model is compatible with Weitz's 1981 Contingency Model of Salesperson Effectiveness. The five constructs of the proposed model (Figure 2), Salesperson Presentation Type, Buyer Expertise, Buyer/Seller Relationship, Relative Competitive Strength, and Selling Effectiveness are aspects of Weitz's framework elements of Selling Behaviors, Characteristics of the Customer's Buying Task, Characteristics of the Salesperson-Customer Relationship, Resources of the Salesperson, and Salesperson Effectiveness respectively. The conceptual model developed for this dissertation is not meant to replace or compete with Weitz's Contingency Model. Instead, the new conceptual model is offered because it more specifically describes the hypothesized relationships regarding agenda sales presentations.

Selling Effectiveness

In the past, sales performance and its determinants have been a highly researched topic. The terms, sales performance and sales effectiveness, have often been used interchangeably without noting conceptual differences. An

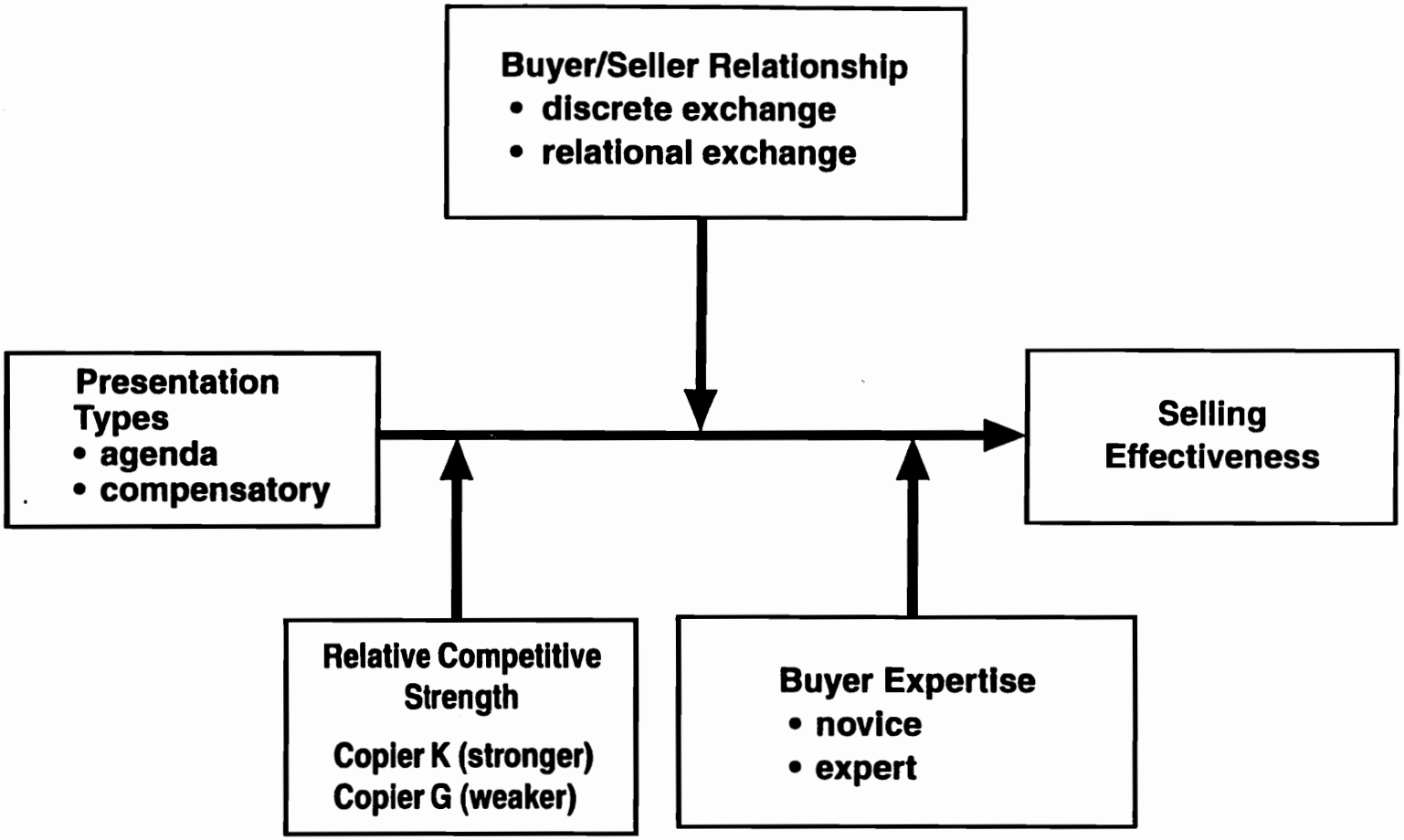


FIGURE 2

CONCEPTUAL MODEL

exception, Walker, Churchill, and Ford (1979), outlined distinctions between performance and effectiveness. They described performance as salesperson behavior that is evaluated for its contribution to the goals of the organization. Appropriate measures of performance might be percent of quota attained or sales adjusted for territory potential. Performance data may include subjective as well as objective company data, as in Futrell and Parasuraman's (1984) use of information obtained from sales managers' appraisal forms. The normative element of this conceptualization of performance reflects that a salesperson's behavior is considered good or bad in terms of the organization's goals. Effectiveness, on the other hand, reflects organizational outcomes that are a function of additional factors not under the control of the salesperson (e.g., management policies or competitors' actions). According to Walker et al. (1979), measures of effectiveness include market share, sales volume, or profitability of sales.

Following this reasoning, in their meta-analysis on the determinants of salesperson performance, Churchill et al. (1985) divided the various types of performance measures into two groups. They made the distinction between performance measures which do or do not control for externalities. Objective data not correcting for externalities include total sales volume, number of total calls or new accounts, and the number of demonstrations. Objective data controlling for externalities include: sales as a percentage of quota or territory

potential, and sales adjusted to reflect economic conditions or the difficulty of the salesperson's route.

The conceptualization of selling effectiveness in this dissertation takes a more micro perspective of selling effectiveness. Here, the idea of selling effectiveness involves how well the salesperson influences individual customers during interpersonal interactions. In this dissertation, selling effectiveness is defined as, "the degree in which the preferred solutions of salespeople are realized across their customer interactions" (Weitz, 1981, p. 91).

This definition is used because it is compatible with two main thrusts of this research. First, two types of sales presentations are evaluated with respect to which provides a greater likelihood of the salesperson's product being selected. Second, the buyer's perceptions of the choice process and the salesperson are also important to this research. Weitz (1981, p. 91) recognizes the importance of buyer perceptions when he adds the words, "across their customer interactions," to his definition of effectiveness. He states that making a sale through deceptive strategies may sacrifice customer satisfaction and have negative ramifications for future sales. Thus, deceptive influence strategies are not considered effective.

In like manner, it may be argued that sales strategies that foster positive perceptions of the seller and create favorable attitudes regarding the product and the choice process are likely to give the seller a beneficial advantage in

future purchase situations with that particular buyer. Even though this study measures choice outcomes for only one individual sales call, indicators of selling effectiveness also include perceptual measures with longer term implications. With this in mind, selling effectiveness is examined here with respect to immediate choice outcomes, the buyer's evaluation of the product, the buyer's perceptions of the choice, and the buyer's perceptions of the salesperson and the sales strategy used.

Salesperson Presentation Type

Varying the specific messages and format of the sales presentation is one means for a salesperson to adapt selling behaviors to a particular interaction (Weitz 1981). In this study, two types of salesperson presentations are investigated with respect to their influence on aspects of selling effectiveness. The two types of presentations contain either a compensatory presentation strategy or an agenda presentation strategy.

Compensatory Presentations

Consider a typical sales presentation. A salesperson focuses on the strengths of a particular product and encourages the buyer to form a favorable overall evaluation of that product. While some general references may be made to competitive products, the primary focus of the presentation is the providing of information regarding the benefits of the one product the salesperson is selling.

Such a sales approach is compatible with a buyer's use of a compensatory choice rule. Evaluating alternatives by compensatory choice rule enables positive information about an alternative to compensate for negative data (i.e., in the earlier copier example, the buyer might be willing to consider a copier that did not operate at the desired speed of 40 copies per minute if that copier were favorably priced well below the $12,000 budget criterion). A compensatory choice rule calls for the decision maker to arrive at a summary evaluation for each brand and then choose the best brand based on the overall evaluation scores (Bettman, 1979). In the typical selling situation described above, the summary evaluation of a particular salesperson's product would likely become one of the evaluation scores ultimately used in choosing the best brand. Studies in both consumer choice and organizational buying have shown that a compensatory choice rule is frequently used by buyers in reaching a decision (Coppett & Staples, 1980; Gregory, 1986; Lamberson, Diederich, & Wuori, 1976; Wind & Robinson, 1968; Wright, 1975).

In this dissertation, a compensatory presentation is defined as a sales presentation in which the salesperson encourages the buyer to use a summary evaluation of the product in making a purchase decision. The salesperson leads the buyer through the development of an overall evaluation of his or her product based on individual evaluation of the product's attributes. The strengths of the product are emphasized while any perceived weaknesses are avoided, minimized, or reinterpreted. The focus of this type of presentation is

the overall benefit of the product to the buyer. Little emphasis is devoted to specific competitive information.

Agenda Presentations

An agenda has been defined as "a sequence of constraints on the order of selecting or eliminating choice alternatives" (Hauser, 1986, p. 199). Two ways that agendas may be classified are: 1) with respect to source, and 2) with respect to the sequence of processing used.

First, an agenda is either intrinsic or extrinsic. An intrinsic agenda is one structured by the decision maker using constraints that s/he has devised. This type of agenda represents the decision maker's own view of the choice problem. Conversely, an extrinsic agenda is one which has been constructed by someone other than the decision maker. The constraints are suggested to the decision maker as a means of organizing the choice. This representation of the problem may or may not be identical to one that the decision maker might devise, and may or may not be used by the decision maker. Extrinsic agendas may have various sources (i.e., friends, relatives, or salespeople). This dissertation involves extrinsic agendas that are suggested to buyers by a salesperson. The ultimate goal of an agenda sales presentation is to influence final choice.

Second, agendas are generally processed as either top-down agendas or bottom-up agendas (Hauser, 1986). When using a top-down agenda to make a choice, the decision maker first partitions the set of alternatives into two or

more categories. Next, the decision maker selects only one category of alternatives for further consideration. A final choice may be made directly from among the members of the one remaining category, or the category may again be partitioned using a new constraint. This sequential elimination continues until a final choice is made (Hauser, 1986).

Figure 3 is a diagram of the top-down agenda example discussed earlier in this dissertation's introduction. Copier models are first categorized as a set of models that cost less than $12,000 and a group that sell for $12,000 and above. The first constraint in the agenda requires a price of less than $12,000, so the more expensive copiers are eliminated from further consideration. The implementation of the second constraint partitions the remaining alternatives according to copier speed. Using this second constraint, the remaining models are divided into a group of copiers with speeds of at least 40 copies per minute and a group that operate slower than 40 copies per minute. The buyer makes the final choice from among the models meeting both the price and speed constraints.

Agendas may also be processed bottom-up. Contrary to the top-down agenda example where some alternatives are eliminated without individual evaluation (copiers costing more than $12,000), the bottom-up agenda calls for at least some individual evaluation of all alternatives. Bottom-up agendas occur when buyers partition the choice set, but then select the best of <u>each</u> group for further consideration. These agendas may also be useful in sales,

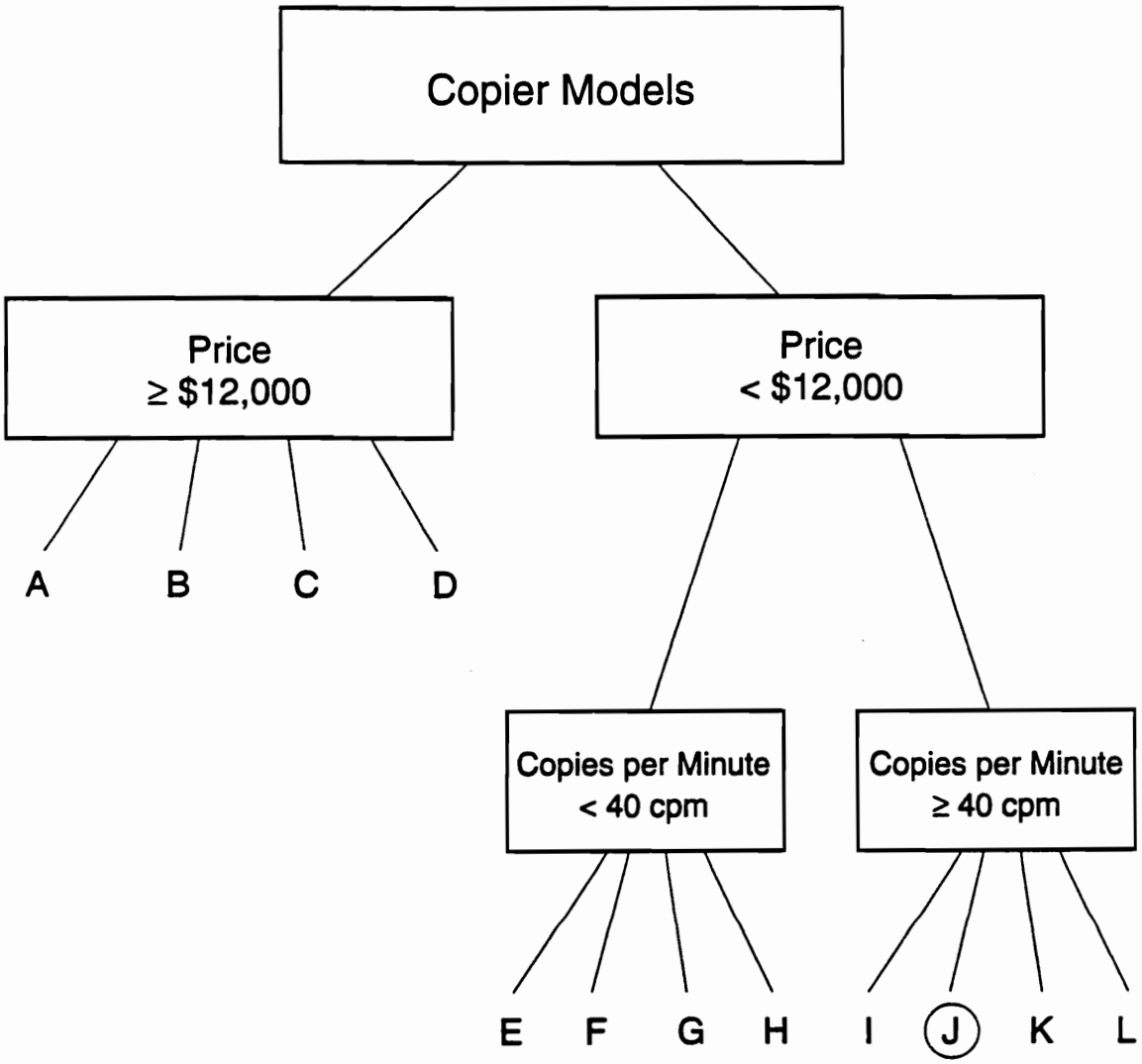


FIGURE 3
TOP-DOWN AGENDA

but are more complex and beyond the scope of this study. A discussion of bottom-up agendas is omitted here because this study focuses on extrinsic top-down agendas.

In this dissertation, an agenda presentation is defined as a sales presentation in which the salesperson facilitates the buyer's use of a top-down agenda choice rule when making a purchase decision. That is, in an agenda presentation, the salesperson guides the buyer through a partitioning of alternatives into two or more categories on the basis of a suggested constraint on a particular attribute. The salesperson then encourages the buyer to select only one category of alternatives for further consideration (alternatives in all other categories are removed from the choice process at this point). The buyer may make a final choice directly from among the members of the one remaining category, or the salesperson may guide the buyer through another partitioning of that category. This sequential elimination continues until the buyer makes a final choice. In an agenda sales presentation, the salesperson selects the constraints and sequences them for the buyer in a way that shows the salesperson's product to greatest advantage.

In a selling situation, the salesperson's job is to provide information and make suggestions and product recommendations to the buyer. Following any type of sales presentation, the buyer may, of course, choose to accept or reject the salesperson's suggestions. The buyer may ask the salesperson to supply additional information before the purchase decision is made, and/or the

buyer may seek verification or further information from other sources. When making a final decision, the buyer may use any decision rule that s/he feels appropriate.

In this dissertation, the use of the terms compensatory and agenda sales presentations refers only to the type of information provided and to the manner in which it is presented by the salesperson. Employing these terms does not require that the buyer actually uses the particular decision rule that a salesperson's presentation may try to facilitate.

Compensatory presentations serve here as a control for agenda sales presentations, which are the main focus of this study. A compensatory presentation provides a good contrast to the noncompensatory nature of the agenda presentation. First, each of the two presentation types facilitates the buyer's use of a different decision rule and type of processing. Second, a compensatory presentation is a more traditional sales approach and is easily recognizable as one used by many salespeople. On the other hand, an agenda sales approach is used much less frequently. Finally, the two presentation types differ with respect to the kind of information provided by the salesperson. In delivering a compensatory presentation, the salesperson primarily supplies information regarding the one product being recommended to the buyer. References to competitive products tend to be infrequent and/or general in nature. In contrast, a salesperson using an agenda sales strategy provides the buyer with information on competitive products as well as his or

her product. The buyer is able to see how the recommended product performs with respect to other products in the marketplace.

Agenda Effects in Buyer Behavior

In order to predict the effects of agenda presentations on aspects of selling effectiveness, the existing literature on agendas was reviewed. Although the actual term agenda is seldom used, some of the work on sequential elimination models and constrained choice is relevant here because both are forms of an agenda. As in the agenda sales presentation, sequential elimination involves the partitioning of alternatives into two or more groups and then all but one group is eliminated for further consideration. When situational or extrinsic factors determine how alternatives are partitioned, the choice is said to be a constrained choice (Kahn, Moore, & Glazer, 1987). In an agenda sales presentation, the salesperson suggests both the sequence and nature of constraints to be used to the buyer. The literature offers two findings of particular importance to this study: 1) agendas can influence choice, and 2) agendas can be imposed.

Agendas Can Influence Choice

In the decision literature, the term agenda is most closely associated with Hauser's (1986) work on consumer agendas. A central theme of this work is the influence of agendas on choice probabilities. Hauser used mathematical analysis to show that when the sequence of agenda constraints or the method

of agenda processing (top-down vs. bottom-up) is altered, choice outcomes may be altered as well. Hauser demonstrated this for three formal choice models: Elimination-by Aspects or EBA (Tversky, 1972), the Hierarchical Elimination Model (Tversky & Sattath, 1979), and the Generalized Elimination Model (Hauser, 1986). These three models of choice consist of sequential eliminations and are thus forms of an agenda. Research involving how the use of cutoffs is changed by preference structures and contextual factors provides additional insight into an agenda's influence on choice (Huber & Klein, 1991; Klein & Bither, 1987).

Also of importance to this dissertation are Hauser's suggestions for marketing managers. Examples are given of how agendas can be constructed to enhance the choice probabilities of either a lesser or a greater product. Marketing managers with a lesser product are advised to encourage buyers to use a top-down agenda grouping dissimilar products, and for managers with a greater product, the recommendation is made to encourage consumers to use a bottom-up agenda.

Several studies have provided empirical evidence of how choice probabilities may be influenced when constraints are placed on the order in which alternatives are considered (Glazer, Kahn, and Moore, 1991; Kahn, et al., 1987; Tversky & Sattath, 1979). Tversky and Sattath (1979) provided both theoretical and empirical support for three sequential choice models which incorporate agendas (PRETREE [Preference Tree] model, the Elimination

by Tree [EBT], and Hierarchical Elimination Model [HEM]). Of these three models, HEM has the greater relevance for the extrinsic agendas in this dissertation because it assumes that product aspects are considered in some prescribed sequential order. Salespeople using an agenda sales presentation will have mapped out a strategy involving the sequence of constraints to be used. The salesperson-constructed sequence, if adhered to by the buyer, will increase the likelihood of purchase of the seller's product.

One of the studies reported by Tversky and Sattath (1979) involved having respondents choose from among two risky gambles with similar probabilities and one sure-thing option. In each case, the options were initially presented as a choice between a pair and a third alternative. If the pair was selected, a choice was then required between the members of the pair. One assumption of the PRETREE Model was that if an external constraint was consistent with the natural structure of the set, choice probabilities would not be affected. In this study, it was assumed that the more natural choice would be between the risky pair and the sure-thing. By imposing an external constraint and forcing respondents to choose between the pairing of the less preferred risky gamble and the sure-thing and the third option, the preferred gamble, Tversky and Sattath were able to demonstrate increased choice probabilities for the less preferred gamble. If salespeople could learn to assess a particular competitive situation in terms of which specific agenda or

competitive product comparisons would increase their product's choice probabilities, selling effectiveness might be improved.

In related empirical work, Kahn et al. (1987) and Glazer et al. (1991) also investigated the effects of constrained choice. These two studies challenged the PRETREE assumption that an external constraint which is consistent with the natural structure of the set would not affect choice probabilities. The experimenters found evidence of two effects which contradict the predictions of PRETREE. The stronger of the two, the lone-alternative effect, indicates that a product is at a disadvantage if an external constraint puts it in a category by itself. The asymmetric effect shows that an external constraint that groups brands on similarity benefits a preferred brand, but not a less preferred brand.

Glazer et al. (1991) extended the investigation of the lone-alternative and asymmetric effects resulting from constrained choice. Both effects were found to be stronger when the items in the set were perceived as more similar because choices among similar objects are more difficult. Therefore, an easy-to-use heuristic in the form of an external constraint becomes more attractive to the decision maker when alternatives are similar. An alternative explanation for the lone alternative effect is that a larger pool of options may appear to the decision maker to represent a greater chance of making an optimal choice (Wright & Barbour, 1975). Kahn et al. (1987) and Glazer et al. (1991) suggest that decision makers may resist agenda constraints that require the elimination

of too many alternatives at once, or that leave the seller's product as a lone alternative early in the sales presentation.

Glazer et al. (1991) also found that brands with larger market shares are more disadvantaged when they are the lone alternative in a constrained choice than brands with smaller market share. They suggest that larger-share brands have more to lose in constrained choices when they are forced to become part of unattractive comparisons with other products. This finding suggests that salespeople selling larger-share brands should use caution when deciding to use an agenda sales presentation.

Another study, Wagner and Klein (1993), has relevance for predicting buyers' usage of agendas offered to them by salespeople. One important finding here was that information format plays an important part in eliciting recognizable agenda processing. Wagner and Klein (1993) used protocol analysis to trace the decision process of university students selecting a video rental. Coding of the students' information processing patterns revealed that recognizable agenda processing existed to a much greater degree when movie category labels (action, comedy, horror, etc.) and specific pre-sorted movie alternatives were provided to the respondents. In fact, the students tended to use the exact category names provided by the stimuli rather than to construct their own categories. This implies that decision makers may readily adopt category structures presented by salespeople during agenda sales presentations.

Agendas Can be Imposed

A second relevant finding from the review of agenda literature is that agendas can be successfully imposed on others. Plott and Levine (1978) used a real life situation to show agenda influence. The authors constructed an agenda designed to influence a flying club's decision on the size and composition of their aircraft fleet. The group adopted Plott and Levine's agenda, and their preferred solution was selected from among hundreds of alternatives. The success of the agenda may have been due more to the nature of the strategic considerations that it introduced than to the agenda's ability to reorder individual preferences. Negotiation agendas are comprised of the domain of the issues and the order in which they will be discussed (Balakrishnan, Patton, & Lewis, 1993). In the flying club example, Plott and Levine's greatest influence may have been in establishing the domain or set of issues for consideration. Determining both the domain (nature of the constraints) and the order of issues for consideration (sequence of constraints) are promising means for a salesperson to use in attempting to influence buyer decision making.

Hauser (1986) also supports the notion that agenda constraints suggested by someone other than the decision maker may influence the choices that individuals make. He discusses agendas offered in comparative advertising and draws the analogy between an agenda and a sales presentation. Hauser makes the point that extrinsic agendas can only influence choice and not set

it. The empirical question of under what circumstances extrinsic agendas are more likely to be followed by the decision maker is a focus of this research.

In total, investigations of agenda effects in buyer behavior have shown that agendas alter choice probabilities and that agendas can be imposed. Two factors found to modify the strength of agendas effects are the similarity of the alternatives and whether or not an alternative is the only alternative in a category. Finally, information format, namely providing a category structure and specific alternatives, appears to foster the use of agendas by decision makers.

Agenda Effects in Sales Management

The previously discussed empirical studies relating to agendas have come from the consumer decision literature. The sales management literature was also examined with respect to agendas. Given the power of an agenda to influence choice, it is surprising to find that the empirical sales literature has not focused attention on possible use of this sales tool. Although all but ignored in academic literature, agenda-like strategies have been written of by sales practitioners. In one such account, Systematic Selling: How to Influence the Buying Decision Process, Mort (1977, p. 118) explains what he calls "engineering the decision." The examples provided describe how sales presentations can be designed to systematically eliminate competition. If the seller's product does not meet initial customer criteria, the criteria may be shaped (via buyer education) to make the seller's product more competitive.

Shaping decision criteria "involves rephrasing a specific criterion or altering the buyer's overall list of criteria in a way that more accurately reflects his or her requirements and/or improves the performance of the salesperson's product" (Mort, 1977, p. 118). For example, if a real estate agent takes at face value a customer's constraint that a prospective home be no more than ten minutes travel time from the train station, the lack of such listings would prevent a sale. If, however, the constraint is shaped into the requirement that travel time to work be less than one hour, the agent's listings close to a bus route may become viable sales solutions. Reshaping the criterion may change the home buyer's consideration set.

Being customer-oriented need not mean being customer-controlled (Mort, 1977). There are repercussions for the buyer as well when a salesperson restricts the sales presentation to a matching of product benefits to the initially-stated customer needs. Recommending a product that matches the stated criteria of a misinformed buyer may result in a buyer who is later disappointed in his or choice. The effective salesperson takes control of the selling situation and helps the buyer structure the choice process. For example, while buyers may agree that they require productivity in a copier, they may or may not know how to determine if they are looking at the more productive products. The industry uses speed as a chief measure of productivity, but there are many types of copier speed. Many buyers define productivity as copies per minute as stated on brochures or in the copier's

model number (Model 3045 is often spoken of as a 45 copy per minute machine). Buyers may not realize these copy speeds generally do not reflect what are often drastic speed reductions that surface when automatic feeders are used. The type of productivity important to most offices is net speed (when feeders are used). Two buyers may have productivity (copier speed) as a buying criterion, but only one may be informed about net speed. Thus, chances are that the misinformed or uninformed buyer may be dissatisfied with his or his choice once it is made. By controlling the selling situation, the seller of a product with higher net speed than his competitors has the opportunity to shape the buyer's productivity criterion and eliminate what might be his or her generally strongest competition. The effective salesperson attempts to control the sales interaction and to shape choice criterion in a way that engineers a quality result for both buyer and seller.

While agenda sales presentations have not been investigated in the academic sales literature, some aspects of the relationship between controlling the sales interaction and selling effectiveness have been discussed or explored. Weitz (1981) lists varying the degree of salesperson control over the sales interaction along with altering sales messages and formats as some of the adaptive selling behaviors which salespeople may use to increase selling effectiveness. Weitz relates controlling the sales interaction to the dominant-submissive dimension (Buzzota, Lefton, & Sherbert, 1972) and to the use of high or low pressure in selling. He defines the use of control or pressure as,

"a method of aggressively directing the flow of the interaction toward making a sale" (p. 92). Weitz also links controlling the interaction with the often studied leadership behavior of initiating structure. He relates this behavior to the salesperson "aggressively structuring the customer's problem so that the solution involves purchasing the salesperson's product" (p. 92).

A number of studies have focused on the link between controlling the interaction and selling effectiveness. In general, these studies have used methodology involving the coding of actual sales interactions with respect to actual behaviors or asking buyer's for their perceptions of a particular salesperson's intentions or attempts to dominate.

Wilkes (1989) used survey data from industrial and service salespeople to examine the effect of customer-oriented and controlling behaviors and adaptive selling on sales performance and customer satisfaction. While adaptive selling was determined to be the best predictor of success, being highly customer-oriented and highly control-directive also significantly contributed to good performance. The three items measuring control-directive behavior asked salespeople if they mentioned product features that they thought were important, directed the customer's attention to what the salesperson thought was important, and structured their presentation to guide the customer to make a correct decision.

Laughlin (1991) and Rifon (1990) both used some form of a relational communication measure (Soldow 1984) to investigate the control component

of the buyer/seller relationship. This measure is a classification scheme which can be used to code the grammatical form of conversation, as well as the correspondence between the individual's response and the previous utterance of the other member of the dyad. Grammatical forms include: assertions, questions, or talk-overs. Responses to the other member can be coded as: support, nonsupport, extension, answer, instruction, order, disconfirmation, topic change, and initiation/termination. Laughlin (1991) found modest relationships between relational control and the incidence of sales and seller profit. Rifon (1989) concluded that selling effectiveness was related to a salesperson appropriately responding to a customer's requests to take or relinquish control.

The previously cited work dealing with controlling the interaction appears to focus more on the dominant-submissive dimension rather than on structuring the customer's problem to result in a sale. The agenda sales presentations in this dissertation will concentrate more on the later aspect of control. Weitz (1981) warns that aggressively controlling the interaction may sacrifice customer satisfaction. He proposes that controlling the interaction will best lead to selling effectiveness when the customer faces an ambiguous problem without satisfactory levels of information and when future interactions are not anticipated.

In summary, the sales management literature has shown that controlling the sales interaction can lead to greater selling effectiveness. Thus far, the

literature has related controlling the interaction to the dominant-submissive dimension of behavior or to the leadership behaviors of initiating structure. Empirical attention is not given to a second aspect of controlling the interaction, influencing the way a buyer structures a purchase problem. While practitioners have written about this dimension of control and have described agenda-like strategies, no empirical tests have investigated their effectiveness.

Agenda sales presentations as developed in this dissertation may enable the salesperson to shape the buying decision without creating the buyer negativism that Weitz cautions may result from attempts to control. Agenda presentations may instead have a greater relationship to Weitz's (1978) earlier work stressing the importance of an effective salesperson's understanding of the customer's decision making. Indeed, determining when and if to alter sales messages via agenda sales presentations, while aimed at controlling the interaction, may be closer to Weitz's idea of understanding the "modifiability of the consumer's choice space and choice rule" (p. 504). Designing and delivering agenda sales presentations may prove to be a very effective means of practicing adaptive selling.

Agenda Related Hypotheses

Consumers rarely use decision processes which are highly detailed and require complicated calculations or comparisons between alternatives. This is true because people have limited information processing capabilities. As a result of these limitations, consumers often elect to simplify their decisions by

using choice heuristics. Two strategies commonly used are some form of compensatory rule and heuristics involving sequential elimination (Bettman 1979; Bettman, et al., 1991). An agenda is one example of a sequential elimination heuristic. Both compensatory and agenda choice rules have been discussed earlier in this chapter.

Numerous studies have shown that buyers frequently use a compensatory choice rule in evaluating alternatives and selecting suppliers (Coppett & Staples, 1980; Gregory, 1986; Lamberson, et al., 1976; Wind & Robinson, 1968). Under this choice rule, a superior product may continually fare well because few trade-offs need to be made between negative and positive attributes. For a market leading product with generally favorable attribute ratings, a buyer's use of a compensatory choice rule will frequently result in the purchase of that product. However, for a salesperson representing a product that is not the market leader, a buyer's use of a compensatory choice rule is less optimal. When the pluses and minuses regarding products for non-market leader products are totaled, the overall evaluation scores may not be higher than those of the other products being considered, and the buyer may select another supplier.

In some cases, an opportunity may exist for a salesperson to influence the buying decision by attempting to change the buyer's decision rule to one that shows his or her product to better advantage. Wright and Barbour (1975) discuss the feasibility of this strategy for advertising campaigns but conclude

that it is infrequently done. Tversky (1972), however, provides an example of a television commercial designed to guide viewers through a choice based on his elimination by aspects model. Bettman (1979) explains what he terms a proactive approach to attempt to change consumer processing. He suggests altering the format in which information is presented or attempting to restructure the choice task itself will encourage a different type of processing.

An agenda sales presentation capitalizes on the opportunity to suggest a choice rule to the buyer that is favorable to the seller's product. The constraints presented to the buyer are constructed and sequenced in such a way that, if the suggested process is followed, the result will be an increased probability of purchase of the seller's product. In other words, an agenda sales presentation can provide a means of increasing selling effectiveness.

An agenda sales presentation can be a more effective selling strategy than a compensatory presentation for several reasons. First, an agenda provides a simpler structure for the buying problem than does a compensatory presentation. Agendas divide products into categories of alternatives which either do or do not satisfy the constraint. Categories are natural devices for people to use. Gutman (1982, p. 62) states that, "Categorization processes represent the way in which consumers segment their environments into meaningful groups by creating equivalence among nonidentical stimuli." This natural tendency for people to categorize in order to reduce information load

and thus facilitate decision is echoed by Rosch (1978) and Tversky and Gati (1978).

Agenda sales presentations are effective for other reasons as well. If followed, at least in part, they sequentially reduce the number of alternatives that are being considered more quickly than a compensatory presentation does. Wright and Barbour (1975) point out that the smaller the number of product candidates that are considered, the greater the likelihood of a particular product being selected as the final choice. A quickly reduced consideration set is fostered by agenda presentations because the buyer is encouraged to eliminate alternatives which do not meet each successive constraint. In addition, a constraint that eliminates a close competitor may be extremely helpful in increasing sales. As the number of alternatives left under consideration by the buyer decreases, the likelihood of the seller's product being part of the final consideration set, and thus the final choice, increases (Wright & Barbour, 1975).

Following this logic, I propose:

H1. Compared to compensatory presentations, with agenda presentations the buyer will be more likely to:

a. include the seller's product in the consideration set
b. select the seller's product as the final choice.

An agenda presentation also may be more effective than a compensatory presentation because it leaves the buyer with positive perceptions of the choice and choice process. Decisions made by agenda are perceived as less

effortful. Cognitive effort, or "thinking costs," as discussed by Shugan (1980), are reduced because the calculations involved in arriving at an overall evaluation for each alternative using a compensatory choice rule are avoided. Shugan contends that cognitive effort increases with the number of comparisons that are required to make a decision. An agenda presentation reduces the number of comparisons that a buyer must make because the set of alternatives is reduced at each stage. Glazer et al. (1991) suggests that an easy-to-use heuristic such as an external constraint becomes more important when choice alternatives are similar. Agenda presentations show a buyer how to easily differentiate among products.

Other positive buyer perceptions should result from an agenda sales presentation. Wright (1975) found that decision maker confidence in the choice declined with increases in the number of alternatives. Wright did not have respondents use a sequential elimination choice rule in his full study, but the conclusion could be drawn that buyer confidence in the choice would be higher for an agenda presentation than a compensatory presentation because the agenda calls for a reduction in the number of alternatives considered.

Some may argue the reverse, that confidence would be lower for choices following an agenda rule because the buyer may feel that he or she has assessed too few of the alternatives. Surprisingly, Wright (1975) found that consumers rated a conjunctive elimination strategy, which like an agenda involves noncompensatory eliminations, as more likely to optimize choice than

a compensatory strategy. In addition, an effective salesperson would refrain from suggesting constraints which too quickly reduce the number of products being considered.

Besides the benefit of reduced cognitive effort already discussed, agendas have strong appeals to logic. An agenda provides a framework for systematically narrowing down the number of alternatives. The buyer after an agenda presentation is generally a better informed decision maker than one who has listened to a typical compensatory approach. The agenda sales strategy presents the buyer with information additional to that concerning the seller's recommended product. The buyer also learns how the seller's product performs with respect to other products on the market. The buyer gains, in one agenda sales presentation, as much information as might have been gathered only after a number of individual sales calls with other vendors. An agenda sales presentation exposes the buyer to numerous products in only the time it takes for one sales call. The presentation which compares the seller's product with its competition forms the justification of a choice made by agenda. Greater confidence and satisfaction tends to result when decision makers feel that they have followed a logical and rational approach to a problem. Tversky (1972) states that when faced with an important decision, people search for a compelling principle of choice which offers a clear-cut choice. An agenda provides this principle in a form for which the logic is easy to state, apply, and defend to yourself and to others. These last

considerations are mentioned as important by Tversky (1972) in his development of another sequential choice model, the EBA.

Based on this analysis of how agendas will be perceived, I hypothesize:

H2. Compared to compensatory presentations, with agenda presentations the buyer will:

a. perceive the choice process as less difficult
b. be more confident regarding the choice process
c. be more satisfied with the final choice.

If agenda sales presentations are to be effective, they must result in buyer perceptions of the salesperson which are positive. This idea was discussed earlier in the development of a definition for selling effectiveness. Agendas seem likely to improve perceptions of salesperson expertise which has often been associated with successful attempts to influence buyers (Busch & Wilson, 1976; Taylor & Woodside, 1981). A common way for buyers to assess salesperson expertise is the amount of product and industry knowledge that the salesperson exhibits in the form of information provided to the buyer (Crosby, Evans & Cowles, 1990). The agenda presentation may enhance perceptions of salesperson expertise because the salesperson provides extensive information on a number of products. The salesperson in an agenda presentation appears to be an industry expert, and not just an expert on his or her product alone.

Any positive perceptions of the salesperson could quickly be damaged if the type of presentation used were perceived by the buyer as manipulative or deceitful. However, an agenda presentation only makes <u>suggestions</u> for

eliminating competitive products. If care is taken to avoid a high pressured approach, an agenda presentation by nature should not be perceived as any more manipulative than the compensatory presentation.

Following the above rationale, I propose the follow hypotheses:

H3. Compared to compensatory presentations, with agenda presentations, the buyer will perceive the seller as:

a. more expert
b. no more manipulative

Buyer Expertise

The conceptualization of buyer expertise used in this dissertation is developed from the consumer behavior and psychological literature. The psychological literature traditionally treated consumer knowledge as a unidimensional construct labeled product familiarity or prior knowledge (see Alba & Hutchinson [1987] for an extensive review of this literature). Alba and Hutchinson propose that consumer knowledge is a multidimensional construct comprised of two major components, familiarity and expertise. Alba and Hutchinson (1987, p. 411) define familiarity as, "the number of product-related experiences that have been accumulated by the consumer." They define expertise as, "the ability to perform product-related tasks."

Both familiarity and expertise are defined at very inclusive levels. Product-related experiences include "advertising exposures, information search, interactions with salespersons, choice and decision making, purchasing, and product usage in various situations." Consumer expertise is described as

including both the: "cognitive structures (e.g., beliefs about product attributes) and cognitive processes (e.g., decision rules for acting on those beliefs) required to perform product-related tasks successfully" (p. 411).

Alba and Hutchinson (1987) make no rigid definitional discrimination between familiarity and expertise. Instead, they propose that increased familiarity leads to increased expertise. The conceptualization of expertise in this dissertation uses the definition provided by Alba and Hutchinson (1987). However, the focus is on one aspect of "the ability to perform product-related tasks." The emphasis here is on a buyer's ability to formulate and use choice criteria in the evaluation of available alternatives. This aspect of expertise was chosen because the agenda presentation which is central to this dissertation involves a salesperson's attempt to influence a buyer's decision criteria and manner of eliminating alternatives. Expert buyers tend to have established beliefs about product attributes and can use this attribute information to determine appropriate choice criteria. In addition, expert buyers are likely to have preferred ways of using these criteria to reach a purchase decision. Once experts have established choice criteria and ways of evaluating alternatives, they are perhaps also less likely to be willing to change their criteria and more resistant to attempts by salespeople to get them to consider a new perspective.

Novice buyers, on the other hand, have greater difficulty in deriving appropriate buying criteria because they lack well-developed attribute

information and preferences. Because their perception of the buying situation lacks the structure that strong preferences can provide, novice buyers also generally have inadequate means of evaluating alternatives. As a result of these differences between experts and novices, an agenda sales presentation may be more effective for novices than experts because novices will find the suggested choice criteria and decision rule more helpful.

Expertise Related Literature

The organizational buying literature does not provide much guidance in understanding the effect of buyer expertise on the relationship between different types of sales presentations and selling effectiveness. Although empirical work on expertise in the organizational buying literature is lacking, the importance for buyers of choice criteria and having a means for evaluating alternatives is part of several well-known models of buyer behavior. In Webster's (1965) modeling of the industrial buying process, expertise, as conceptualized here, would be included in both the search process and choice process sections of the model. In Howard and Sheth's (1969) model of buyer behavior, choice criteria are seen as the link between the buyer's motives and attitudes toward brands.

Perhaps the closest association between the organizational buying literature and expertise as conceptualized here would be the references to familiarity included in the widely referenced Buy-Grid (Robinson, Faris & Wind, 1967). The Buy-Grid of Robinson, Faris and Wind uses three dimensions to

categorize industrial purchases: 1) Information Needs—how much information the buyer needs to gather before a good decision can be made; 2) Consideration of Alternatives—the degree to which serious consideration is given to all possible alternatives; and 3) Newness of the Task—the buyer's level of familiarity with the purchase situation. The three levels (high, medium, and low) of each of the three dimensions (Information Needs, Consideration of Alternatives, and Newness of the Task) provide for a combination (3 x 3 x 3) of 27 possible purchasing situations. Because of the high correlation between the three dimensions in actual practice, the framework reduces to three categories of buying situations. New Task represents situations where high levels of information needs, serious consideration of numerous alternatives, and newness of the task (i.e., low familiarity with the purchase situation). Straight Rebuy describes the reverse situation with low levels of the three dimensions occurring together. The third category, Modified Rebuy, exemplifies a buying situation with moderate levels of the dimensions. These definitions may suggest that a buyer in a New Buy situation has low levels of expertise and a buyer in a Straight Rebuy situation has high levels of expertise. Although there may be some relationship between buying situation and buyer expertise, they needn't be correlated. For instance, an office clerk may be able to follow procedures and submit a purchase order for a Straight Rebuy product without knowing any of the criteria upon which the product was

originally selected. Thus, while buying situation and buyer expertise may be associated, they are conceptually distinct.

The greatest insight into how expertise might affect the relationship between sales presentation type and selling effectiveness is found in cognitive psychology and a few consumer studies of knowledge. Even here, there are few relevant studies.

A purchase situation has been compared to problem solution (e.g., a new task purchase situation is comparable to an extensive problem solving situation). Several studies in cognitive psychology have investigated the effect of expertise on problem solving. Chi, Glaser, and Rees (1982) report a number of studies involving expertise and the solution of physics problems. In the first discussed here, experts (Ph.D. students in physics) and novices (undergraduate physics students) were asked to solve a number of problems. No difference was found between the groups regarding ability to solve the problems accurately. However, differences appeared when both groups were asked to categorize the problems. Both groups used roughly the same number of categories, but the basis for the categories was different for novices and experts. Novices used clues such as key words and diagrams to categorize the problems. The experts categorized the problems on the basis of the underlying principle required to solve the problem. Chi et al. (1982) concluded that novices were more greatly influenced by surface features of the problems, while experts' categorization system was based on a deeper structure. On the

basis of these findings, one might infer that the ideas in sales presentations that seem to provide greater structure for the buying problem might be more quickly adopted by novices than by experts who already have a well-developed perspective of the problem.

In a second study, Chi et al. (1982) asked physics students with three levels of expertise to categorize physics problems. After the initial groupings were made, the students were invited to subdivide the groups again and again as they saw fit. For the last step in this categorization task, the students were told that they could now regroup the subgroups in any way they liked. Only one novice was able to think of a superordinate category, and novices in general had more difficulty in coming up with numerous subgroupings. On the other hand, the experts seemed to have no trouble with either of these operations. The results of this study suggest that experts' knowledge is organized more hierarchically and that experts are able to make finer discriminations in deciding categories. This finding has relevance for this dissertation because it suggests that experts might perceive finer distinctions in levels of product attributes than do novices. The findings together suggest that product experts are better able than novices to determine appropriate criteria with which to evaluate products (e.g., categories and levels of criteria which will satisfy their needs). As a result, experts may react more strongly than novices to the criteria and cut-off levels suggested by a salesperson in an

agenda presentation. Experts may be less accepting of a simplistic view of the problem because they recognize a greater number of possible perspectives.

Alba and Hutchinson (1987) in their extensive review of the psychological literature with respect to consumer knowledge present a number of propositions relevant to this work. Ideas from the more pertinent propositions include:

1. Experts are better able to discriminate between important and unimportant information than are novices.
2. Novices are more likely than experts to select information on the basis of expediency rather than on relevance to the task.
3. Novices are more likely to heavily weight product attributes that have been emphasized in promotion.
4. Novices are more likely than experts to oversimplify complex problems and/or to ignore hidden complexities.

A synthesis of the above ideas presents a picture of a novice as someone who is: uncertain of product attribute importance and how to determine it; less able to solve purchase decisions analytically; and more greatly influenced by external forces. They may be more willing than experts to accept the simple sequential eliminations inherent in agendas.

Finally, a study dealing with a related construct, knowledge, appears to provide insight regarding the effect of expertise on the relationship between sales strategies and selling effectiveness. The purpose of Brucks (1985) was to shed light on an explanation for the contradictory results of a number of studies concerning the impact of prior product knowledge on information

search. Of significance here and supported by this study are the conceptual differences established between measures of subjective and objective knowledge. Objective knowledge measures tested terminology, available attributes, and criteria for evaluating attributes. Respondents high in objective knowledge tended to be more efficient searchers and better able to screen alternatives on the basis of appropriateness. Subjective knowledge measures involved self-reported ratings of knowledge and familiarity levels. Respondents high in subjective knowledge tended to rely more on their own evaluation skills. Reliance on dealer evaluations decreased with greater subjective knowledge. These findings suggest that acceptance of salesperson-suggested decision strategies may depend on what buyers think they know as well as what they actually know about a purchase situation. Novice buyers, who are generally less confident, may exhibit more dependence on a salesperson and thus tend to follow agenda suggestions more closely than experts.

Expertise Related Hypotheses

The previous literature review implies a number of effects that expertise may have on the relationship between different types of sales presentations and selling effectiveness. Agenda sales presentations suggest to buyers a number of constraints that can be used as criteria for making a purchase decision. These constraints provide a way for buyers to evaluate a group of alternatives (Hauser, 1986). Agenda sales presentations thus provide a type of structure for the purchase problem the buyer is facing. Because agendas

involve the sequential elimination of alternatives, agendas supply the buyer with a means of reducing the complexity of the purchase process when a number of alternatives are involved. In contrast, a compensatory sales presentation summarizes the benefit information regarding the attributes for a single product. Although some references are made to the competition, in a compensatory presentation few direct comparisons are made between alternatives. The sales presentation aims at aiding buyers in forming an overall evaluation of the seller's product. The evaluation is the result of some type of mental calculations by buyers involved in trading off positive and negative information. It is assumed that buyers will receive similar types of input from competitive salespeople during other sales calls. Considerable cognitive effort may be involved when the buyer is required to calculate the trade offs for several alternatives (Shugan, 1980).

Given the inherent differences between agenda and compensatory sales presentations detailed above and the capabilities of experts and novices outlined in the literature review, increases in selling effectiveness due to using an agenda sales presentation rather than a compensatory presentation may be greater for novices than for experts. Consider first the rationale for novices' response to agendas, based on the propositions detailed by Alba and Hutchinson (1987). Because novice buyers have less well-developed buying criteria, they should welcome the format of an agenda presentation which supplies specific criteria as well as a plan for evaluating alternatives. Due to a

novice's tendency to experience more difficulty processing information analytically, the agenda presentation should help the novice buyer gain a level of understanding of the situation that is in line with the novice's reduced ability to handle complex problems. The compensatory presentation, on the other hand, leaves the novice buyer less certain of how to manage the complexities of evaluating the product information relative to other products being considered. In addition, because a novice is not equipped with the discriminatory capabilities of doing otherwise, he or she may seek an expeditious solution to a buying problem. The agenda serves this function nicely in delivering a buying solution requiring less time and effort than evaluating the alternatives through a compensatory method. In total, novices may tend to follow the suggestions in an agenda presentation, thus resulting in a higher likelihood of the seller's product being included in a novice buyer's final consideration set and then chosen.

The agenda presentation should also prove more effective with novice buyers than the compensatory presentation because its use creates more positive perceptions of the choice, choice process, and the salesperson. The agenda presentation, more so than the compensatory presentation, creates a situation where novice buyers have a chance to make a choice with higher levels of confidence and satisfaction. Extending the ideas of Tversky (1972) and Rosch (1978), the agenda, as a form of sequential elimination, has strong appeals to reason and to the natural tendency to categorize as a means of

simplification. For these reasons, the agenda is attractive to novices. Trying to justify purchases to oneself or others is made easier by a strategy that appears very logical and is easier to state and defend than a compensatory choice rule.

Finally, novices should also come away from an agenda presentation with greater appreciation for the seller's expertise than they would having witnessed a compensatory presentation. In both compensatory and agenda presentations, the seller has an opportunity to exhibit his mastery of product knowledge. An agenda presentation, however, affords the seller an added advantage. Here is a chance to display industry expertise as well. The implicit assumption behind an agenda presentation is the notion that the salesperson has the ability to offer a structure for the evaluation of products representing the entire industry. Novices, realizing that they lack both product and industry knowledge, would tend to place more reliance on the opinions of those people who appear most equipped to dispel their own uncertainty (1985).

In summary, when comparing the benefits of an agenda presentation with those of a compensatory presentation, the agenda presentation offers the novice a plan of analysis that is logical, easy to execute, justifiable, and confidence and satisfaction building. It follows then, that salespeople who use them in selling to novice buyers would experience increased selling effectiveness as defined in this dissertation.

Now contrast the expert's response to agendas versus compensatory strategies. The increased selling effectiveness of an agenda strategy rather than a compensatory strategy should be far less for an expert buyer than for a novice buyer because of the greater capabilities and preparedness that experts bring to a purchase. Of course, agendas offer experts the same ease of execution and logical plan for evaluating alternatives as they do for novices. However, the circumstances involved with higher levels of expertise makes a compensatory choice strategy an equally viable alternative method of choice for experts.

Experts, in all likelihood, approach a buyer/seller interaction with a structured perspective to the problem. They have well-developed criteria and an established means of evaluating alternatives. Because these criteria and decision making practices have served in the past, the expert buyer is more committed to a particular course of action than is a novice who is only then developing decision strategies. Even though expert buyers may be accustomed to doing some type of initial screening of alternatives (Crow, Olshavsky, & Summers, 1980), they may not wish to make the entire decision by sequential elimination. Accepting the salesperson's agenda may require a restructuring of the problem for the expert. The result may be resistance to the agenda suggestions.

Because experts do not possess the same degree of limitations on their processing capabilities that novices do, experts have less incentive to accept

an agenda strategy over a compensatory strategy. Thoroughly evaluating more alternatives generally builds confidence and satisfaction in the decision process and the final selection. However, experts may be more aware that an agenda strategy sacrifices some thoroughness. Also, experts experience lower levels of cognitive effort than novices do for the same task. Experts are also better able than novices to handle the added problem complexities that may be involved in using a compensatory strategy (Alba & Hutchinson, 1987).

Strategy may also have less effect on perceptions of the choice process, final selection, and salesperson for experts. During problem solving tasks, experts recognize that they deal from a position of strength as compared to novices. Experts are already more confident and satisfied with their performance than are novices. While following a seemingly logical agenda or achieving a new perspective on a problem may add to this confidence and performance satisfaction, the addition will not be as great as that experienced by a novice. This greater incremental effect for novices may also exist for perceptions of the salesperson's expertise. While the salesperson using an agenda presentation may appear somewhat more expert than one using a compensatory approach, experts compared to novices are in general less impressed with salesperson information because experts already possess a great deal of this information prior to the interaction with the salesperson.

In summary, while an agenda provides some benefits for expert buyers over using a compensatory method of decision, the benefits are not as great

as those experienced by novice buyers. Because cost/benefit considerations may be taken into account in deciding between alternative methods of choice (Bettman, et al., 1991), experts may be less likely than novices to consistently prefer an agenda strategy over a compensatory strategy. It follows then that salespeople who use agenda strategies rather than compensatory strategies in selling to experts may experience less improvement in selling effectiveness than those selling to novices.

These arguments lead to the following hypotheses about the interaction of strategy type and expertise:

H4. The effect of strategy type (agenda vs. compensatory) will be greater for buyers with low expertise than for buyers with high expertise for:

   a. inclusion of the seller's product in the consideration set
   b. selection of the seller's product as the final choice

H5. The effect of strategy type (agenda vs. compensatory) will be greater for buyers with low expertise than for buyers with high expertise for:

   a. perception of choice process difficulty
   b. confidence regarding the choice process
   c. satisfaction with the final choice

H6. The effect of strategy type (agenda vs. compensatory) on the perception of seller expertise will be greater for buyers with low expertise than for buyers with high expertise.

Buyer/Seller Relationship

Due to an increasingly competitive environment, businesses are placing greater emphasis on their relationships with customers. One type of relationship being evaluated with greater scrutiny is the buyer/seller

relationship. More than ever before, existing buyer/seller relationships are now frequently viewed in terms of their history, and future expectations as well as their present status.

This dissertation investigates what impact the nature of the buyer/seller relationship has on the association between sales presentation type and selling effectiveness. The particular aspect of the buyer/seller relationship explored here is the nature of the exchange that exists within the relationship. Exchange is used in a broader sense than just an exchange of money for a product or service. Exchange is not dependent upon a sale and occurs if only the buyer's time and consideration of the seller's product is exchanged for the seller's product information and a recommendation.

Although a sales order or other form of written contract is not involved in each buyer/seller interaction, some of the norms that begin to develop in a selling situation are analogous to a set of common contract norms developed and described by Macneil in a series of his writings (1978, 1980, 1981, 1983, 1987). Because of this, the conceptualization of the nature of the exchange in this study is based in part on Macneil's writings.

In his work, Macneil (1978, 1980, 1981, 1983, 1987) developed and revised his ideas concerning a taxonomy of the types of norms that exist under contractual exchange. Beginning from a list of common contract norms, Macneil emphasizes which norms assume special importance in certain types

of contractual exchange. These norms seem to pervade the behavior and underlie the principles operating in the exchange.

Macneil (1987) described what he termed discrete and relational exchange and the norms that were prevalent under each. Discrete exchange tends to be characterized by relationships that are short in duration and involve limited personal interactions. Objects of exchange are precisely measured. Benefits or burdens derived from the association are immediately divided or allocated. Under discrete exchange, there are minimum plans for future cooperation between the parties. Altruism is not expected. The parties are tightly bound, and matters are clearly defined and presentiated.

In contrast, relational exchange is of longer duration and involves closer personal ties. The objects of exchange may no longer be able to be precisely measured. Future cooperation between the parties is expected. Benefits or burdens are shared rather than sharply divided. Friendship, reputation, interdependence, morality, and altruism are important ingredients of relational exchange. Once again, although Macneil's ideas were primarily developed for a legal context, his ideas have application for marketing exchanges as well. In describing the discrete and relational exchanges in this dissertation, I adopt Macneil's (1987) above characterization.

Ideas and work by Thibaut and Kelley (1959), Noordewier, John, and Nevin (1990), and Heide and John (1984) have also been helpful in developing a conceptualization of the buyer/seller exchange for this research. First, norms

have been defined as expectations regarding behavior that are shared, at least in part, by a group of decision makers (Thibaut & Kelley, 1959). Norms develop over time and reflect past, as well as, present behavior. Past behavior is often a good predictor of what to expect in the future. In this study involving attempts of the salesperson to shape the buyer's decision process, one important factor impacting whether or not the suggested sales strategy is accepted is likely to be the buyer's sense of the spirit in which suggestions are made. Existing norms offer the buyer some basis for predicting what the seller's motivations and objectives may be.

Second, this conceptualization considers the exchange relationship to be a higher order multidimensional construct in which each dimension reflects a particular norm (Noordewier, et al., 1990). Consequently, discrete and relational exchanges are defined in terms of the norms which are prevalent within the relationship (Heide & John, 1984). Some of the norms which are used to describe these exchanges include: role integrity, solidarity, mutuality, flexibility, harmonization of relational conflict, and restraint of power. Role integrity describes the degree to which the habits, customs, principles, and rules of the parties are integrated (Macneil, 1980). Solidarity refers to the degree to which the maintenance of the relationship is held important by the parties (Kaufmann & Stern, 1988). Mutuality concerns the equity in the distribution of benefits and burdens from the relationship. Under high mutuality, these are evaluated using a long-term rather than transaction-by-

transaction perspective (Boyle, Dwyer, Robicheaux, & Simpson, 1992). Flexibility describes the degree to which the exchange partners are willing to make alterations in their practices and policies to adjust for unforeseen and changing conditions (Boyle, et al., 1992). Harmonization of relational conflict refers to how conflict is successfully managed so as to preserve the relationship. Harmony between the parties may be accomplished by employing established procedures for doing things or by relying on good faith and trust (Macneil, 1980). Restraint of power involves the degree to which the exercise of legitimate power is voluntarily restrained by the parties (Kaufmann & Dant, 1992).

Macneil (1987) conceptualized discrete and relational exchange as opposite ends of a continuum. This same idea of a continuum extending from discrete to relational exchange is used in this study. Here, relational exchange is defined as an exchange in which there are higher degrees of role integrity, solidarity, and harmonization. Discrete exchange is defined as one with lower degrees of these three norms. Role integrity, solidarity, and harmonization were chosen for emphasis here because it is likely that these norms have greater influence on the acceptance or rejection of a sales presentation than other norms discussed by Macneil.

The suggestions of a seller regarding products or new approaches to problems are more likely to be given stronger consideration by a buyer when the two parties' roles are integrated to the degree that their working

relationship has developed beyond mere buying and selling and has focused on solving general business problems as well. A seller's presentation also should be given greater credence when both buyer and seller realize that the maintenance of a long lasting relationship has strong importance for the other party. This sense of solidarity makes both parties more certain that the other is not likely to do anything to jeopardize the continuance of the existing relationship. Finally, whether or not a seller's presentation is favored by a buyer should also be impacted by the presence or absence of a spirit of harmony, trust, and fair play between the parties.

Discrete and Relational Exchange Literature

A number of studies have used the concept of norms to investigate buyer/seller relationships in marketing. Using Macneil's (1980) ideas as a foundation, Dwyer, Schurr, and Oh (1987) propose a framework for the development of buyer/seller relationships. They suggest that many relationships progress through five general phases of development: awareness, exploration, expansion, commitment, and dissolution. As a buyer/seller relationship evolves from awareness to commitment, the form of exchange becomes more relational in nature. In the dissolution stage, the relationship begins to break apart and dissolve.

Dwyer et al. (1987) recognize the importance of relational norms which begin to develop in the second stage, exploration. In this stage, partners examine the potential of an exchange. There is a search for and assessment

of obligations and benefits that might occur from an exchange. A trial purchase may occur during this period. Norms play a part in this assessment because they include information about what has gone before, how to interpret present actions, and what might be expected to happen in the future.

Research provides some indications of how the nature of the exchange and its prevalent norms might affect the processes and attitudes within channel dyads (Boyle, et al., 1992; Heide & John, 1992; Kaufmann & Stern, 1988; Noordewier, et al., 1990). Heide and John (1992) defined the buyer/seller relationship with respect to the norms which characterize the relationship because they indicate the extent of cooperation or exploitation existing in the relationship. These norms also may foreshadow what might be expected from future exchanges.

Heide and John (1992) investigated the role that the existence of relational norms (flexibility, information exchange, and solidarity) plays in structuring relationships between independent firms. This survey of original equipment manufacturers and their component suppliers tested Transaction Cost Analysis' underlying assumption of opportunism. According to this TCA framework, a buyer who possesses transaction specific assets should attempt to attain vertical control over suppliers as a means of safeguarding themselves from the opportunism of the supplier. This type of control may not always be feasible among independent firms. For the buyer to achieve vertical control,

the independent supplier must be willing to surrender some of the decision control to the buyer.

Heide and John (1992) found that suppliers were more likely to relinquish control if the relationship was characterized by the presence of relational norms. An explanation may be that in relational exchange the overriding code of conduct is based on morality and cooperation. In this atmosphere, the supplier may not feel at risk in giving more control to the buyer.

The Heide and John (1992) study findings may have implications for this dissertation. Both buyer and seller feel less at risk in a relational exchange. Given the long term outlook for this type of exchange, there is time for both buyer and seller to benefit in turn. Actions of either partner should be judged less suspiciously by the other. When feelings of trust are present, it may be easier for the buyer to accept a salesperson's suggested new perspective to a particular purchasing situation.

Boyle et al. (1992) examined the associations between relationalism and alternative governance structures. A relevant finding for this dissertation was a positive association between recommendation, promises, and information exchange strategies and relationalism. A negative association was determined to exist between requests, legalistic pleas and threats and relationalism. These findings supply some evidence of the types of influence-strategy norms that are compatible with the norms of a relational exchange. This dissertation examines the effectiveness of an agenda sales strategy. For this strategy to

be effective it must not sacrifice customer satisfaction or endanger future sales. For this reason, buyer perceptions of the choice process and the salesperson have significance. Sales strategy must not violate the norms existing within an exchange relationship.

Kaufmann and Stern (1988) examine what happens when relational norms are breached. This survey involving firms engaged in legal disputes assessed the ways in which relational norms (solidarity, mutuality, and role integrity) affected perceptions of unfairness and whether attributions regarding the intentions of the offending party influenced those perceptions. Results indicate that, when solidarity is high within an exchange, parties tend to rate the other member's behavior as less unfair. However, given the same circumstances, if a member's uncooperative actions show little regard for the preservation of the relationship, that member's behavior is rated as more unfair. Finally, once a party's actions are termed unfair, greater hostility is harbored toward that member if both members are partners in a relational exchange. Once again the relevance here involves perceptions regarding the behavior of an exchange partner. When exchange members share feelings of high solidarity, small disputes are tolerated and worked through. However, once there are perceptions that norms have been transgressed, the once cooperative atmosphere can be disturbed for some time. Salespeople must be careful not to damage a developing relationship in order to capture a quick sale.

In the final study discussed in this section, Noordewier et al. (1990) use a discrete/relational continuum to test buyer performance as predicted by the TCA framework. The focus was on the performance of buyers of ball bearings, a frequently purchased product. Performance was measured in terms of possession and acquisition costs. For a repetitively purchased product, these two costs can be considerably high. Results indicate that relational forms of governance reduce acquisition costs during periods of high uncertainty. There was no effect for periods of lower levels of uncertainty. Noordewier et al. (1990) provides initial evidence of the impact on the buying organization's profitability of pursuing a relational exchange during periods of uncertainty. This dissertation takes the seller's perspective and looks at how one aspect of profitability (i.e., selling effectiveness as defined here) is influenced by the type of buyer/seller exchange.

In summary, existing studies provide evidence of the influence of relationalism on such things as perceptions of unfairness (Kaufmann & Stern, 1988), decision making control (Heide & John, 1992) and profitability (Noordewier, et al., 1990) that are relevant to the study of the effectiveness of sales agendas.

Buyer/Seller Relationship Hypotheses

As discussed above, certain conditions, among them high environmental uncertainty and high investments in transaction specific assets, may foster the development of relational exchange between buyers and sellers. However,

regardless of whether conditions exist that motivate buyers and sellers to develop relational exchange, every buyer/seller relationship begins somewhere closer to the discrete end of the continuum. Thus, a salesperson must be equally effective in the management of both discrete and relational exchanges. Both discrete and relational exchanges are important in this dissertation. This work examines how the relationship between agenda presentations and selling effectiveness is altered by the type of exchange relationship. This section develops the rationale for a number of hypotheses related to this investigation.

Consider the case of a salesperson presenting either an agenda sales presentation or a compensatory sales strategy to a buyer in a relational exchange. The buyer is able to refer in some respect to the nature of the relationship to provide clues as to the motives of the seller for using a particular sales strategy. The high levels of role integrity, solidarity and harmonization of conflict encourage tendencies for the buyer to see either strategy as acceptable because of the spirit of trust and cooperation experienced in the past and anticipated for the future (Kaufmann & Stern, 1988; Macneil, 1980). Further possible support for this argument may exist in Heide and John (1992). While they found that suppliers were more likely to relax control in a relational exchange because they felt more protected from abuse, buyers may be willing to do so as well. In other words, a buyer may feel more protected, be less suspicious, and be more accepting of a seller's presentation because of existing relational norms which the buyer uses as

clues to the nature of future interactions. This feeling of protection and the importance placed on the maintenance of the relationship by both parties suggests that the seller will be more effective in a relational exchange than in a discrete exchange.

Prior arguments on the greater effectiveness of agendas over compensatory presentations should hold for both discrete and relational exchanges. However, the incremental effect should be less in relational exchanges than in discrete exchanges. Because salespeople are more effective in a relational exchange overall, the degree to which increased selling effectiveness can be demonstrated for agenda versus compensatory presentations is limited. A better opportunity to show greater incremental effectiveness for an agenda strategy over a compensatory strategy exists in the case of a discrete exchange. Here, the seller's advantage provided by the relational norms is gone. The buyer's expectations are that behavior will be individualistic and competitive (Heide & John, 1992). Each sales strategy will be evaluated at face value. Consequently, the use of a particular sales strategy may have greater importance in a discrete exchange than in a relational exchange. Thus, as stated earlier, the opportunity to show incremental increases in effectiveness for an agenda strategy over a compensatory strategy may be greater in a discrete exchange. The same logic applies for perceptions of the choice and the salesperson.

Following this logic, I propose:

H7. The effect of strategy type (agenda vs. compensatory) will be greater for discrete exchange than for relational exchange for:

a. inclusion of the seller's product in the consideration set
b. selection of the seller's product as the final choice

H8. The effect of strategy type (agenda vs. compensatory) will be greater for discrete exchange than for relational exchange for:

a. perception of choice difficulty
b. confidence regarding the choice process
c. satisfaction with the final choice

H9. The effect of strategy type (agenda vs. compensatory) will be greater for discrete exchange than for relational exchange for perception of seller expertise.

Relative Competitive Strength

It is likely that all products in a competitive set do not benefit equally from a particular sales presentation type. A market leader possessing several strong attributes which are rated very important by the majority of users may consistently capture a greater proportion of sales regardless of the sales presentation strategy used. Likewise, a salesperson's choice of one sales presentation strategy over another may not increase the likelihood of sale for products that are significantly weak on several dimensions usually considered important by buyers. In summary, for product alternatives with either extreme overall strength or weakness relative to their competitors, the choice of sales presentation type may be less consequential. For these products, sales may be determined almost solely on the overwhelmingly obvious accumulation of

positive or negative evidence regarding strengths or weaknesses and not upon the use of any particular presentation strategy.

But, consider now the impact of a salesperson's selection of a particular sales strategy for what may be the majority of products, those that possess some significant strength but that don't dominate their competitors. For these more average products, a particular sales strategy which highlights a product's strongest attributes and suggests those strengths as a foundation for a buyer's eliminating other products from consideration may be more effective than a sales strategy that suggests forming an overall product evaluation and then comparing that overall evaluation to those of other competitors.

With that in mind, this dissertation investigates the influence that product offerings with different relative competitive strengths have on the relationship between sales presentation type and selling effectiveness. Relative competitive strength is defined here as a product's overall evaluation when compared to the overall evaluations of the other products in the competitive set.

Relative Competitive Strength Literature

A number of researchers have dealt with the idea that a salesperson's product offerings have an influence on selling effectiveness. However, the approach that has usually been taken is to look at broad product categories or product/product line characteristics. This dissertation investigates which selling behaviors might work better with products with differing overall

competitive strengths. Churchill et al. (1985) provides evidence that product type had a significant moderating effect on the relationship between sales performance and its determinants. In that meta-analysis, products sold were classified as consumer goods, industrial goods, and services. The moderating effect of product was attributed to differences in the types of selling jobs created by representing these product categories.

Weitz (1981) speaks of the range of product alternatives that the salesperson is able to offer buyers and the degree to which products can be adapted for customers as resources upon which a salesperson can draw. In his Contingency Framework for Salesperson Effectiveness, Weitz (1981) suggests that the Resources of a Salesperson (in this case, a salesperson's product offerings) can act to either enhance or constrain the range of selling behaviors that will be effective.

Weitz, Sujan, and Sujan (1986) also include product as a modifier of the relationship between selling behaviors and selling effectiveness. The authors purport that the benefits of practicing adaptive selling are greater when the salesperson represents products with a number of alterable options and features or when the seller's product line is broad and/or varied. In both of these situations, the nature of the product offerings facilitates using adaptive selling behaviors involving the customization of sales calls.

As stated earlier, although the above literature recognizes the importance that product plays in shaping appropriate selling behaviors, the perspective is

much broader than the one used in this dissertation. The next section will further explain the concept of relative competitive strength and develop hypotheses regarding the concept's influence on the relationship between sales presentation type and selling effectiveness.

Relative Competitive Strength Hypotheses

Two choice alternatives that vary in competitive position are first described broadly, in order to explain the hypotheses.

Product G

Alternative G's product attributes are strong enough to give G a high-average relative competitive strength. While not the market leader, G is strong enough, relative to its competitors, to be included often in a buyer's consideration set. While buyers' overall evaluations formed during a compensatory sales presentation may be slightly higher for the market leaders than for Copier G, the fact that Copier G possesses one very strong attribute and lacks serious weaknesses makes it a good candidate for the use of an agenda presentation. The very strong attribute may be a solid basis for competitive comparisons, and buyers may then be willing to use the agenda framework to eliminate a market leader from consideration. In addition, Copier G's lack of serious weaknesses also enables the product to withstand a number of other comparisons that may similarly further reduce the number of viable alternatives. Because Copier G is likely to already be in many buyers'

consideration sets, the increase in selling effectiveness due to a salesperson's use of an agenda presentation rather than a compensatory presentation would most likely be evidenced in more frequent selection of Copier G as the final choice.

Product K

Product K is the second choice alternative used to examine the interaction between sales presentation type and the relative competitive strengths of products. Product K was chosen for study because it is an alternative with average relative competitive strength. Product K has one very strong attribute, one serious weakness, and is rated average on the remaining agenda attributes. The lower relative competitive strength of K compared to G provides a test of whether or not an agenda sales presentation can improve selling effectiveness with respect to products that have more substantial disadvantages relative to the market leader.

As was true for Copier G, the buyer's overall evaluation for Copier K formed during a compensatory presentation (which by definition focuses on the strengths of the product and avoids the weaknesses) may at first seem favorable to the buyer. However, later comparisons of the overall evaluations of Copier K and other alternatives are likely to place Copier K at a more serious disadvantage and inhibit consideration.

While not faring too well with a compensatory presentation, Copier K may be sold more effectively using an agenda presentation. This is true because

K's one very strong attribute, if demonstrated to buyers to be highly important, may again form the rationale for eliminating some strong competitors. As is true in the compensatory presentation as well, the seller giving an agenda presentation will not focus on the serious weakness of the product and will instead stress the benefits to be gained from those things the product does well.

An agenda presentation highlights the strengths of the product in a format that prompts direct competitive comparisons. If such focus is enough to prompt buyers to eliminate some competitors with greater relative competitive strength, buyers may be willing to look more seriously at Copier K than they otherwise might following a compensatory presentation. While Copier K's average relative competitive strength allows it to hold its own near the middle of the competitive set, any selling effectiveness advantage gained by using an agenda presentation may not be sufficient to make K the final choice.

For the above reasons, I propose:

H10. The favorable effect on choice of agenda presentations (vs. compensatory presentations) will be greater for G (stronger product) than for K (weaker product).

H11. The favorable effect on inclusion in the consideration set of agenda presentations (vs. compensatory presentations) will be greater for K (weaker product) than for G (stronger product).

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

A field experiment was used to test the previously developed hypotheses. The objective of this study is to assess the impact of alternative sales strategies on selling effectiveness and how this relationship is modified by buyer expertise, buyer/seller relationship, and relative competitive strength. Specifically, the study analyzes the effectiveness of agenda vs. compensatory sales strategies. In order to test the hypotheses using survey research, it would have been necessary to identify salespeople who use one (or both) of these types of strategies and then to assess the selling effectiveness of these salespeople. This may have been difficult if agendas are not routinely used by all salespeople and would fail to control for differences among salespeople and the situations in which they use each sales strategy. On the other hand, an experiment enables the experimenter to manipulate the independent variable (sales strategy, in this case) to ensure its presence. In addition, an experiment provides greater control, allowing stronger inferences regarding causation.

This experiment was conducted in the field to allow access to actual buyers. A computer-interactive questionnaire that included sales presentations provided a format that allowed the use of agenda sales strategies. The

decision to use actual industrial buyers is discussed in a later section covering sampling considerations.

Design

This experiment involved a 2 (sales presentation) x 2 (expertise level) x 2 (buyer/seller relationship) x 2 (relative competitive strength) between-subjects design (see Figure 4). The sales presentation, buyer/seller relationship, and relative competitive strength variables were manipulated. The levels of sales presentations were agenda and compensatory strategies. The buyer/seller relationship was manipulated as either discrete exchange or relational exchange. Relative competitive strength involved products with either a high average or average relative competitive strength. Expertise was measured rather than manipulated. The dependent variable was selling effectiveness, which was measured by the inclusion of the target product in the buyer's consideration set, selection of the target product as the buyer's final choice, buyer perceptions of the target product, buyer perceptions of the choice and choice process, and by the buyer's perceptions of the seller.

Given that order of presentation can have important effects on the outcome of sales calls, two sequences were used to allow examination of possible order effects. In sequence 1, the target product was presented before a competitive product. In sequence 2, the target product was presented second following the presentation of a competitive product. The competitive product was the same across all conditions.

		Agenda				Compensatory			
		Expert		Novice		Expert		Novice	
		Target 1st	Target 2nd	Target 1st	Target 2nd	Target 1st	Target 2nd	Target 1st	Target 2nd
Discrete Exchange	Product G	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
	Product K	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
Relational Exchange	Product G	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24
	Product K	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32

FIGURE 4
DESIGN

Choice Context

The context of this study was a photocopier purchase decision. A photocopier was selected as the focus product for several reasons. First, a photocopier is a fairly complex product. The purchase decision is generally based on multiple attributes, and this provides more opportunities for a salesperson to influence an agenda. The larger the number of buyer criteria, the greater the flexibility the salesperson possesses in suggesting and sequencing a set of constraints which eliminates the competition and presents the salesperson's product as the best option.

Second, the selling environment for copiers is appropriate in that the benefits derived from adapting sales presentations are likely to outweigh the costs of doing so. Weitz, Sujan, and Sujan (1986) suggest that a cost/benefit ratio favorable to adaptive selling is likely to exist: 1) when the salesperson encounters a variety of customer needs and types, 2) when the customer is making a significant purchase decision, and 3) when the salesperson has the resources with which to adapt (i.e., a product with many features and options).

These three conditions exist in the copier selling environment. Almost any type of business is a potential copier purchaser. Copier markets are often segmented by industry, geography, customer size, or customer usage volume. There is wide variance between and within segments with respect to customer type and needs.

Most copier sales are significant enough purchases to warrant adapting sales strategies. Copiers considered appropriate for business range in price from several thousand to in excess of one hundred thousand dollars. The scenarios used in this dissertation include product offerings priced between $10,300 and $13,300. If adaptive selling results in a sale, the commissions or other compensation awarded on a sale in this dollar amount range are usually large enough to offset salesperson time and effort investment in appropriate strategy selection.

Copier salespeople also possess the resources needed to adapt sales presentations. Today, most copiers are complex products with numerous features and options which can be varied to best meet the needs of particular customers. This aspect of the choice context is not important in this study, however. In this research, all products conform to a common configuration and set of features.

A final reason for selecting a copier purchase as the choice context for this dissertation was that it allowed for an adequate test of the hypothesized moderating effects of buyer expertise and buyer/seller relationship. First, there is wide variance in the product expertise of copier buyers. Buyers range from experienced purchasing agents to new entrepreneurs or office managers completely inexperienced in making a purchase decision of this type. Second, the nature of the buyer/seller relationship involved in a copier purchase may fall anywhere on the continuum of discrete to relational exchange. While

some buyers make a one-time purchase with no ongoing interaction between themselves and the copier salesperson, other buyers require a buyer/seller relationship involving negotiated multi-year purchasing agreements which incorporate the purchase of numerous copiers and other business equipment items.

Sample

The sample was drawn from the population of businesses in Rockford, Illinois and in the Virginia cities of Roanoke, Blacksburg, and Christiansburg. The sampling frame was a list of businesses compiled by cross referencing information from The Virginia Business Directory, business directories from the Chambers of Commerce of Rockford, Illinois; Roanoke, Virginia; and Christiansburg, Virginia, as well as the Ameritech Yellow Pages for Rockford, Illinois. Businesses were excluded from the sampling frame if it appeared unlikely that a mid-size copier would be a feasible purchase decision for the firms either at the time of the experiment or any time in the future. For example, restaurants, service stations, or other small retail establishments were excluded from the sample because these businesses generally make too few copies to require a mid-size machine. This process drew on my sales experience in selecting prospects for various types of copiers.

The sampling element was the one individual from the selected organizations that has the greatest responsibility for a copier purchase decision. This individual was identified by telephoning each business.

Respondents agreed to participate in the study before any materials were mailed.

The telephone calls qualifying respondents and requesting participation were placed by myself and several individuals hired to help. All callers were given a script and written explanation of the procedures to follow when approaching the businesses, finding the appropriate decision maker, explaining the importance of the study, soliciting participation, and administering the pre-screening expertise measures. This information was reviewed with each caller during a 1 1/2 hour training session stressing the importance of standardizing procedures. Mastery of the procedures was tested during telephone role plays before callers actually began phoning. Callers only telephoned businesses on lists which were given to them.

Approximately 4,000 individual businesses were telephoned and asked to participate. On average, 1 out of 10 decision makers who could actually be reached by phone agreed to take part in the study. Those that declined generally cited lack of time, or no access to a personal computer as the main reasons for their inability to help with the research.

A total of 394 participants were secured, and a disk and related materials were mailed to each of them over the course of a three-month recruiting period. In most cases, a follow-up phone call was made to each decision maker approximately two to three weeks after the disk's mailing date if that particular disk had not yet been returned. Usually only one or two attempts

were made to re-contact the decision maker. Not everyone could be reached. Some of those that were successfully contacted said that they would be unable to do the study as originally planned. The most often cited reason for non-response was lack of time in their busy schedule. The final count of disks returned with data was 248 out of the original 394. This translated into a 63% return rate.

Stimuli

Product Profile Matrix

Respondents made choices among 12 products. A product profile matrix, Table 1, shows how products in the competitive are ordered with respect to four attributes: productivity, reliability, service, and price. My copier selling experience revealed these four attributes to be generally important to buyers in a photocopier purchase decision, the selected experimental choice context. The importance and common use of these attributes as copier choice criteria was verified during both pre-testing and the actual study. These results are discussed in a later section of this dissertation. The information contained in the Product Profile Matrix was not represented to respondents in full matrix form at any time. Instead, attribute information regarding any particular copier was made available to respondents only during sales calls or after special requests for a specific piece of information.

TABLE 1

PRODUCT PROFILE MATRIX

< COPIER BRANDS >

Attribute	H	Y	V	L	W	T	K	G	J	R	N	P
Productivity	11	3	10	2	2	6	11	7	7	8	5	12
Reliability	8	6	11	12	6	12	5	11	4	4	7	1
Service	10	5	4	2	1	3	1	5	12	9	4	11
Subtotal	29	14	25	16	9	21	17	23	23	21	16	24
Price	5	8	4	2	11	6	7	6	4	1	7	10
Overall Score	34	22	29	18	20	27	24	29	27	22	23	34

In the Product Profile Matrix, values ranging from 1 to 12 indicate a copier's relative strength on each of the four attributes. Higher attribute values mean that the brand has more of the favorable aspects of the attribute (i.e., more productivity, faster service, and better reliability, and lower price). As explained later, only the non-price attributes were incorporated in the agenda.

As much as possible, products were designed to create a realistic choice set with variance in the strength of products' relative competitive positions and the sources of competitive advantage. This variance was necessary because the hypothesized agenda effects would be unlikely to occur if alternatives were very similar. A heuristic measure of competitive strength can be created by summing the ranks of the copiers in Table 1. This total score is analogous to how buyers using a compensatory choice rule might arrive at overall evaluations. Although buyers may differ in how they weight each attribute, equal weights were used to examine the expected choice set.

Table 1 presents a sub-total and grand total for each of the twelve copiers. The sub-total is the sum of productivity, service, and reliability attribute values. The grand total includes price values as well. Price was included in the grand total to examine overall relative competitive strength but was not used as an agenda constraint.

Grand total scores roughly indicate relative competitive strength. The twelve copiers represent a mix of strong, average, and weak competitors. As

is true in the marketplace, the products in the matrix also differ with respect to within-product attribute strengths and weaknesses as well. For example, a highly competitive product may have two or more relatively strong attributes along with one weak attribute. Similarly, even a relatively weak competitor may be superior with respect to one of the choice attributes.

Grand total scores range from a low of 18 to a high of 34 points. The strongest products overall from this competitive set are expected to be alternatives H or P, each with 34 points. When price is not considered, H is a leader with a subtotal of 29. Two copier brands, G and K, are the focus of the sales presentation manipulation. The rationale for the selection of G and K is discussed under relative competitive strength in the independent variable section of this chapter. Neither G nor K are top choices under compensatory evaluation, but are strong on some attribute, and so may benefit from agenda strategies.

Product Comparisons Charts

Respondents also received information about copiers in a second form, a Product Comparisons Chart (Table 2). This chart, along with another sheet providing explanations for the terms used on the chart (Table 3), were given to respondents in paper form early in the study. The objective for providing the chart was to give respondents some information about the entire competive set. The chart could be used as a basis for evaluating products that were not a part of the sales presentation manipulation and as a basis for selecting

TABLE 2

PRODUCT COMPARISONS CHART

Copier	Multiple Copy Speed (copies per minute)	First Copy Speed (seconds)	Two-Sided Copying (minutes/ seconds)	Variable Enlargement Percentages %	Automatic Feeder Capacity (sheets)	# Sorter Bins/Non-Sort Capacity (# / sheets)	Manufacturer's Claimed Volume Per Month (copies)
H	42	5.5	6 / 55	49 - 202	100	20/250	60,000
Y	40	7.5	8 / 13	50 - 200	50	20/100	50,000
V	42	5.5	6 / 55	49 - 202	100	20/200	55,000
L	40	7.5	8 / 45	50 - 200	50	20/100	60,000
W	40	8.0	8 / 45	50 - 200	50	20/100	50,000
T	45	7.0	7 / 38	49 - 202	100	20/200	50,000
K	42	5.5	6 / 55	50 - 200	50	20/100	50,000
G	45	6.5	7 / 25	49 - 202	100	20/200	55,000
J	45	6.5	7 / 45	49 - 202	100	20/100	50,000
R	40	6.0	7 / 25	50 - 200	100	20/200	50,000
N	40	7.0	8 / 3	50 - 200	50	20/100	50,000
P	45	5.5	6 / 8	49 - 202	100	20/250	45,000

TABLE 3

COPIER TERMS

Below is a list of copier terms and their definitions. You will see the same terms used as column headings on the Product Comparisons Chart (next page). This chart shows you what copiers you will later choose from and how those products compare on a number of common features. Please use this page of definitions whenever you are uncertain about what a particular term means.

Multiple Copy Speed —	number of copies made per minute by placing a single original on the glass (copy speed when automatic feeder is not used)
First Copy Speed —	number of seconds to make a single copy when using the automatic feeder
Variable Enlargement — Percentages	range in 1% increments by which a document can be reduced or enlarged in size
Two-Sided Copying —	time it takes to make 10 sets of 10 two-sided originals
Automatic Feeder Capacity —	maximum number of document pages that the automatic feeder will hold
# Sorter Bins —	maximum number of sorted sets of copies that can be made at one time
Non-Sorter Capacity —	maximum number of single page copies that can be made without emptying the top sorter bin
Manufacturer's Claimed — Volume Per Month	manufacturer's claim of maximum number of copies that copier can produce per month without undue wear on the product

products for which to later request a sales call. These charts provide commonly presented copier information such as various copying speeds, sorter capacity, and reduction and enlargement capabilities. These product features correspond with the attribute values in the product profile matrix in that those with higher productivity ratings in the matrix also show quicker copying speeds in the comparison chart. In addition, copiers with higher overall relative competitive strength on the product profile matrix, in general, show more favorable information on the product comparisons chart. However, some agenda attribute information, such as service, was only available during sales calls and cannot be assessed at all from the product comparisons chart alone. An explanation of how respondents used these product feature charts is provided in the procedures section of this chapter.

Independent Variables

The following section explains manipulations or measurements of the independent variables.

Sales Presentation Types

The study investigated two types of sales presentations, agenda and compensatory. The agenda presentation was the experimental treatment of interest. The compensatory presentation in which only the target product is mentioned and all good attributes are stressed, served as a control. Studies in both consumer choice and organizational buying have shown that a

compenstory choice rule is very frequently used by buyers in reaching a decision, and that it is compatible with the strategy followed by many salespeople in order to persuade a customer of the product's merit (Coppett & Staples, 1980; Gregory, 1986; Lamberson, et al., 1976; Wind & Robinson, 1968). Appendices A and B contain the scripts for agenda and compensatory presentations respectively for targets Copier G and Copier K. The presentations are designed to be similar to those that might be delivered by industrial salespeople. The focus of both presentations is on how the product performs regarding four attributes commonly used as decision criteria in the purchase of mid-volume copiers. These four criteria are productivity, reliability, service turnaround time, and price. The criteria were chosen because prior industry experience has shown them to be important criteria used by buyers in a copier purchase.

Both the agenda and compensatory presentations in Appendices A & B contain the same basic information about each particular target product (i.e., The compensatory and agenda presentations for Copier G contain the same information about that product). The format and availability of product information is discussed more fully in the procedures section of this chapter. However, two major differences exist between the two presentation types. First, competitive information regarding the four decision criteria mentioned above is explicitly included in the agenda and not in the compensatory approach. The second difference is that each type of presentation encourages

the buyer to use a different choice rule—compensatory evaluations versus sequential elimination for agendas.

Compensatory Presentation

The compensatory presentation is a sales presentation in which the salesperson encourages the buyer to use a compensatory choice rule in order to make a purchase decision. Under a compensatory choice rule positive and negative information regarding multiple attributes are traded off, with positive data in some cases compensating for negative data. Processing is by brand. The decision maker arrives at a summary evaluation for each brand and then chooses the best brand based on the overall evaluation scores (Bettman, 1979).

Fostering a compensatory choice rule, the compensatory presentation encourages the buyer to form a summary evaluation of the target product (G or K). The rationale for the presentation is compatible with the goals of the average salesperson. The strengths of the product are discussed and the weaknesses are avoided or minimized. The emphasis is on the overall benefit of the product to the buyer.

It is important to note that while the compensatory presentation does not include competitive information, the experimental procedures do allow the buyer to evaluate other brands in a similar manner. As explained later, they could choose to solicit information on other brands, just as actual copier buyers are free to do.

Agenda Presentation

The agenda presentation is a sales presentation in which the salesperson facilitates the buyer's use of an agenda choice rule when making a purchase decision. An agenda choice rule also assumes multiple attributes. However, no balancing of positive or negative information exists. Instead, the decision maker establishes a cut-off or constraint on one of the attributes and those alternatives that do not meet the constraint are eliminated from further consideration. The choice proceeds with the application of a constraint on a second attribute to alternatives that had survived the first elimination. This agenda elimination may continue until only one alternative remains. Processing is by attribute rather than by brand (Hauser, 1986).

In the agenda sales presentation, the salesperson focuses on one attribute as the starting point for the presentation. Values are given for all alternatives regarding that initial attribute (competitive brands as well as the target brand). The salesperson then suggests an appropriate cut-off value, and the brands are divided into two groups—one group that meets the constraint and one group that does not.

The buyer's options at this point in the presentation are:

1) Accept the agenda; use the suggested cut-off and eliminate from further consideration those brands that do not meet the constraint. If the buyer chooses this option, no additional attribute information is subsequently presented for the eliminated brands.

2) Partially accept the agenda and establish their own cut-off value—indicate that although not willing to eliminate all brands that do not meet the constraint, the buyer desires to eliminate some of the brands from the group not meeting the cut-off. No additional information is presented subsequently for any brands eliminated.

3) Reject the agenda; decide not to eliminate any brands at this point in the decision process.

After the buyer exercises his options relating to the first attribute in the agenda, the presentation proceeds to the second stage in a similar manner for a second attribute. Information is presented on the second attribute for all brands that are still being considered (all brands that the buyer has not chosen to eliminate in any previous stage). As before, the buyer chooses to accept, partially accept, or reject the second stage of the agenda, and the presentation proceeds to the third agenda attribute in the same manner. The third stage of the agenda applies only to one of the target products, Copier G. The agenda for Copier K is comprised of two stages only, and excludes competitive comparisons regarding the product's serious weakness in the area of service turnaround. In line with a customary sales approach, the compensatory presentation for Copier K uses the same strategy in that no information on the weakness is volunteered. However, for both sales presentation types, respondents were given a chance to request information on the weak attribute after the presentation was concluded.

The specific agenda for the target brand, that is, the order of attribute presentation and the suggested cutoff points, was based on prior judgments about which agenda would be most palatable to buyers and best eliminate strong competitors. For example, some research suggests that buyers may care about the number of alternatives that they eliminate at one time and at what stage in the decision process large numbers of eliminations are suggested (Kahn, et al., 1987). Beginning the agenda with the attribute that is the target brand's strength may result in asking the buyer to initially eliminate all but a very few alternatives. A buyer may not be willing to narrow the alternatives so drastically early in the information search even if the argument seems sound. Another danger is that the buyer may perceive an attempt to eliminate quickly all but a few alternatives as manipulative on the part of the salesperson. It seemed more likely that a buyer would accept an agenda that suggests a more gradual reduction in the number of alternatives.

The most effective sequencing of agenda constraints as well as the specific suggested cut-off points themselves will vary from product to product and are dependent on a given product's attribute values. Because the agenda attribute values for Copier G allowed construction of a three-level agenda, a strategy of gradually reducing the number of competitors in the consideration set could be followed. That same strategy was not followed for Copier K. A serious weakness for one Copier K attribute made possible only a two-level agenda. Due to the reduced number of levels in the agenda for Copier K, a

quicker reduction in the number of alternatives being considered was used. Table 4 summarizes the stages for each agenda and shows which alternatives would be eliminated if the agendas were accepted.

The fourth attribute, price, was treated differently. Following the natural sales sequence, price was presented last for both types of sales presentations, following a brief summary of that brand's benefits. There was no display of prices for competitive brands. This approach was the most realistic representation of how price is incorporated into sales presentations.

This operationalization of an agenda sales presentation lacked much of the flexibility and interaction that are generally a part of sales calls. The chosen agendas were unlikely to be optimal for all respondents. These constraints make the test of agenda effectiveness more conservative in that it will tend to underestimate its effectiveness in the field. However, some degree of structure was required to test the theory that is the focus of this study.

As was the case in the compensatory presentation, the experimental procedures allowed buyers in the agenda manipulation to request sales calls on competitive products. A sales call for a particular copier presented attribute and price information for products that the buyer may have earlier eliminated from consideration during the agenda presentation. These competitive sales calls are described in the procedures section of this chapter.

TABLE 4

PROPOSED AGENDAS

Product	Stage	Attribute	Cutoff Level	Alternatives Eliminated	
G	1	Productivity	> 33% loss	N	39%
				Y	49%
				L	55%
				W	60%
	2	Service	> 12 Hrs.	T	14 Hrs.
				K	18 Hrs.
	3	Reliability	< 8 rating	P	3 rating
				J	5 rating
				R	5 rating
				H	7 rating
K	1	Productivity	> 10% loss	V	13%
				R	23%
				G	29%
				J	29%
				T	33%
				N	39%
				Y	49%
				L	55%
				W	60%
	2	Reliability	< 6 rating	P	3 rating

Relative Competitive Strength

Relative Competitive Strength was manipulated using two of the twelve brand profiles shown in the Product Profile Matrix (Table 1). Two brands, Copier G and Copier K were manipulated to show that agenda presentations are effective for products occupying different competitive positions. It was important to include two brands with different relative competitive strengths to test the generality of the agenda effects and to learn if products in various competitive positions benefit from agenda strategies in different ways.

Copier G and Copier K have total relative competitive strength scores of 29 and 24 respectively. The target products were selected to reflect high average and average competitive positions within the competitive set shown in the Product Profile Matrix. Alternative G ranked fourth out of the twelve copiers when comparisons are based on the three agenda attributes and ranked third when price is included in the ranking process. The individual attribute levels for alternative G are 7, 5, 11, and 6 for productivity, service, reliability and price respectively. Because alternative G does not possess any particularly weak attributes, an agenda incorporating constraints on all three non-price attributes was used. The text for the Copier G agenda manipulation is contained in Appendix A.

According to the Product Profile Matrix, Copier K, the other target product, ranked eighth out of the twelve based on the three agenda attributes and ranked seventh when price was considered as well. The individual

attribute levels for this product are II, 1, 5, and 7 for productivity, service, reliability, and price, respectively. The extremely low value of 1 for the service attribute prevented the use of service in an agenda because no competitors are lower on this attribute. As discussed earlier in this chapter, salespeople are unlikely to focus on this attribute in any type of sales presentation because doing so would emphasize the product's poor competitive positioning regarding service. Thus, there were stages in the Copier K agenda. The text for the Copier K agenda manipulation is contained in Appendix A.

Discrete/Relational Exchange

Two levels of exchange, discrete and relational, were created for this study. The manipulations are compatible with the conceptualization of the discrete/relational exchange continuum in Chapter 2. The two levels describe types of exchange closer to the endpoints of this continuum than to the middle.

The relational exchange manipulation includes higher degrees of development of the relational norms of role integrity, solidarity, and harmonization. Role integrity describes the degree to which the habits, customs, principles, and rules of the parties are integrated (Macneil, 1980). Solidarity refers to the degree to which the maintenance of the relationship is held important by the parties (Kaufmann & Stern, 1988). Harmonization of relational conflict refers to how conflict is successfully managed so as to preserve the relationship. Harmony between the parties may be accomplished

by employing established procedures for doing things or by relying on good faith and trust (Macneil, 1980). In the relational exchange manipulation, the buyer's working relationship with the seller is described as involving "more than just buying and selling products." The seller under relational exchange is said to be "very useful in solving general business problems." Even if the buyer does not buy from the seller at this time, the buyer knows that "there will be no hard feelings." Both parties are described as being "committed to developing and maintaining a good working relationship—one that will last a long time."

The discrete exchange manipulation includes descriptions depicting lesser degrees of development of the same relational norms. In the discrete exchange manipulation, sales calls are described as focusing on "information that directly pertains to the purchase." The buyer is said to believe that "it is not important to develop or maintain an on-going relationship" with the seller. Once the terms of the purchase agreement have been fulfilled, the buyer's "relationship with him ends until the next purchase, when you (the buyer) may or may not give him a call." Appendix C contains the complete text of the two manipulations.

Expertise

In this study, expertise was defined as the ability to formulate and use choice criteria in the evaluation of available alternatives. Expertise was measured by use of an original five-item scale developed fully during the pre-

testing stage of this experiment in accordance with the procedures described in Churchill (1979). In order to ensure a fairly even distribution of respondents over the various cells of the design, pre-screening on expertise was done during the initial telephone contact with each respondent.

Potential problems existed concerning how and when to measure expertise as defined in this study. The most direct method would have been to ask buyers what their purchase criteria were and how they would evaluate alternatives. These measures, however, were likely to sensitize the buyers to the treatments to follow. To lessen the likelihood of sensitization to treatments, the expertise scale was composed of more indirect measures than asking buyers outright what their criteria and method of alternative evaluation were.

Concerning the placement of the measure, gathering expertise data before administering the treatments might cause respondents who did not have well formulated choice criteria to begin to solidify their thinking. This could in turn make buyer's less accepting of the sales presentation treatments. Measures taken after the treatments might be contaminated by differential learning that could occur during the sales calls. It was decided that the better time to take the measures was before the administration of the treatments. It was thought that using indirect rather than direct measures would somewhat lessen the problem of prior sensitization.

Expertise was measured with a five-item scale. Respondents used 7-point Likert scales to indicate their degree of agreement or disagreement with items concerning how well they understood copier features, if they would consider themselves an expert when purchasing a copier, or whether they would be a good source of information for friends purchasing a copier. Actual scale items are presented in Appendix D. The same items were asked during both pre-screening and the actual study. Further details regarding the administration of the expertise measures are provided later in the Procedures Section of this chapter.

Procedures

Data Collection Method

Computer-interactive marketing research software, Ci3 (Sawtooth Software, 1991) was used to collect data for this study. Sales presentation and buyer/seller relationship manipulations as well as expertise and selling effectiveness measures were incorporated in the format of a simulated copier purchase and programmed on a computer diskette using Ci3. This software provides the flexibility needed to measure agenda effectiveness in this study. Ci3 also offers a degree of branching capability that would be nearly impossible to achieve with paper and pencil methods of data collection.

Prospective respondents were first approached by telephone. Each respondent who initially agreed to take part in the study was pre-screened on expertise over the telephone. Later, each participant was mailed an envelope

containing the experimental materials. The envelope held a cover letter briefly explaining the purpose of the study, an instruction sheet, a computer diskette containing the questionnaire, the product comparison charts, and a postage-paid mailer for returning the completed disk.

Cover Story

An introductory letter stated that the study's objective was to learn how buyers make a copier purchase decision and how they interact with salespeople. This explanation provided a truthful rationale for the manipulations and the format of the data collection that was believable to respondents. A copy of the letter is included in Appendix E.

Simulation Sequence

Table 5 shows the sequencing of the experimental treatments, various measures, and directions to respondents. To help the buyer distinguish between the words of the researcher and those of the simulated salespeople, different colors of background and foreground print were used for the simulated sales calls versus all other parts of the computer questionnaire. The order shown in the table assumes the target product's sales call is first. As discussed later, competitor H's sales call was first for half of the respondents.

TABLE 5

SIMULATION SEQUENCE

Introduction

Administration of Expertise Measures

Presentation of Product Comparisons Charts

Initial Consideration Set Measure

Importance Measures for Agenda Attributes

Mandatory Sales Calls for Target Product (G or K) and market leader (H)
- (sequence of calls reversed for half of the respondents)
- Relationship description (discrete or relational for Target G or K, discrete for Product H)
- Manipulation Check (if target product)
- Salesperson Entrance and Presentation
- Opportunity to request extra information for seller's product
- Opportunity to request demonstration
- Seller expertise measures
- Seller manipulativeness measures

Discretionary Competitive Sales Calls
- Opportunity to request competitive sales calls
- Sequence for each call
- Shortened discrete relationship description
- Compensatory sales call for particular product
- Opportunity to request extra product information
- Opportunity to request demonstration

Demonstration Results

Opportunity to Request Extra Information on Any Product

TABLE 5
(continued)

Dependent Measures
- Final consideration set
- Choice
- Second choice
- Evaluation of target product
- Perceptions of confidence regarding choice
- Perceptions of choice difficulty
- Perceptions of satisfaction with final choice

Miscellaneous Measures
- Repeat of agenda criteria importance measures
- Sample demographics

Thank You to Respondents

Introduction

The simulation began with a welcome, a brief restatement of the purpose of the study, and an explanation of the sales call format. Buyers were instructed to think of the simulated salespeople as real salespeople speaking to them and asked to make all responses as realistic as possible. The rationale stated that because buyers are generally called upon by several salespeople before reaching a final decision, the program would provide the buyers with opportunities to get information from a number of suppliers.

Administration of Expertise Measures

The expertise measures were explainable as information important in determining a profile of prospective customers. The Ci3 software automatically randomized the order for items for each respondent. The same five expertise items were administered twice (over the telephone during pre-screening and in the actual study). The second set of data was used in the final analysis because it was collected at the time of the purchase simulation and was expected to be a better measure of the buyer's perception of his or her expertise at that point in time.

Presentation of Product Comparisons Charts

At this point in the program, buyers were requested to open the sealed envelope included in the materials and to remove and examine the Product Comparisons Charts. Participants were encouraged to take any notes that might be helpful to them in remembering information or making a choice. Although the charts did not provide the prices of individual products, the price range was stated to be between $10,000 and $13,000. Respondents were told that the products were not identical to specific brands but that the feature combinations were comparable to those of products on the market at that time.

Initial Consideration Set Measure

Buyers were asked to use the information on the Product Comparisons Charts and to indicate which of the copiers they would investigate further if they had to make a purchase decision that day.

Importance Measures

Buyers rated the importance of the four agenda criteria (productivity, reliability, service, and price) with regard to use in purchasing a copier.

Mandatory Sales Calls for Target Product (G or K)

and Market Leader (H)

All respondents received sales calls from both the target product (G or K) and one market leader (H). The text of the presentation for Copier H is included in Appendix F.

The sequence of sales calls (G/K vs. H) was counterbalanced, which achieved several objectives. First, the procedure was designed to eliminate possible order effects for the sales presentation manipulation. Second, including Copier H, an obvious market leader, ensured that respondents would have encountered at least one alternative with greater relative competitive strength than that of the target product before making a final choice. Third, presenting Copier H (including questions identical to the relationship manipulation checks, the seller expertise measures, and the seller manipulativeness measures for G or K) better disguised the manipulations.

Relationship Descriptions. The relationship manipulation for the target product seller (either level—discrete or relational) was presented as a description of the respondent's (buyer's) previous interactions with the salesperson about to call. The relationship manipulation for H was always discrete exchange, and the sequence of questions which followed the product presentation was identical to that for G or K. Respondents were asked to try to form an impression of what that salesperson was like. To help respondents better associate a particular type of relationship with a specific copier and

salesperson, each seller was given first and last names beginning with the letter of the copier that they sold (e.g., Gary Griffin representing Copier G or Hank Hanson representing Copier H). Several questions about the relationship followed immediately and served to help respondents internalize the relationship description as well as to function as manipulation checks. These items are shown directly following the manipulation text in Appendix C. The relationship with all salespeople other than those for the target products was always described as a discrete exchange. Respondents could review the relationship description before answering the questions if they wished.

Salesperson Entrance and Presentation. Subsequent to the relationship description, the salesperson introduced himself and gave the sales presentation (agenda or compensatory) for product G or K and a compensatory presentation for market leader H. After the seller presented his product, respondents had the opportunity to request extra information about the seller's product and/or to request a product demonstration. Seller expertise and seller manipulativeness measures followed next. This sequence matched that in Table 5.

Discretionary Competitive Sales Calls

Following the above manipulations, buyers had the option of obtaining additional competitive information by requesting sales calls from competitive salespeople representing other copiers found on the Product Comparisons Charts. These competitive calls included a brief relationship description which

was a shortened version of the discrete manipulation and a compensatory presentation of the benefits of the competitive product, along with its price. In order to provide buyers with sufficient information to make an informed choice, the respondents were able to receive competitive calls for as many of the copiers that they desired. Sample competitive sales calls for each product are included in Appendix F.

Demonstration Results

If the buyer had asked for a demonstration of any of the copiers, the program next advised that all products had performed very satisfactorily and had met all expectations. The message was the same regardless of which demonstrations had been requested.

Extra Product Information

Following all requested sales calls, there was an additional opportunity for buyers to request extra information on any copier from the Product Comparisons Charts regardless of whether or not there had already been a sales call on that particular copier.

Dependent Measures

The dependent measures were taken next. The sequence corresponded to that shown in Table 5. A detailed discussion of these measures is presented later in this chapter.

Miscellaneous Measures

The importance measures of the agenda criteria were repeated, followed by a number of items measuring sample demographics and general reaction to the questionnaire.

Thank You

The end of the questionnaire thanked respondents for their participation in the study and told them that the program would end automatically.

Dependent Variables

This section explains the measurement of the dependent variables. The construction of the dependent variable measures followed the procedures described in Churchill (1979). Because measure reliability increases with the number of items, multiple items were developed for all but the choice and consideration set measure. Given the complexity of the decision task, multiple choices were not feasible in this study.

Recall that the focus of this research was the effect of alternative sales strategies on selling effectiveness. There were eight dependent variables: 1) inclusion of the seller's product in the buyer's consideration set, 2) selection of the seller's product as the buyer's final choice, 3) buyer's evaluation of the target product, 4) buyer's perception of choice difficulty, 5) buyer's confidence regarding the decision, 6) buyer's satisfaction with the final choice,

7) buyer's perception of seller expertise, and 8) buyer's perception of seller manipulativeness.

A sales strategy was considered effective if it resulted in the inclusion of the seller's product in the buyer's consideration set, or if the seller's product was the buyer's final selection. Positive buyer evaluations of the product and inclusion in the buyer's consideration set are intermediate measures of effectiveness. Certainly if the seller's product is chosen, the product is likely to have been perceived favorably and have been in the consideration set. However, even if the product is not selected but is perceived more favorably or is a part of the consideration set, choice probabilities for that product have improved. The buyer's serious consideration of the seller's product may enhance chances of sales in the future.

In this research, a sales strategy was also considered effective if it left the buyer with positive perceptions of the interaction. A buyer's willingness to work with a salesperson in the future should be greater if the sales interaction has been positive. Therefore, the buyer's perceptions of choice difficulty, and the buyer's level of confidence and satisfaction with their choice were also included as measures of selling effectiveness.

Finally, a sales strategy was termed effective if its use results in the buyer's having positive perceptions of the seller. Strategies should not be employed if they leave the buyer reluctant to interact with that salesperson again. For this reason, indicators of the buyer's perceptions of the

salesperson's expertise and degree of manipulativeness were also included as measures of selling effectiveness.

The following section discusses the measurement of each dependent variable. Actual measures are presented in Appendix D.

Consideration Set

In this study, consideration set was defined as the total set of brands that a buyer would consider purchasing (Alba & Chattopadhyay, 1985). Two single-item measures of consideration set were taken at different points in the simulation. The initial consideration set measure was taken before any of the sales presentations. Respondents were asked to use the information on the Product Comparisons Chart and to indicate which copiers they wanted to investigate further. This initial measure creates a reference point, if needed, to assess the original probability of consideration set inclusion prior to the execution of a given choice strategy.

A second measure of consideration set was taken after all sales calls were completed and buyers had received all information they had requested. Buyers were asked to indicate which copiers they were still considering buying. This measure was used to test hypotheses related to sales strategy and inclusion in the consideration set. Actual consideration set measurement items are included in Appendix D.

Choice

Final choice is the product which a buyer ultimately selects in a purchase decision. Final choice was measured by a single item indicating which copier a respondent would buy. This measure corresponds to choice measures used in the choice literature (Klein & Yadav 1989; Nedungadi, 1990). Because final choice is a very ambitious criterion for sales effectiveness, second choice was also assessed by requesting respondents to indicate what their choice would have been if their first choice had been unavailable. If necessry, this looser criterion can be used to test for less extreme effects of the independent variables on choice. Both choice items are presented in Appendix D.

Buyer's Evaluation of the Target Product

A sales strategy is also effective if it results in a buyer favorably evaluating the seller's product. The likelihood of a product being chosen, either now or at some future date, increases with buyers' growing appreciation for the product. Preferences for the target product were measured using a single item which asked buyers to rate how good they thought the target product was (Appendix D).

Buyer's Perceptions Relating to Choice Process and Final Choice

This section discusses measurement of three of the dependent variables, perception of choice difficulty, confidence regarding the choice, and satisfaction with the final choice. They are discussed together because they

all relate to perceptions of either the choice process or the final choice itself. These variables were assessed using self-report measures similar to those used in the choice literature (Klein & Yadav, 1989; Widing, et al., 1986). Scales were developed in accordance with Churchill (1979).

Perception of Choice Difficulty

In this dissertation, choice difficulty referred to the amount of cognitive effort required to reach a decision. Decisions perceived as requiring more mental effort were defined as more difficult. A 3-item scale measured perceptions of choice difficulty. Buyers used a 7-point Likert scale to rate how hard, complicated, and confusing it was to make a decision. Scale items are shown in Appendix D.

Confidence Regarding the Choice Process. In this study, confidence in the choice process referred to the degree of buyer certainty that the choice process that was followed has resulted in a good decision. Buyers, using a 3-item scale, rated how confident and certain they were that they had made a good choice. Scale items are presented in Appendix D.

Satisfaction with the Final Choice. Satisfaction with the final choice referred to the how pleased the buyer was with the copier selected relative to the other copier alternatives. Using a 3-item scale, buyers rated how satisfied and pleased they were with the copier they chose.

Confirmatory Factor Analysis. A confirmatory factor analysis for the scales measuring these three dependent variables and buyer expertise was performed using LISREL. Buyer expertise (discussed later in Chapter 4) was included in this analysis because buyer expertise (EXPERT) and perceptions of choice difficulty (DIFF), confidence (CONFID), and satisfaction (SAT) all relate to the buyer. Table 6 presents the results of the LISREL analysis.

The model and data were shown to differ significantly ($X^2_{71} = 142.69$, $p < .001$). However, other measures indicated a good fit between model and data. The Standardized RMR was less than .05, and all fit indices except for the AGFI (.89) were above the .90 criterion (Bentler & Bonett, 1980; Jaccard & Wan, 1995). The significance of all factor loadings for each of the individual constructs indicated convergent validity for each construct (Bagozzi & Yi, 1991). Divergent validity among the pairs of constructs was shown in that the correlations among pairs of constructs were all significantly less than 1.0. The construct reliability for each construct was greater than the .60 criterion (Bagozzi & Yi, 1988). The average variance extracted was above .50 for each of the constructs (Bagozzi & Yi, 1991). Overall, the results indicate that each of the scales used to measure buyer expertise, choice difficulty, confidence and satisfaction were viable scales. No individual items needed to be eliminated from the original set of items for any of these four scales. The

TABLE 6

CONFIRMATORY FACTOR ANALYSIS
BUYER RELATED SCALES

Item	λX	$\theta\delta$	R^2	Reliability	Average Variance Extracted
EXPERT1	1.08	0.55	0.68	0.926	0.716
EXPERT2	1.09	0.47	0.72		
EXPERT3	1.24	0.41	0.79		
EXPERT4	1.28	0.49	0.77		
EXPERT5	0.98	0.66	0.59		
CONFID1	0.83	0.20	0.77	0.922	0.798
CONFID2	0.88	0.22	0.78		
CONFID3	0.91	0.16	0.84		
DIFF1	1.19	0.88	0.62	0.859	0.671
DIFF2	1.36	0.48	0.79		
DIFF3	1.19	0.94	0.60		
SAT1	0.71	0.23	0.69	0.903	0.757
SAT2	0.71	0.12	0.81		
SAT3	0.78	0.17	0.78		

Chi-square = 142.69 df = 71	0.00
RMSEA	0.06
Test of Close Fit	0.07
RMR	0.04
GFI	0.93
AGFI	0.89
Normed FI	0.95
Non-normed FI	0.97
CFI	0.97

	EXPERT	CONFID	DIFF	SAT
ϕ				
EXPERT	1.00			
CONFID	0.21	1.00		
	(.07)			
DIFF	-0.07	-0.46	1.00	
	(.07)	(.06)		
SAT	0.22	0.91	-0.39	1.00
	(.07)	(.02)	(.06)	

next sections discuss the scales for choice difficulty, confidence, and satisfaction individually.

Buyer's Perceptions of the Salesperson

This section pertains to two of the dependent variables, buyer perception of seller expertise and buyer perception of seller manipulativeness. They were grouped together because they both deal with the buyer's perceptions of the salesperson. Seller expertise and seller manipulativeness measures were taken directly after the sales call because waiting until the other dependent measures were taken near the end of the study would have made it more difficult for respondents to remember their reactions to individual salespeople. These measures were taken for Copier H as well as the target product to avoid the extra emphasis on the target product that might have occurred if measures had been taken for that product alternative alone.

Buyer Perception of Seller Expertise. The buyer's perception of the salesperson's expertise (SELLEX) refers to the degree to which a buyer believes that a salesperson possesses the product knowledge and industry experience necessary to make informed recommendations and otherwise assist the buyer in the sale. The seller expertise items used here were adapted from measures of sellers' service domain expertise used in Crosby et al. (1990). Buyers were asked to compare the seller's product knowledge, sales experience, and selling skills to that of the average salesperson. Actual items are presented in Appendix D.

Buyer Perception of Seller Manipulativeness. In this study, the buyer's perception of seller manipulativeness (MANIP) relates to the degree to which the buyer sees the sales presentation as an attempt on the part of the seller to manage or control the interaction in a deceptive manner. Appendix D contains the actual scale items. Item 1 was adapted from an item in a Trust in Salesperson Index in Crosby et al. (1990). Items 2 and 3 are original items. Buyers were asked whether the salesperson was bending the facts, honestly represented product features, and was up front with important information.

Confirmatory Factor Analysis. A confirmatory factor analysis for the scales measuring seller expertise, seller manipulativeness, and the manipulation checks for relationship was performed using LISREL. The relationship manipulation checks (CHECK) were included in the LISREL model because they also pertain to perceptions of the seller. Table 7 shows the results of the LISREL analysis.

The model and the data were not significantly different indicating a good fit ($X^2_{41} = 49.3$, $p = .18$), and the fit indices were above the .90 criterion (Bentler & Bonnett, 1980; Jaccard & Wan, 1995). The significance of all factor loadings for each of the individual constructs indicated convergent validity for each construct (Bagozzi & Yi, 1991). Divergent validity among the pairs of constructs was shown in that the correlations among pairs of constructs were all significantly less than 1.0. Construct reliability was greater than the .60 criterion in all cases (Bagozzi & Yi, 1988). The average

TABLE 7

CONFIRMATORY FACTORY ANALYSIS –
SALESPERSON RELATED SCALES

Item	λX	$\theta\delta$	R^2	Reliability	Average Variance Extracted
CHECK1	0.96	1.81	0.34	0.830	0.554
CHECK2	1.32	1.08	0.62		
CHECK3	1.02	0.61	0.63		
CHECK4	1.18	0.61	0.69		
SELLEX1	0.81	0.48	0.58	0.878	0.643
SELLEX2	0.94	0.38	0.70		
SELLEX3	0.94	0.27	0.76		
SELLEX4	0.79	0.56	0.52		
MANIP1	0.59	1.53	0.18	0.693	0.437
MANIP2	0.90	0.42	0.66		
MANIP3	0.84	0.45	0.61		

Chi-square = 49.3 df=41	0.18
RMSEA	0.032
Test of Close Fit	0.81
RMR	0.034
GFI	0.96
AGFI	0.93
Normed FI	0.95
Non-normed FI	0.99
CFI	0.99

	CHECK	SELLEX	MANIP
ϕ			
CHECK	1.00		
SELLEX	0.45	1.00	
	(.07)		
MANIP	-0.37	-0.86	1.00
	(.08)	(.04)	

variance extracted was above .50 for seller expertise (.64) and the relationship manipulation checks (.55) and marginally below the cutoff for seller manipulativeness (.44) (Bagozzi & Yi, 1991). In summary, the results indicate that each of the scales used to measure seller expertise, seller manipulativeness, and the relationship manipulation checks were viable scales. No individual items needed to be eliminated from the original set of items for any of these three scales. The next sections discuss the scales for seller expertise and seller manipulativeness individually. The relationship manipulation checks are discussed further in Chapter 4.

CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Overview

This chapter discusses the methods of analysis and reports the findings of this research. The first section describes the sample. The second section provides manipulation check results. The third section presents the rationale regarding the form of analysis used for the two types of dependent variables. The fourth section of this chapter includes the final models for each dependent variable, a presentation of the significant effects for each model, and a statement of which effects do or do not support specific hypotheses. The fifth and final section gives a summary of the support for the hypotheses of this research.

Sample Distribution Across Treatments

Because there were no existing similar studies to use as a guide, the cell size, effect size, and power calculations were based on Cohen (1977) and the recommendations of the statistical consulting service at Virginia Tech. A cell size of 21, given an estimated effect size ('f') of .3, and an alpha level of .05 was initially sought to deliver power of .8 for tests of the stated hypotheses.

An effect size of .3 represents a medium effect size for chi-square tests and lies between a medium (.25) and large (.40) effect size for F tests on means in the analysis of variance. High power was particularly important in the testing of hypothesis 3b dealing with buyer perceptions of seller manipulativeness, because failure to reject the null was hypothesized and high power provides greater confidence in the results if indeed there is a failure to reject the null.

The initial power calculations were based on the plan to use a 16-cell design including the factors of strategy, expertise, product, and relationship. The factor sequence (the order of G/K vs. H sales calls) was later added to the design. Figure 5 presents the actual number of respondents for each of the 32 cells in the final design. As shown in Figure 5, cell size ranged from 4 to 11.

Demographics

Table 8 presents demographic information regarding the sample. Data are presented describing the respondents and the businesses where they were employed. There were two main sampling goals for this study. First, to increase external validity, there was an attempt to recruit respondents who actually exercise decision making responsibilities at work. Second, respondents with a wide range of expertise in copier purchasing were necessary to properly test the hypotheses involving expertise.

		Agenda				Compensatory			
		Expert		Novice		Expert		Novice	
		Target 1st	Target 2nd	Target 1st	Target 2nd	Target 1st	Target 2nd	Target 1st	Target 2nd
Discrete Exchange	Product G	9	10	4	9	7	6	12	11
	Product K	10	9	5	6	5	10	8	7
Relational Exchange	Product G	9	9	6	7	6	7	10	5
	Product K	4	9	11	5	10	10	6	6

FIGURE 5

RESPONDENTS PER CELL

TABLE 8

SAMPLE DEMOGRAPHICS

Self-reported Titles of Respondents (grouped by categories)

Title	# of Respondents	Percent of Sample
owner, officer	83	33%
manager (various types)	98	40%
buyer, purchasing agent	24	10%
other (sec., admin. asst.)	43	17%

Number of Years with Purchasing Responsibility

# of Years	# of Respondents	Percent of Sample
1 to 5	92	38%
6 to 10	65	27%
11 to 15	36	15%
16 to 20	28	11%
More than 20	23	9%

Level of Responsibility for Most Recent Copier Purchase

Responsibility	# of Respondents	Percent of Sample
One of final decision makers	131	53%
Made final recommendation	51	21%
Gave an opinion	35	14%
Had no role in last copier purchase	30	12%

Number of Copier Purchases Respondent Was Previously Involved In

# of Purchases	# of Respondents	Percent of Sample
0	31	13%
1	58	24%
2 to 5	115	46%
More than 5	43	17%

Sales Revenue of Businesses in Sample (Data available on 202/248 businesses)

Sales Revenue	# of Businesses	Percent of Sample (202)
Less than 2.5 M	131	65%
2.5 M to 20 M	51	25%
More than 20 M	20	10%

Number of Employees (Data available on 203/248 businesses)

# of Employees	# of Businesses	Percent of Sample (203)
1 to 19	132	65%
20 to 99	44	22%
100 +	27	13%

As Table 8 shows, the first sampling goal was achieved. Respondents' job titles were concentrated in roles that signify decision-making responsibility (owner, officer—33%, manager—40%, buyer or purchasing assistant—10%). Also, 74% of the sample said that they were either one of the final decision makers or had made the final recommendation regarding the last copier purchase at their business.

Sampling was less successful regarding the second goal of finding a wide range of expertise in copier purchasing. While years of experience in purchasing ranged from 0 to 44 years, only 5% (13 buyers) had less than 2 years of experience. Also, and perhaps more importantly, 87% of the sample said they had previous involvement in one or more copier purchases. Whether a respondent who has been involved in at least one copier purchase can be classified as a novice—i.e., does not possess the ability to formulate and use choice criteria regarding the purchase of a particular product—is questionable.

Expertise Criterion

Buyer expertise was measured using an original 5-item scale (EXPERT). Scale assessment using LISREL was discussed along with other buyer related scales in Chapter 3 (See Table 6). LISREL results showed the scale to exceed reliability and average variance extracted criteria and to possess evidence of convergent and divergent validity. None of the five items were eliminated from the final scale.

Buyer expertise was operationalized as a two-level variable; experts and novices. Respondents were pre-screened on the telephone using the same 5 items as those in the final version of the expertise scale. Dependent on the pre-screening scores, buyers were initially assigned to either the novice or expert portion of the research design. Buyers were randomly assigned in sets of sixteen to the sixteen treatments of the appropriate level of expertise (expert or novice). The criterion for initially assigning respondents to either novice or expert conditions had been based on pre-testing of the scale for a sample of 70 university secretaries.

Final assignment of respondents to the novice or expert category was based on responses to the expertise measures on the computer questionnaire. Actual hypothesis testing for this research used expertise scores gathered as part of the computerized questionnaire. Appendix D gives the actual items. The items were the same as those used during pre-screening and assignment to conditions. The five responses to the items were averaged and the mean was 4.431; those that fell below it were classified as novices. The median was 4.6, and the mode was 5.0. The final criterion for distinguishing between experts and novices was the mean.

Table 9 shows a breakdown of some sample demographics by level of expertise. Overall, the expertise scale categorized respondents as expected. Buyers that the scale categorized as experts tended to have more years of purchasing responsibility ($X^2 = 11.54$, df = 4, p = .02). Buyers categorized as

TABLE 9

SAMPLE DEMOGRAPHICS BY EXPERTISE LEVEL

Number of Years with Purchasing Responsibility

# of Years	% Novices	% Experts
1 to 5	60%	40%
6 to 10	34%	66%
11 to 15	42%	58%
16 to 20	46%	54%
More than 20	39%	61%

Pearson's Chi-Square = 11.54, df = 4, p = .02

Level of Responsibility for Most Recent Copier Purchase

Responsibility	% Novices	% Experts
One of final decision makers	40%	60%
Made final recommendation	37%	63%
Gave an opinion	60%	40%
Had no role in last copier purchase	83%	17%

Pearson's Chi-Square = 22.99, df = 3, p < .001

Number of Copier Purchases Respondent Was Previously Involved In

# of Purchases	% Novices	% Experts
None	87%	13%
One	57%	43%
Two to Five	39%	61%
More than Five	28%	72%

Pearson's Chi-Square = 31.40, df = 3, p < .001

experts were shown to have had higher levels of responsibility concerning the last copier purchase (X^2 = 22.99, df = 3, $p < .001$) and had been involved in a larger number of copier purchases (X^2 = 31.40, df = 3, $p < .001$).

Manipulation Checks

Relationship Manipulation

The strength of the relationship manipulation was tested in two ways. First, an F test was performed on the means of the scale totals for both the relational and discrete manipulation items. The means were significantly different ($F_{1,246} = 250.50$, $p = < .001$, $eta^2 = .50$) and were in the expected direction (relational = 5.42, and discrete = 3.67).

A second check on the manipulation was taken near the end of the purchase exercise. Following the dependent measure items, respondents were asked the following, "With which salesperson, did you feel the strongest relationship?" Respondents in the relational exchange condition should have been able to correctly identify that target salesperson as the one with whom they had the strongest relationship. As expected, 71.7% of those in the relational exchange condition correctly indicated the strongest relationship with the target salesperson. Only 39.8% of respondents in the discrete condition named the target salesperson as the one for which they felt the strongest relationship. This significant difference supports the manipulation (Pearson X^2_7 = 25.37, $p < .001$).

Relative Competitive Strength Manipulation

The aim of the manipulation was to create a set of alternatives in which neither of the target products G or K were to be considered market leaders. Also, G was to be the stronger of the two target products. The relative competitive strength manipulation went through a series of pre-tests and revisions prior to actual data collection. A final pretest of the manipulation was conducted on a sample of thirty-nine university secretaries. Mean ranks were used as a heuristic for assessing the relative competitive strength of the 12 products. The results presented in Table 10 show that Product H, the expected market leader, had the highest ranking (2.9). Rankings for Products G and K were also in the intended direction, 5.5 and 6.5 respectively.

The product main effects for the dependent variables of choice, consideration set, and product evaluation provided further evidence of the effectiveness of the relative competitive strength manipulation. The probability of being chosen was .46 for Product G and .21 for Product K ($X^2_1 = 17.84$, $p < .001$). The probability of G and K being part of the consideration set was .62 and .48, respectively ($X^2_1 = 2.80$ $p = .02$). Finally, the mean product evaluation rating for G was 5.4 compared to the lower average rating of 5.0 for product K ($F_1 = 8.82$, $p = < .01$).

TABLE 10

PRE-TEST FOR RELATIVE COMPETITIVE STRENGTH

Product	Mean Rank
H	2.9
V	4.4
P	4.5
G	5.5
T	5.5
K	6.5
J	6.7
R	7.5
L	7.5
N	7.6
Y	8.2
W	11.4

Analysis Overview

The data from this study were analyzed following the procedures for analysis of a generalized randomized block design. The two levels of expertise (expert and novice) were the blocking variable. The generalized randomized block design provides an additional advantage over the randomized block design. While still allowing the experimenter to reduce the error term by isolating variation due to a nuisance variable (expertise), the generalized randomized block design has the added advantage of allowing for the testing of a group (expertise) x treatment (strategy) interaction (Kirk, 1982). The three treatments in the field experiment were strategy, relationship, and relative competitive strength. Order effects relating to strategy were also tested by including sequence as a fifth factor. The analysis followed the 32 cell design (expertise x strategy x relationship x product x sequence).

The remainder of this chapter will present the findings relating to the dependent variables. A brief discussion follows presenting the rationale for choosing CATMOD and GLM as methods of analysis. Next, a model is presented for each dependent variable in turn, followed by a report of significant effects and related hypothesis testing results. The final section of this chapter provides a summary of the support for the study's hypotheses.

CATMOD

The dependent measures in this study involved both categorical and interval scaling. Because of this difference in scaling, two separate types of analysis were required. The dependent variables of inclusion in the consideration set and final choice represented categorical data. Responses were dichotomous with the target product either being included in the consideration set or not and the target product either being selected as the final choice or not. Hypotheses for which these variables were the dependent variables (H1a, H1b, H4a, H4b, H7a, H7b, H10, and H11) were tested using the SAS procedure CATMOD.

CATMOD is appropriate for the analysis of data that can be represented by contingency tables. In many cases, CATMOD methods of analysis are generalizations of methods used to analyze continuous data. CATMOD fits linear models to functions of response frequencies. In this instance, CATMOD was used to perform a maximum-likelihood analysis. This study had both categorical dependent and independent variables. Because of these categorical independent variables, CATMOD was more appropriate than regular logistic regression which is better for analysis of continuous independent variables (SAS Institute, Inc., Vol. 1, 1989).

The same procedures were followed in using CATMOD to arrive at the final models for both dichotomous dependent variables, choice and inclusion in consideration set. The first step was to find the level of complexity in the

data. Starting with a saturated model, higher order interactions were then sequentially removed while noting the impact on the fit statistic (removed 5-way, then all 4-way, etc). The likelihood ratio must remain above .20 to indicate that the model is not significantly different from the data. Eliminating the 5-way interaction had virtually no impact on the fit statistic. However, although 4-way interactions were not hypothesized, the likelihood ratio dropped below .20 when all 4-ways were simultaneously eliminated from the model. This established the complexity level as including 4-way interactions.

The second step in the process was to systematically eliminate terms with the highest p-values. This allowed for a smoothing of the estimates and a more efficient and sensitive means of detecting existing differences in the data. Thus, the best model may differ for different dependent variables. Main effects terms were retained as part of the model regardless of p-values.

GLM — General Linear Model

The dependent measures for the testing of the remainder of the hypotheses (H2a, H2b, H2c, H3a, H3b, H5a, H5b, H5c, H6, H8a, H8b, H8c, H9) involve interval scaled data (7-point Likert scales). These hypotheses were tested using an F test of the difference in the means. The general linear model (GLM) approach was used because it facilitates the analysis of experimental data involving unequal cell size. In graphing results for GLM models, the means presented are least squares means (LSMEANS) rather than arithmetic means. Least squares means are more appropriate because they

represent estimates of what the cell means would be for a balanced design (SAS Institute, Inc., Vol. 2, 1989).

Identical procedures were used to examine each of these dependent models. First, the p-value for the overall F test was assessed. If the p-value was $\leq .10$, then Type III Sums of Squares were used to examine the significance level of specific effects. Type III Sums of Squares, or partial sums of squares, tests hypotheses in such a way that effects are independent of the order in which terms are entered into the model (SAS Institute, Inc., Vol. 2, 1989).

The remainder of this chapter presents the results for each dependent variable in turn. First, the derived model for the variable is presented followed by the reporting of significant effects for that particular dependent variable. Effects are presented starting with main effects and then building to the 2, 3, and 4-way significant interactions. It is hoped that this building approach will better enable the reader to understand how nested effects change as additional variables are added and facilitate the later interpretation of the higher order interactions. Figure 6 presents a summary of the significant effects reported for each of the interpretable models.

Effects on Choice

Table 11 shows the maximum-likelihood analysis-of-variance results for the dependent variable, choice. This final model is the result of the CATMOD SAS procedure described earlier. The likelihood ratio for the choice model is

Effect	Choice	Consideration Set	Product Evaluation	Seller Expertise	Manipulative	Confidence
Strategy		X		X	X	
Relationship		X		X	X	
Expertise						X
Product	X	X	X	X	X	
Sequence		X		X		
St x R	X		X			
St x Sq				X		
R x Ex			X			
St x Ex						X
R x Sq						X
P x Ex x Sq	X					
R x P x Ex		X				
St x R x Ex		X	X		X	
Sq x P x Ex				X		X
St x R x Sq			X			
St x R x EX x Sq		X				
St x P X R x EX	X		X	X	X	
St x P x Sq x Ex						X

FIGURE 6

SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT EFFECTS

TABLE 11

CATMOD MODEL — CHOICE

MAXIMUM-LIKELIHOOD ANALYSIS-OF-VARIANCE TABLE

SOURCE	DF	CHI-SQUARE	PROB
INTERCEPT	1	29.90	0.0000
STRATEGY	1	2.52	0.1122
RELATE	1	1.87	0.1720
SEQU	1	2.58	0.1084
PROD	1	17.84	0.0000
EXPCAT	1	0.91	0.3407
STRATEGY*RELATE	1	4.15	0.0416
SEQU*PROD*EXPCAT	1	2.80	0.0941
STRAT*RELATE*PROD*EXPCAT	1	6.80	0.0091
LIKELIHOOD RATIO	23	17.10	0.8041

.80. This measure of the overall fit between the model and the data is well above .20, the acceptable criterion for model interpretation.

Product

Results indicate that choice probabilities depend upon the strength of the product being sold ($X^2_1 = 17.84$, $p < .001$). The choice probability of the stronger Product G (.46) is more than twice the choice probability of the weaker Product K (.21), and is consistent with the manipulation of the products' relative competitive strengths discussed in Chapter 3.

Strategy

The effect of strategy on choice probabilities is not significant ($X^2_1 = 2.52$, $p = .11$), and H1b is not supported. Choice probabilities were greater when an agenda was used than when a compensatory strategy was used (.37 and .29, respectively), and hence, are in the predicted direction.

Strategy*Relationship

The effect of strategy type on choice depends on the nature of the buyer-seller relationship ($X^2_1 = 4.15$, $p = .04$). Strategy had no significant effect on choice for relational exchange ($Z = .49$, $p > .10$). For discrete exchange, choice probabilities under the agenda strategy condition were significantly greater than choice probabilities under the compensatory strategy condition ($Z = 3.49$, $p = < .001$). These results support H7b.

Strategy * Relationship * Product * Expertise

Figure 7 depicts the 4-way interaction involving strategy, relationship, product, and expertise and provides further information regarding the effects of strategy and exchange type on the probability of choice ($X^2_1 = 6.80$, $p = .009$). Choice probabilities associated with agenda presentations were equal to, or greater than, those for compensatory presentations for both experts and novices in discrete exchange (Figure 7a-b).

The effectiveness of strategy type on choice probabilities is more contingent under relational exchange (Figure 7c and d). When presented with the stronger product G, strategy did not significantly affect choice probabilities of novices ($Z = .92$, $p > .10$). For experts, choice probabilities were significantly less when agenda strategies were used than when compensatory strategies were used ($Z = 1.66$, $p = .10$)

When presented with a weaker product K, choice probabilities were significantly less when agenda strategies were used for novices only ($Z = 3.33$, $p < .001$). For experts, choice probabilities were significantly greater when agenda strategies were used ($Z = 3.85$, $p < .001$).

H4b predicted that effectiveness of agenda strategies relative to compensatory strategies would be greater for novices than for experts. The 2-way interaction between strategy and expertise is not significant, and this hypothesis is not supported. Results of the 4-way interaction suggest that

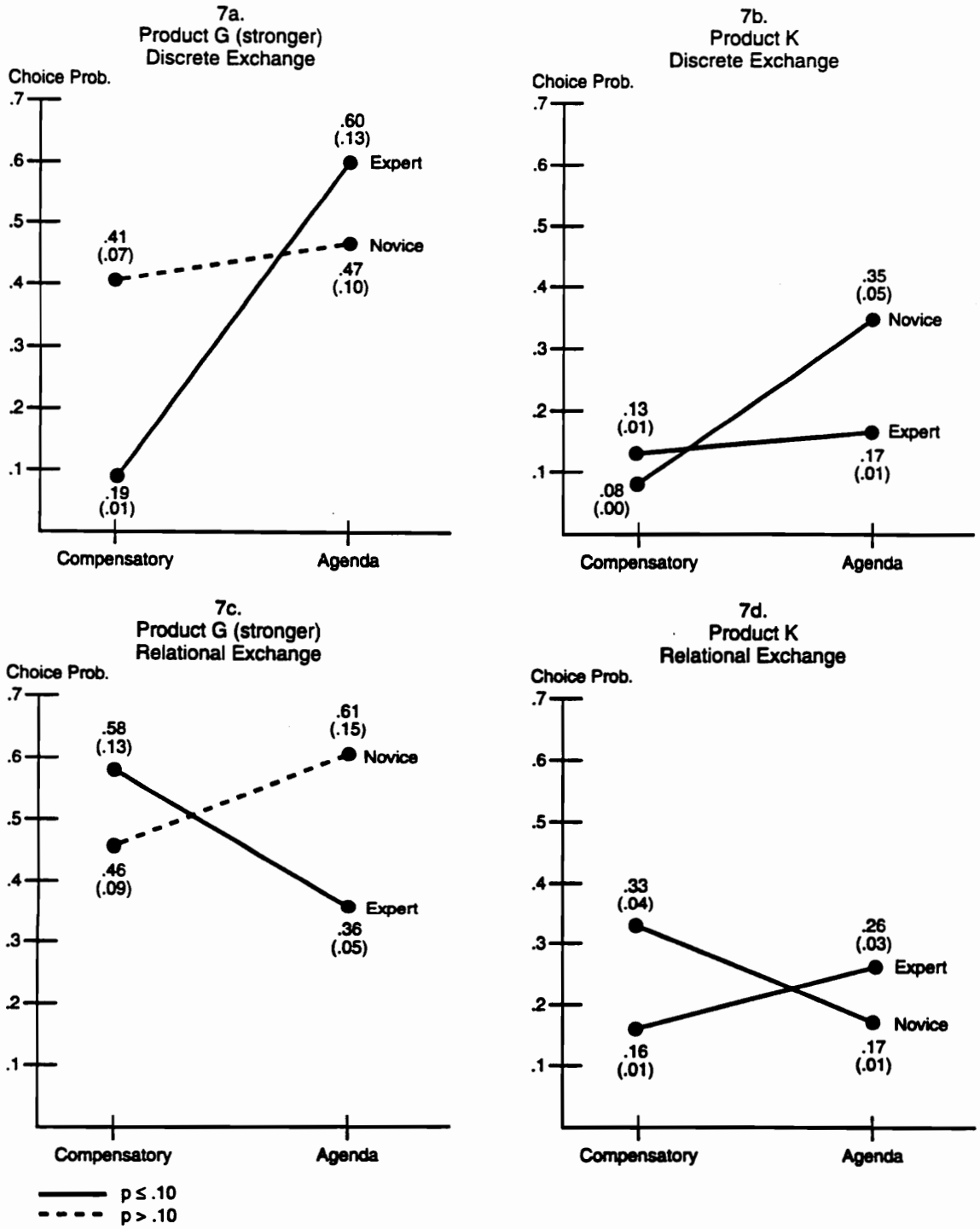


FIGURE 7

CHOICE PROBABILITIES AS A FUNCTION OF STRATEGY, RELATIONSHIP, PRODUCT AND EXPERTISE

agendas have more advantage (over compensatory presentation) for novices only for the weaker product K in a discrete exchange (Figure 7b). For experts, agendas increase choice probabilities in three of the four product/relationship conditions (Figure 7a, 7b, 7d).

H10 hypothesized a 2-way interaction between strategy and product. The increase in choice probabilities for agenda over compensatory presentations was expected to be greater for Product G than for Product K. Actual results did not support H10. Agendas significantly increased choice probabilities for Product G only in the case of experts in a discrete exchange.

On the other hand, agendas improved choice probabilities for Product K in three of the four expertise/exchange conditions, with the greatest improvement for K occurring for novices in a discrete exchange. The only condition in which agendas did not increase K's choice probabilities was that of novices in a relational exchange. In summary, H10 was not supported, but results do show some differential effects for different products. However, the effects are not in the predicted direction.

Sequence * Product * Expertise

Recall that half of the subjects were presented with the target product (G or K) first followed by a presentation of a market leader. The sequence of presentation was reversed for the other half. Results show that sequence of presentation interacted with product and buyer expertise to affect choice probability ($X^2_1 = 2.80$, $p = .09$). In two cases, choice tended to increase

when the target product was presented second (Figure 8a and b). When the target product was the stronger product G, the increase in choice occurred for novices ($Z = 1.89$, $p = .06$). When the target product was the weaker product K, the increase in choice occurred for experts ($Z = 6.98$, $p = < .001$).

Effects on Consideration Set

Table 12 presents the maximum-likelihood analysis-of-variance results for the dependent variable, consideration set. The CATMOD SAS procedure was used to develop the final model. The likelihood ratio of .9114 shows a good fit between the model and data (.20 minimum criterion).

Product

Membership in the final consideration set depended on the product ($X^2_1 = 2.80$, $p = .02$). Consideration set probabilities for the stronger Product G (.62) were significantly greater than for the weaker Product K (.48). This difference supports the product manipulation.

Strategy

The significant effect of strategy on consideration set ($X^2_{1,248} = 4.32$ $p = .04$) supports H1a. As predicted, membership in the consideration set is greater under agenda (.61) than compensatory strategies (.49).

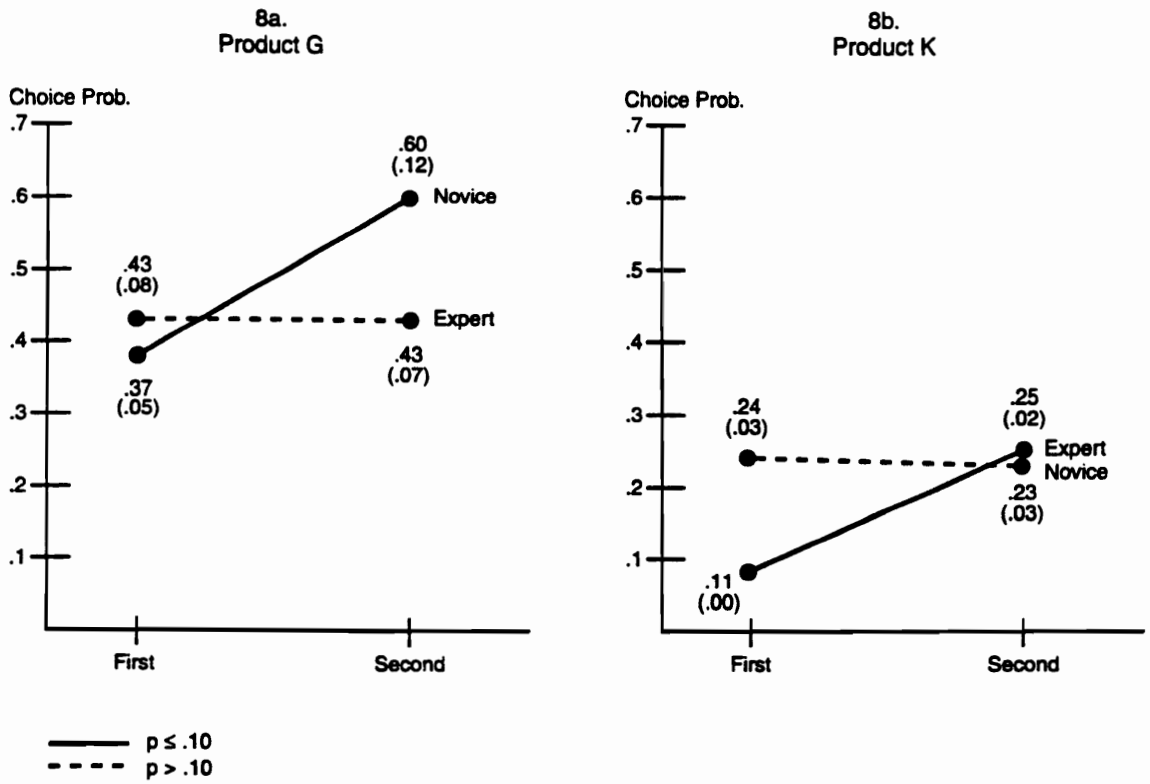


FIGURE 8

CHOICE PROBABILITIES AS A FUNCTION OF SEQUENCE, PRODUCT, AND EXPERTISE

TABLE 12

CATMOD MODEL — CONSIDERATION SET

MAXIMUM-LIKELIHOOD ANALYSIS-OF-VARIANCE TABLE

SOURCE	DF	CHI-SQUARE	PROB
INTERCEPT	1	2.93	0.0867
STRATEGY	1	4.32	0.0377
RELATE	1	4.79	0.0287
SEQU	1	3.23	0.0723
PROD	1	5.07	0.0244
EXPCAT	1	2.19	0.1390
STRATEGY*RELATE	1	2.53	0.1115
STRATEGY*RELATE*EXPCAT	1	4.00	0.0456
RELATE*PROD*EXPCAT	1	3.31	0.0687
SEQU*PROD*EXPCAT	1	2.04	0.1531
STRAT*RELATE*SEQU*EXPCAT	1	3.69	0.0548
LIKELIHOOD RATIO	21	12.92	0.9114

H11 predicted a 2-way strategy by product interaction effect on consideration probabilities. It was thought that agendas would increase the frequency of consideration more for the weaker Product K than for the stronger Product G. Results did not support H11. The hypothesized 2-way interaction was not significant, and no significant higher order interaction included a strategy by product interaction.

Relationship

The likelihood of membership in the consideration set was contingent upon the nature of the exchange ($X^2_{1,} = 4.79$ $p = .03$). The probability of being part of the consideration set was higher under relational exchange (.62) than discrete exchange (.48).

Sequence

Membership in the consideration set depended upon the presentation order of the target product ($X^2_1 = 3.23$ $p = .07$). Probabilities of a product being considered seriously were higher if the target was presented second (.60) than if it were shown first (.50).

Relationship*Product*Expertise

Figure 9 illustrates the 3-way interaction between relationship, product, and expertise ($X^2_1 = 3.31$, $p = .07$). Consideration of the stronger product G

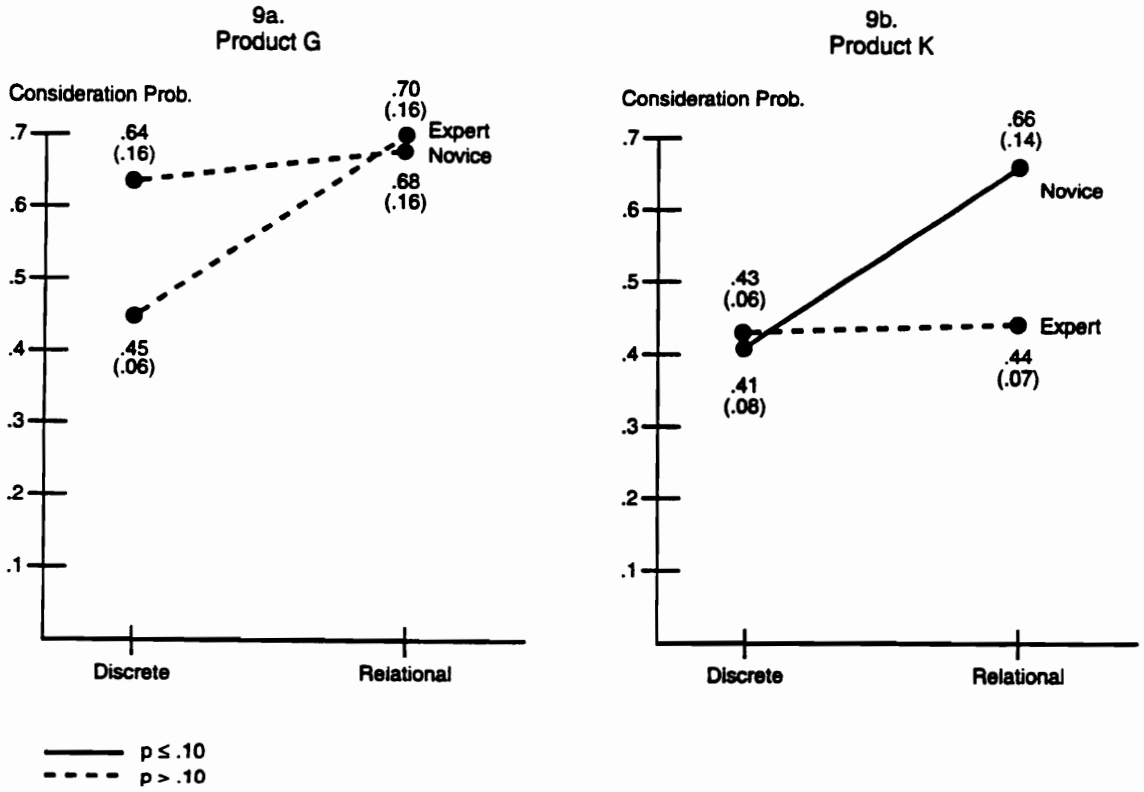


FIGURE 9

CONSIDERATION SET AS A FUNCTION OF RELATIONSHIP, PRODUCT, AND EXPERTISE

did not depend on the nature of the exchange for either experts ($Z = 1.52$, $p = > .10$) or novices ($Z = .23$, $p > .10$). For the weaker product K, consideration again did not depend on the nature of the exchange for experts. For novices', however, consideration probabilities of the product were significantly higher under relational exchange than under discrete exchange ($Z = 1.76$, $p = .08$).

Strategy*Relationship*Expertise

Figure 10 characterizes the 3-way interaction between strategy, relationship, and expertise ($X^2_1 = 4.0$, $p = .05$). For experts (Figure 10b), probabilities of membership in the consideration set did not significantly differ between strategies for either relational ($Z = .81$, $p = > .10$)) or discrete exchange ($Z = 1.13$, $p = > .10$). This was true for novices in a relational exchange as well ($Z = .35$, $p = > .10$). However, for novices in a discrete exchange (Figure 10a) using agenda strategies significantly improved consideration probabilities over using compensatory strategies ($Z = 1.63$, $p = .10$).

H4a predicted that agendas would improve consideration probabilities to a greater degree for novices than for experts. H4a was partially supported by the above 3-way interaction. Agendas significantly increased consideration set probabilities for novices in a discrete exchange condition only.

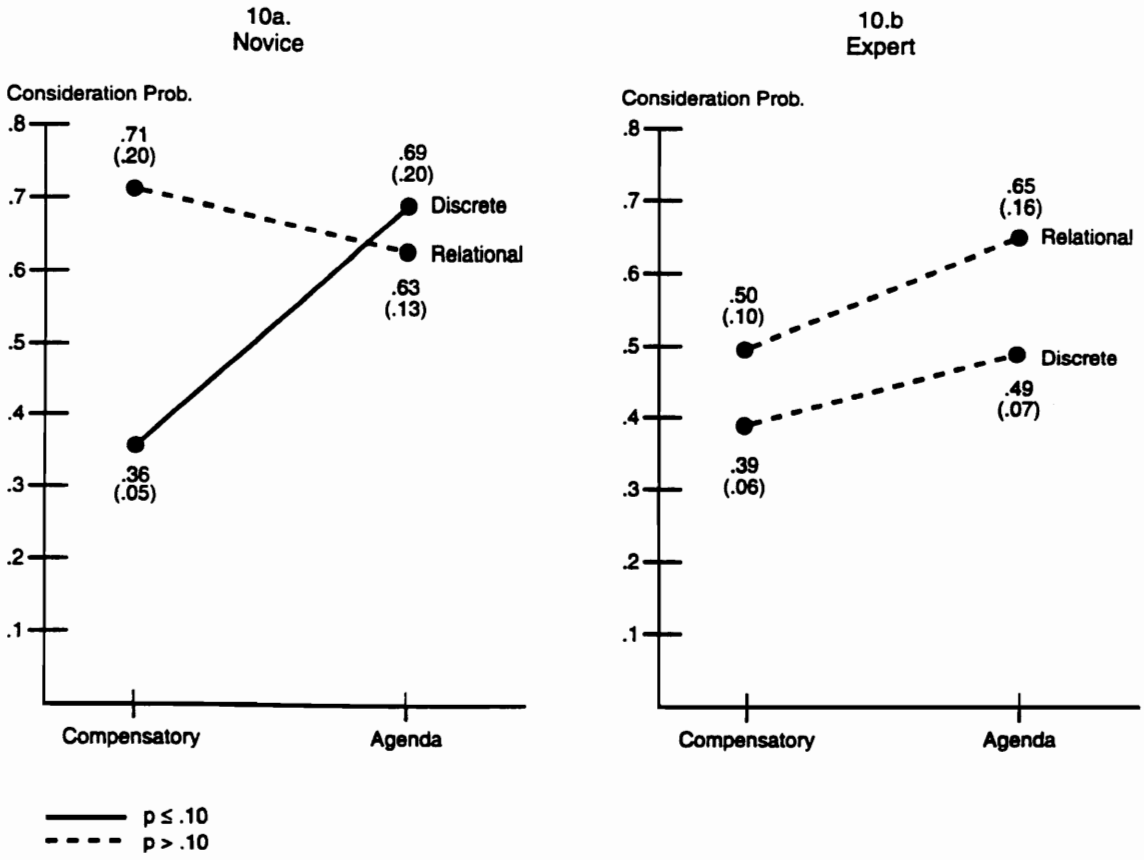


FIGURE 10

CONSIDERATION SET AS A FUNCTION OF STRATEGY RELATIONSHIP, AND EXPERTISE

H7a postulated that agendas would increase a product's likelihood of belonging to the consideration set to a greater extent under discrete exchange than under relational exchange. The Strategy*Relationship* Expertise interaction partially supports H7a. Agendas significantly improved consideration probabilities under a discrete exchange for novices but not for experts.

Strategy*Relationship*Expertise*Sequence

Results indicated a 4-way interaction involving strategy, relationship, expertise, and the order of presentation of the target product ($X^2_1 = 3.69$, $p = .05$). For novice buyers in both relational and discrete exchange conditions, there was no significant difference in consideration set probabilities for either strategy regardless of the order of target presentation. For experts in a discrete exchange, consideration set probabilities were significantly higher for agenda than for compensatory strategies when the target was shown first rather than second ($Z = 2.45$, $p = .01$). Order of presentation did not impact strategy effectiveness for experts in a relational exchange.

Effects on Product Evaluation

Table 13 gives the GLM results for the model involving product evaluation. The overall F ($F_{31,216} = 1.70$, $p = < .02$) signals an interpretable model. R-square is .195 indicating that approximately 20% of the variance is explained by the model. No formal hypotheses were made regarding product

TABLE 13

GENERAL LINEAR MODEL — PRODUCT EVALUATION

DEPENDENT VARIABLE: PRODUCT EVALUATION

SOURCE	DF	SUM OF SQUARES	MEAN SQUARE	F VALUE	PR > F
MODEL	31	52.64733976	1.69830128	1.70	0.0162
ERROR	216	216.18733766	1.00086730		
CORRECTED TOTAL	247	268.83467742			

R^2	C.V.	ROOT MSE	MEAN
0.195835	19.30798	1.0004336	5.1814516

SOURCE	DF	TYPE III SS	MEAN SQUARE	F VALUE	PR > F
STRAT	1	2.31402730	2.31402730	2.31	0.1298
RELATE	1	0.27759877	0.27759877	0.28	0.5990
PRODUCT	1	8.82763001	8.82763001	8.82	0.0033
SEQUENCE	1	1.75135400	1.75135400	1.75	0.1873
EXPCAT	1	0.73558013	0.73558013	0.73	0.3922
STRAT*EXPCAT	1	0.58495895	0.58495895	0.58	0.4454
STRAT*RELATE	1	4.82501963	4.82501963	4.82	0.0292
STRAT*SEQUENCE	1	0.46105588	0.46105588	0.46	0.4980
SEQUENCE*EXPCAT	1	0.39619589	0.39619589	0.40	0.5299
RELATE*SEQUENCE	1	0.64334575	0.64334575	0.64	0.4236
STRAT*PRODUCT	1	0.04260116	0.04260116	0.04	0.8367
RELATE*PRODUCT	1	0.07962530	0.07962530	0.08	0.7782
PRODUCT*SEQUENCE	1	0.15464900	0.15464900	0.15	0.6946
PRODUCT*EXPCAT	1	0.05799171	0.05799171	0.06	0.8100
RELATE*EXPCAT	1	3.28101435	3.28101435	3.28	0.0716
STRAT*RELATE*PRODUCT	1	0.30317177	0.30317177	0.30	0.5826
STRAT*PRODUCT*EXPCAT	1	1.61803565	1.61803565	1.62	0.2049
STRAT*PRODUC*SEQUENCE	1	0.23532657	0.23532657	0.24	0.6282
RELATE*PRODUC*EXPCAT	1	0.84411556	0.84411556	0.84	0.3595
RELATE*PRODUC*SEQUEN	1	0.92783475	0.92783475	0.93	0.3367
PRODUC*SEQUEN*EXPCAT	1	2.03662760	2.03662760	2.03	0.1552
STRA*RELA*PROD*EXPCA	1	4.98147756	4.98147756	4.98	0.0267
STRA*RELA*PROD*SEQUE	1	0.04750756	0.04750756	0.05	0.8277
RELA*PROD*SEQU*EXPCA	1	0.00077582	0.00077582	0.00	0.9778
STRA*PROD*SEQU*EXPCA	1	0.05544028	0.05544028	0.06	0.8142
STRAT*RELATE*EXPCAT	1	6.45774564	6.45774564	6.45	0.0118
STRAT*RELATE*SEQUENC	1	4.36481357	4.36481357	4.36	0.0379
STRAT*SEQUENC*EXPCAT	1	0.59684365	0.59684365	0.60	0.4408
RELATE*SEQUEN*EXPCAT	1	0.42961018	0.42961018	0.43	0.5131
STRA*RELA*SEQU*EXPCA	1	0.97365265	0.97365265	0.97	0.3251
STR*REL*PRO*SEQ*EXPC	1	0.17064265	0.17064265	0.17	0.6801

evaluation as a dependent variable. However, results from this model should be similar to those for choice and consideration set.

Product

Product evaluation was contingent on the product ($F_1 = 8.82$, $p = < .01$). The evaluation of the stronger Product G was significantly higher (5.4) than for Product K (5.0). Again, this supports the product manipulation.

Relationship*Expertise

Product evaluation for experts and novices varied with the nature of the buyer/seller relationship ($F_{1,216} = 3.28$, $p = .07$). Under discrete exchange, experts rated products significantly higher than novices ($Z = 1.91$, $p = .06$). There was no difference in product evaluations between novices and experts under relational exchange ($Z = .66$, $p > .10$).

Strategy*Relationship

The effect of strategy on product evaluation depended on the type of buyer/seller exchange ($F_{1,216} = 4.82$, $p = .03$). Strategy had no significant effect on product evaluation under a relational exchange ($Z = .47$, $p = > .10$). Agendas yielded higher product evaluations than compensatory presentations under discrete exchange ($Z = 2.66$, $p = < .01$). This same effectiveness advantage for agendas under discrete exchange held true for choice as well.

Strategy*Relationship*Expertise

Results denoted a significant 3-way interaction between strategy, relationship, and expertise ($F_{1,216} = 6.45$, $p = .01$). This finding further clarified the above 2-way strategy by relationship interaction. When looking at the impact of expertise as well, product evaluation ratings were significantly higher for the agenda than for the compensatory condition for only those discrete exchanges where the buyer was a novice ($Z = 3.44$, $p < .001$). This difference in strategy effectiveness did not exist for novices in a relational exchange ($Z = 1.20$, $p = > .10$). For experts, product evaluation ratings did not differ significantly between agenda or compensatory strategies for either relational ($Z = .56$, $p = > .10$) or discrete exchanges ($Z = .22$, $p = > .10$). This pattern of results is similar to that found for consideration set.

Strategy*Relationship*Sequence

A 3-way interaction between strategy, relationship, and sequence provides information as to the contribution of presentation order when examining the influence of strategy and relationship on product evaluation ($F_{1,216} = 4.36$, $p = .04$). When the target was presented first, strategy did not affect product evaluations under either relational ($Z = .36$, $p = > .10$) or discrete exchange ($Z = .46$, $p = > .10$). When presented second, product evaluations were higher for agenda over compensatory conditions under discrete exchange ($Z = 3.47$, $p = < .001$). There was no advantage for agendas when the target was presented second in a relational exchange ($Z = 1.02$, $p > .10$).

Strategy*Relationship*Product*Expertise

Figure 11 depicts the 4-way interaction between strategy, relationship, product, and expertise ($F_{1,216} = 4.98$, $p = .03$). For discrete exchange, novices' product evaluations were higher for agendas than for compensatory strategies for both Product G ($Z = 1.93$, $p = .06$) and K ($Z = 2.92$, $p = < .01$) (Figures 11a-b). For experts under discrete exchange, neither strategy yielded higher product evaluations for either Product G ($Z = .23$, $p = > .10$) or Product K ($Z = .08$, $p = > .10$).

Findings regarding relational exchange were more complex. Neither strategy produced higher evaluations for experts ($Z = .75$, $p = > .10$) or novices ($Z = .47$, $p = > .10$) when G was the target. Results were different for product K. For the weaker product K, novices' evaluations under the agenda condition were significantly lower than for the compensatory condition ($Z = 2.12$, $p = .03$). For experts in a relational exchange, neither strategy provided an advantage when K was the product ($Z = 1.51$, $p = > .10$).

Effects on Perceptions of Seller Expertise

Table 14 gives analysis results for the model involving the dependent variable, seller expertise. The analysis was performed using the general linear model (GLM). The overall F ($F_{31,216} = 2.78$ $p = < .0001$) signals an interpretable model. R-square is .285 indicating that approximately 29% of the variance is explained by the model.

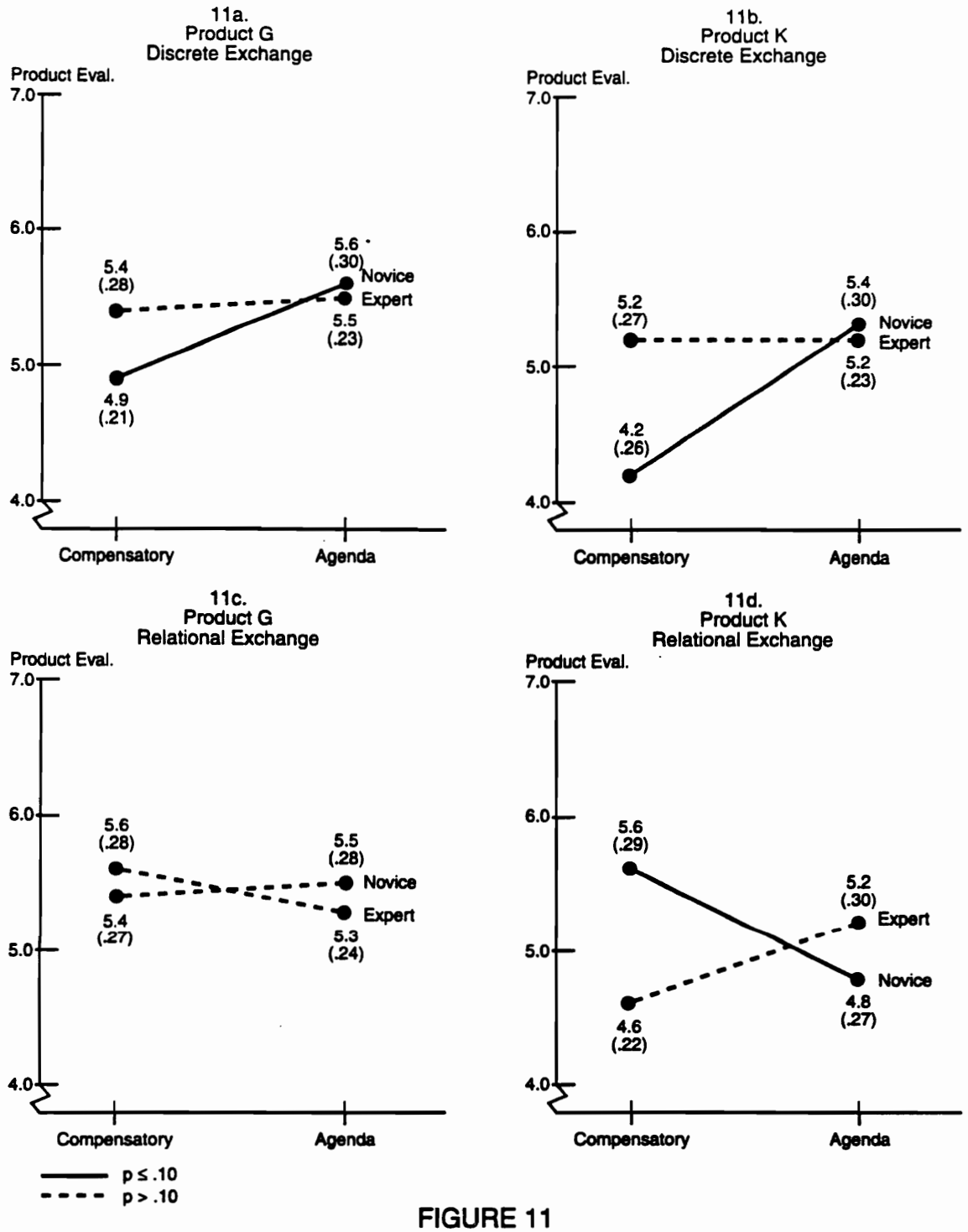


FIGURE 11

PRODUCT EVALUATION AS A FUNCTION OF STRATEGY, RELATIONSHIP, PRODUCT AND EXPERTISE

TABLE 14

GENERAL LINEAR MODEL — SELLER EXPERTISE

DEPENDENT VARIABLE: SELLEX

SOURCE	DF	SUM OF SQUARES	MEAN SQUARE	F VALUE	PR > F
MODEL	31	60.59214808	1.95458542	2.78	0.0001
ERROR	216	151.62837410	0.70198784		
CORRECTED TOTAL	247	212.22152218			

R^2	C.V.	ROOT MSE	SELLEX MEAN
0.285514	16.09186	0.8378471	5.2066532

SOURCE	DF	TYPE III SS	MEAN SQUARE	F VALUE	PR > F
STRAT	1	16.55204501	16.55204501	23.58	0.0001
RELATE	1	9.99194800	9.99194800	14.23	0.0002
PRODUCT	1	4.45609986	4.45609986	6.35	0.0125
SEQUENCE	1	3.79039926	3.79039926	5.40	0.0211
EXPCAT	1	0.50907223	0.50907223	0.73	0.3954
STRAT*EXPCAT	1	1.15528565	1.15528565	1.65	0.2009
STRAT*RELATE	1	1.10896641	1.10896641	1.58	0.2102
STRAT*SEQUENCE	1	3.70083016	3.70083016	5.27	0.0226
SEQUENCE*EXPCAT	1	0.00031265	0.00031265	0.00	0.9832
RELATE*SEQUENCE	1	0.09376985	0.09376985	0.13	0.7151
STRAT*PRODUCT	1	0.21579828	0.21579828	0.31	0.5798
RELATE*PRODUCT	1	0.33701749	0.33701749	0.48	0.4891
PRODUCT*SEQUENCE	1	0.04377077	0.04377077	0.06	0.8031
PRODUCT*EXPCAT	1	0.45616517	0.45616517	0.65	0.4211
RELATE*EXPCAT	1	1.25600538	1.25600538	1.79	0.1824
STRAT*RELATE*PRODUCT	1	0.35502586	0.35502586	0.51	0.4778
STRAT*PRODUCT*EXPCAT	1	0.01185658	0.01185658	0.02	0.8967
STRAT*PRODUC*SEQUENCE	1	1.56563434	1.56563434	2.23	0.1368
RELATE*PRODUC*EXPCAT	1	1.11321940	1.11321940	1.59	0.2093
RELATE*PRODUC*SEQUEN	1	0.11822383	0.11822383	0.17	0.6819
PRODUC*SEQUEN*EXPCAT	1	2.14233524	2.14233524	3.05	0.0821
STRA*RELA*PROD*EXPCA	1	2.89505418	2.89505418	4.12	0.0435
STRA*RELA*PROD*SEQUE	1	0.27184098	0.27184098	0.39	0.5344
RELA*PROD*SEQU*EXPCA	1	0.31607586	0.31607586	0.45	0.5029
STRA*PROD*SEQU*EXPCA	1	0.26782537	0.26782537	0.38	0.5374
STRAT*RELATE*EXPCAT	1	0.12396944	0.12396944	0.18	0.6747
STRAT*RELATE*SEQUENC	1	0.15479570	0.15479570	0.22	0.6391
STRAT*SEQUENC*EXPCAT	1	1.58589353	1.58589353	2.26	0.1343
RELATE*SEQUEN*EXPCAT	1	0.06807078	0.06807078	0.10	0.7558
STRA*RELA*SEQU*EXPCA	1	0.12670623	0.12670623	0.18	0.6714
STR*REL*PRO*SEQ*EXPC	1	0.09319968	0.09319968	0.13	0.7159

Product

The perception of seller expertise varied with the product represented ($F_{1,216} = 6.35$, $p = < .01$). Sellers representing the stronger Product G were seen as more expert (5.35) than those representing the weaker product K (5.07).

Relationship

The buyer's perception of seller expertise depended upon the type of buyer/seller relationship ($F_{1,216} = 14.23$ $p = < .001$). Sellers in a relational exchange were perceived as more expert (5.42) than sellers in a discrete exchange (5.00).

Sequence

The degree of perceived seller expertise was contingent upon the order in which the target product was presented ($F_{1,216} = 5.40$, $p = .02$). Sellers were rated as more expert when the target was presented second (5.34) than when it was presented first (5.08).

Strategy

Buyers' attributions of seller expertise to salespeople were dependent on the sales strategy used ($F_{1,216} = 23.58$ $p = < .001$). Sellers using agendas were perceived as more expert (5.48) than sellers using compensatory presentations (4.94). This finding supported H3a.

Strategy*Sequence

The effect of strategy on perceptions of seller expertise was dependent on the order of product presentation ($F_{1,216} = 5.27$, $p = .02$). While in general, seller expertise increased for agendas over compensatory conditions, perceptions of seller expertise were significantly higher for those agendas where the target was presented second (5.74) rather than first (5.22).

Product*Sequence*Expertise

Results show that sequence also interacted with product and expertise ($F_{1,216} = 3.05$, $p = .08$). When the target was presented first, expert buyers thought the seller representing the stronger product G was more expert than the seller for K ($Z = 2.36$, $p = .02$). Again with the target presented first, novice buyers did not perceive a difference in seller expertise regardless of the product presented ($Z = .138$, $p = > .10$).

Findings were opposite the above when the target was presented second. In this case, novice buyers thought the seller representing the stronger Product G was more expert ($Z = 1.79$, $p = .07$), and expert buyers did not perceive a difference in seller expertise for either product ($Z = 1.00$, $p = > .10$).

Strategy*Relationship*Product*Expertise

When selling the stronger Product G to experts in a discrete exchange (Figure 12a), sellers were perceived as more expert under the agenda condition than under the compensatory condition ($Z = 2.36$, $p = .02$). The difference in

perceptions of seller expertise across strategies did not exist for relational exchange ($Z = .77$, $p = > .10$).

When selling the stronger Product G to novice buyers (Figure 12b), perceptions of seller expertise were significantly higher under agenda conditions than under compensatory strategies for both relational ($Z = 2.60$, $p = .01$) and discrete exchange ($Z = 2.00$, $p = .05$).

For experts presented with the weaker Product K (Figure 12c), perceived seller expertise did not depend on strategy type for either relational ($Z = 1.20$, $p = > .10$) or discrete exchange ($Z = .91$, $p = > .10$).

For novices presented with K in a discrete exchange (Figure 12d), perceptions of seller expertise were greater when agendas were used than compensatory strategies ($Z = 3.39$, $p = < .001$). There was no difference in perceived seller expertise for relational exchange ($Z = .45$, $p = > .10$).

H6 predicted that perceptions of seller expertise would depend on a 2-way strategy by expertise interaction. More specifically, H6 called for greater increases in seller expertise ratings for agenda over compensatory strategies for novices rather than experts. The hypothesized 2-way interaction was not significant, and, therefore, H6 was not directly supported. However, the 4-way strategy*relationship*product*expertise interaction showed partial support for H6. The anticipated increase for novices did occur in three of the four relationship by strategy conditions shown in Figure 12 (b,d). On the other

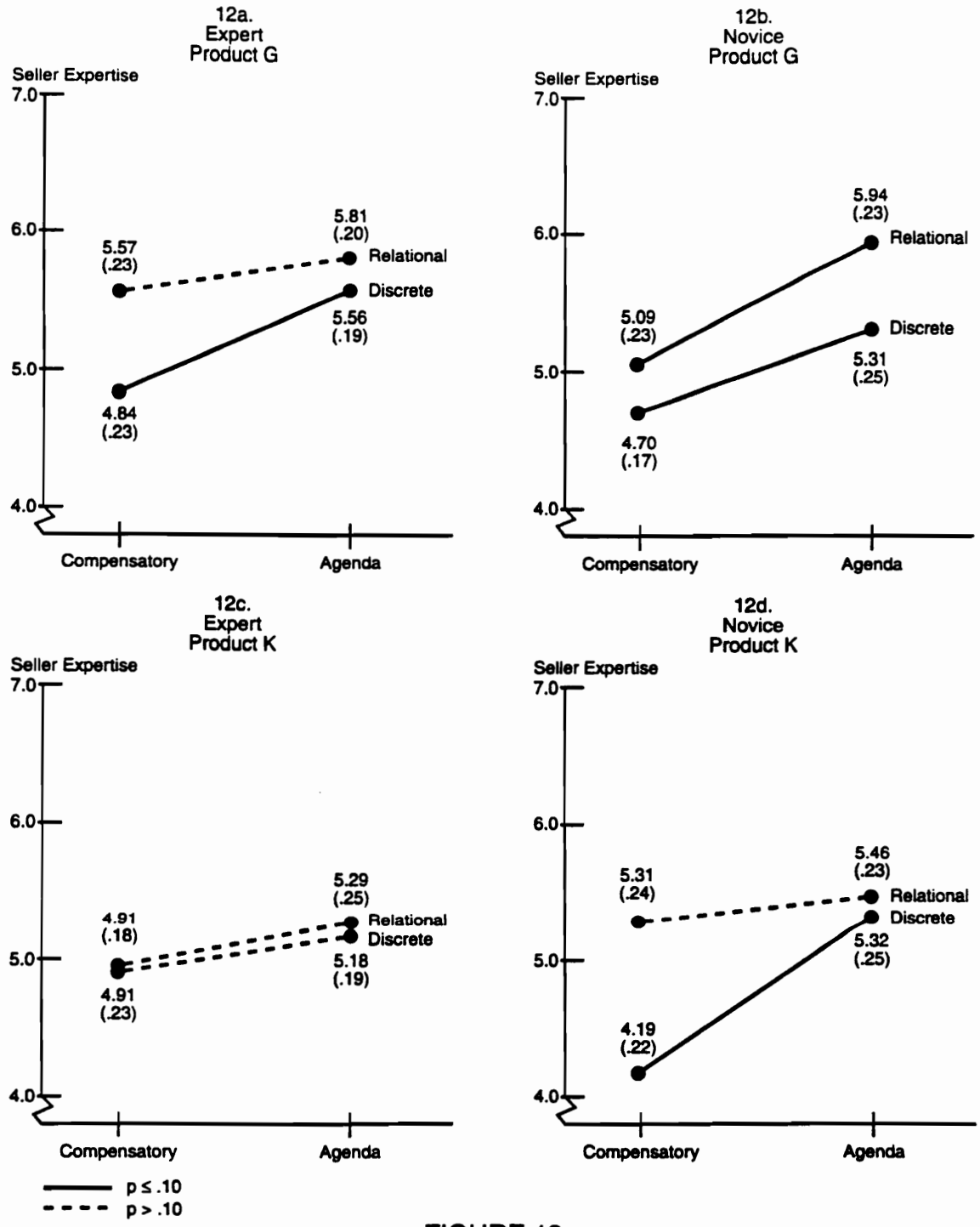


FIGURE 12

PERCEIVED SELLER EXPERTISE AS A FUNCTION OF STRATEGY, RELATIONSHIP, PRODUCT AND EXPERTISE

hand, there was a significant increase in seller expertise ratings for experts for only one of these four conditions (12a,c).

H9 purported that perceptions of seller expertise were contingent on a 2-way strategy by relationship interaction. In particular, H9 called for greater increases in seller expertise ratings for agenda over compensatory strategies under discrete rather than relational exchange. Results did not indicate the hypothesized 2-way interaction, and H9 was not directly supported. However, the 4-way strategy*relationship*product*expertise interaction partially supported H9. The anticipated increase under discrete exchange did occur in three of the four conditions depicted in Figure 12 (a,b,d). There was a significant increase in seller expertise under relational exchange for only one condition (12b).

Effects on Perceptions of Seller Manipulativeness

Table 15 gives results of the general linear model (GLM) analysis for the dependent variable, perceptions of seller manipulativeness. This is a viable model ($F_{31,216} = 1.45$ $p = .07$). R-square is .171 which means that approximately 17% of the variance is explained by the model.

TABLE 15

GENERAL LINEAR MODEL — SELLER MANIPULATIVENESS

DEPENDENT VARIABLE: MANIP

SOURCE	DF	SUM OF SQUARES	MEAN SQUARE	F VALUE	PR > F
MODEL	31	37.35532630	1.20501053	1.45	0.0684
ERROR	216	179.87720058	0.83276482		
CORRECTED TOTAL	247	217.23252688			

R^2	C.V.	ROOT MSE	MANIP MEAN
0.171960	28.63535	0.9125595	3.1868280

SOURCE	DF	TYPE III SS	MEAN SQUARE	F VALUE	PR > F
STRAT	1	2.26748341	2.26748341	2.72	0.1004
RELATE	1	4.84119464	4.84119464	5.81	0.0167
PRODUCT	1	7.07119996	7.07119996	8.49	0.0039
SEQUENCE	1	1.32288906	1.32288906	1.59	0.2089
EXPCAT	1	1.68168936	1.68168936	2.02	0.1567
STRAT*EXPCAT	1	0.00779916	0.00779916	0.01	0.9230
STRAT*RELATE	1	0.40691691	0.40691691	0.49	0.4853
STRAT*SEQUENCE	1	1.75271533	1.75271533	2.10	0.1483
SEQUENCE*EXPCAT	1	0.05636217	0.05636217	0.07	0.7950
RELATE*SEQUENCE	1	0.20109464	0.20109464	0.24	0.6236
STRAT*PRODUCT	1	0.00080986	0.00080986	0.00	0.9752
RELATE*PRODUCT	1	0.01456946	0.01456946	0.02	0.8949
PRODUCT*SEQUENCE	1	0.39620301	0.39620301	0.48	0.4911
PRODUCT*EXPCAT	1	0.33741127	0.33741127	0.41	0.5251
RELATE*EXPCAT	1	0.00000917	0.00000917	0.00	0.9974
STRAT*RELATE*PRODUCT	1	0.00052534	0.00052534	0.00	0.9800
STRAT*PRODUCT*EXPCAT	1	0.06213760	0.06213760	0.07	0.7850
STRAT*PRODUC*SEQUENCE	1	0.75524151	0.75524151	0.91	0.3420
RELATE*PRODUC*EXPCAT	1	0.24127946	0.24127946	1.29	0.5909
RELATE*PRODUC*SEQUEN	1	0.69885761	0.69885761	0.84	0.3606
PRODUC*SEQUEN*EXPCAT	1	1.19441127	1.19441127	1.43	0.2324
STRA*RELA*PROD*EXPCA	1	3.51546879	3.51546879	4.22	0.0411
STRA*RELA*PROD*SEQUE	1	0.45451787	0.45451787	0.55	0.4608
RELA*PROD*SEQU*EXPCA	1	0.02385524	0.02385524	0.03	0.8658
STRA*PROD*SEQU*EXPCA	1	1.80662983	1.80662983	2.17	0.1422
STRAT*RELATE*EXPCAT	1	2.80390235	2.80390235	3.37	0.0679
STRAT*RELATE*SEQUENC	1	0.41508982	0.41508982	0.50	0.4809
STRAT*SEQUENC*EXPCAT	1	0.01205306	0.01205306	0.01	0.9044
RELATE*SEQUEN*EXPCAT	1	1.33592006	1.33592006	1.60	0.2067
STRA*RELA*SEQU*EXPCA	1	0.10412956	0.10412956	0.13	0.7240
STR*REL*PRO*SEQ*EXPC	1	0.39461109	0.39461109	0.47	0.4920

Relationship

Findings showed that the nature of the buyer/seller relationship significantly affected buyers' perceptions of seller manipulativeness ($F_{1,216} = 5.81$, $p = .02$). Perceptions of seller manipulativeness were higher under discrete (3.31) than under relational exchange (3.02).

Product

Perceptions of seller manipulativeness varied with the target product ($F_{1,216} = 8.49$, $p = < .01$). Perceptions of manipulativeness were greater for sellers of the weaker Product K (3.34) than for sellers of the stronger Product G (2.99).

Strategy

Buyers' perceptions of seller manipulativeness depended on sales strategy ($F_{1,216} = 2.72$, $p = .10$). Buyers perceived sellers as more manipulative under a compensatory strategy (3.27) than under an agenda strategy (3.07). This finding supported H3b. Not only were sellers using agendas not perceived as more manipulative, but they were actually perceived as less manipulative than those using compensatory strategies.

Strategy*Relationship*Expertise

Figure 13 illustrates that strategy, relationship, and expertise interacted to affect perceptions of seller manipulativeness ($F_{1,216} = 3.37$, $p = .07$).

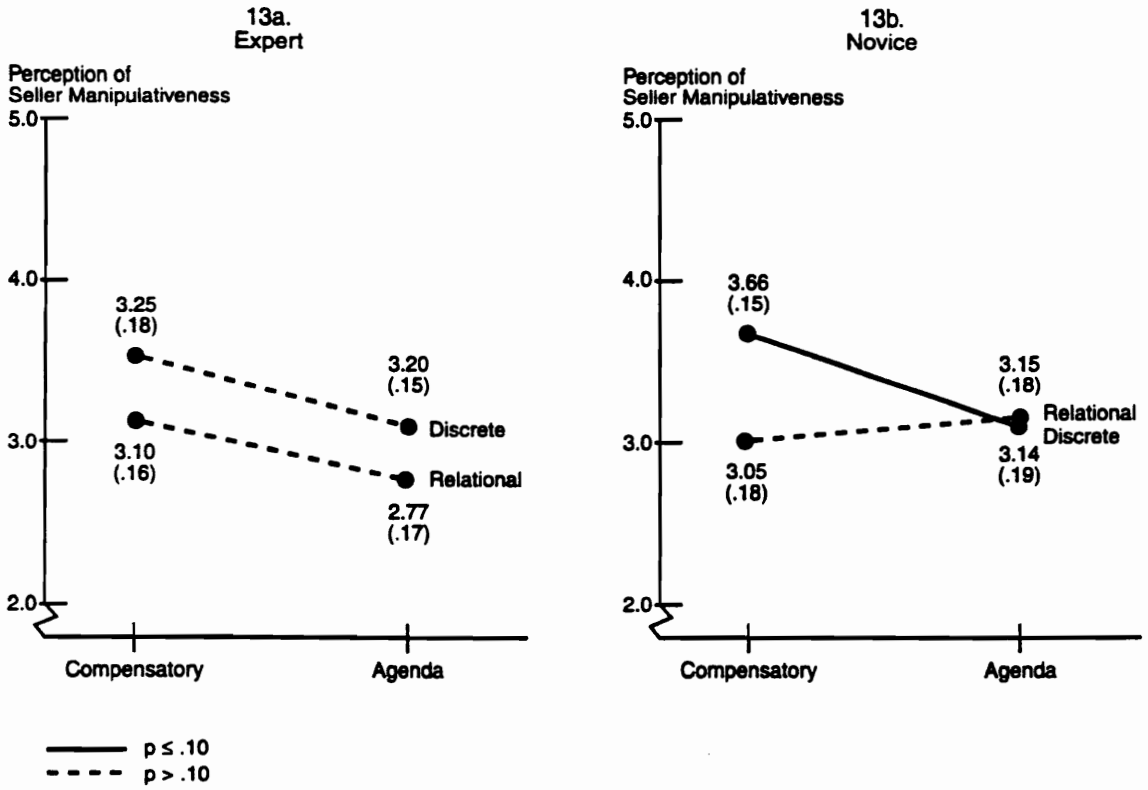


FIGURE 13

PERCEIVED SELLER MANIPULATIVENESS AS A FUNCTION OF STRATEGY, RELATIONSHIP, PRODUCT AND EXPERTISE

Strategy did not affect experts' perceptions of seller manipulativeness (Figure 13a) in either discrete ($Z = 1.00$, $p = > .10$) or relational exchange conditions ($Z = 1.38$, $p = > .10$).

For novices in a discrete exchange, perceptions of seller manipulativeness were significantly lower for agenda than for compensatory conditions ($Z = 2.17$, $p = .03$). For novices in a relational exchange, manipulativeness ratings did not differ depending on the selling strategy ($Z = .42$, $p = > .10$).

Strategy*Relationship*Product*Expertise

Analysis revealed a 4-way interaction between strategy, relationship, product, and expertise ($F_{1,216} = 4.22$, $p = .04$). When the target was the stronger Product G, experts did not perceive a difference in seller manipulativeness dependent upon the selling strategy used in either discrete ($Z = .82$, $p = > .10$) or relational exchange ($Z = .09$, $p = > .10$). By the same token, novices presented with Product G also did not perceive a difference in seller manipulativeness dependent upon selling strategy for either discrete ($Z = .92$, $p = > .10$) or relational exchange ($Z = .51$, $p = > .10$).

For target Product K, experts in a relational exchange perceived decreased seller manipulativeness under agenda conditions than compensatory conditions ($Z = 1.82$, $p = .07$). Experts' manipulativeness ratings did not differ between strategies in a discrete exchange when presented with Product K ($Z = .5$, $p > .10$).

Conversely, novices in a discrete exchange perceived significantly less seller manipulativeness when agenda rather than compensatory strategies were used to present Product K ($Z = 2.00$, $p = .05$). There was no difference in manipulativeness ratings between agenda and compensatory conditions for novices in a relational exchange ($Z = 1.02$, $p = > .10$).

Effects on Buyer Confidence

Table 16 gives results of the general linear model (GLM) analysis for the dependent variable, buyers' confidence in their choices. This is a viable model ($F_{31,216} = 1.40$ $p = .09$). R-square is .167 meaning that approximately 17% of the variance is explained by the model.

Expertise

Results indicated that buyers' confidence in their decisions varied with their degree of expertise ($F_{1,216} = 7.37$ $p = < .01$). As would be expected, confidence levels were higher for experts (5.70) than for novices (5.38).

Strategy*Expertise

The effect of strategy on confidence was dependent upon buyer expertise ($F_{1,216} = 7.37$ $p = < .01$). Experts' confidence levels were higher for agenda than for compensatory strategies ($Z = 3.00$, $p = < .01$). Strategy had no effect on buyer confidence for novices ($Z = .67$, $p = > .10$). This finding does not support H5b. Instead of increasing confidence more among novices, agendas were greater confidence builders among experts.

TABLE 16

GENERAL LINEAR MODEL — CONFIDENCE

DEPENDENT VARIABLE: CONFID

SOURCE	DF	SUM OF SQUARES	MEAN SQUARE	F VALUE	PR > F
MODEL	31	34.18825286	1.10284687	1.40	0.0884
ERROR	216	170.35475790	0.7886 7943		
CORRECTED TOTAL	247	204.54301075			

R^2	C.V.	ROOT MSE	CONFID MEAN
0.167145	15.98279	0.8880763	5.5564516

SOURCE	DF	TYPE III SS	MEAN SQUARE	F VALUE	PR > F
STRAT	1	1.67584659	1.67584659	2.12	0.1464
RELATE	1	1.44074388	1.44074388	1.83	0.1779
PRODUCT	1	0.00537927	0.00537927	0.01	0.9343
SEQUENCE	1	1.90292981	1.90292981	2.41	0.1218
EXPCAT	1	5.80905516	5.80905516	7.37	0.0072
STRAT*EXPCAT	1	4.51253170	4.51253170	5.72	0.0176
STRAT*RELATE	1	0.25287949	0.25287949	0.32	0.5718
STRAT*SEQUENCE	1	0.06647095	0.06647095	0.08	0.7718
SEQUENCE*EXPCAT	1	0.62596905	0.62596905	0.79	0.3740
RELATE*SEQUENCE	1	2.54177096	2.54177096	3.22	0.0740
STRAT*PRODUCT	1	0.00050051	0.00050051	0.00	0.9799
RELATE*PRODUCT	1	0.12944036	0.12944036	0.16	0.6858
PRODUCT*SEQUENCE	1	0.23664423	0.23664423	0.30	0.5844
PRODUCT*EXPCAT	1	0.48919133	0.48919133	0.62	0.4318
RELATE*EXPCAT	1	1.03188644	1.03188644	1.31	0.2540
STRAT*RELATE*PRODUCT	1	0.90307227	0.90307227	1.15	0.2858
STRAT*PRODUCT*EXPCAT	1	1.98050381	1.98050381	2.51	0.1145
STRAT*PRODUC*SEQUENCE	1	0.58703534	0.58703534	0.74	0.3892
RELATE*PRODUC*EXPCAT	1	0.00048945	0.00048945	0.00	0.9801
RELATE*PRODUC*SEQUEN	1	0.79432452	0.79432452	1.01	0.3167
PRODUC*SEQUEN*EXPCAT	1	2.55566414	2.55566414	3.24	0.0732
STRA*RELA*PROD*EXPCA	1	0.00819225	0.00819225	0.01	0.9189
STRA*RELA*PROD*SEQUE	1	0.00518054	0.00518054	0.01	0.9355
RELA*PROD*SEQU*EXPCA	1	0.72036384	0.72036384	0.91	0.3403
STRA*PROD*SEQU*EXPCA	1	2.75579540	2.75579540	3.49	0.0629
STRAT*RELATE*EXPCAT	1	1.13859466	1.13859466	1.44	0.2309
STRAT*RELATE*SEQUENC	1	0.32336072	0.32336072	0.41	0.5226
STRAT*SEQUENC*EXPCAT	1	1.09833995	1.09833995	1.39	0.2393
RELATE*SEQUEN*EXPCAT	1	0.33447005	0.33447005	0.42	0.5156
STRA*RELA*SEQU*EXPCA	1	0.11824326	0.11824326	0.15	0.6990
STR*REL*PRO*SEQ*EXPC	1	0.00009635	0.00009635	0.00	0.9912

H2b predicted a main effect of strategy on buyer confidence. While there was no general support for H2b ($F_{1,216} = 2.12$, $p = .15$), this interaction demonstrates support with respect to experts.

Relationship*Sequence

The effect of exchange type on confidence was contingent upon the target product's order of presentation (($F_{1,216} = 3.22$, $p = .07$). Confidence under a discrete relationship was greater when the target was presented second rather than first ($Z = 2.86$, $p = < .01$). Presentation order did not significantly impact buyer confidence under relational exchange ($Z = .21$, $p = > .10$).

H8b predicted a strategy by relationship interaction, with stronger increases in buyer confidence for agendas vs. compensatory strategies under discrete rather than relational exchange. H8b was not supported. The only significant confidence model term including relationship is the above relationship by sequence interaction.

Product*Sequence*Expertise

Confidence levels were influenced by a 3-way interaction between product, order of presentation, and expertise ($F_{1,216} = 3.24$, $p = .07$). For the stronger Product G, novices' confidence levels increased when the target was presented second rather than first ($Z = 1.83$, $p = .07$). Order of presentation did not affect experts' confidence when shown Product G ($Z = .85$, $p = > .10$).

When Product K was the target, the order of presentation had no effect on confidence for either experts ($Z = 1.62$, $p = > .10$) or novices ($Z = .56$, $p = > .10$).

Strategy*Product*Sequence*Expertise

Results show that strategy also interacted with product, sequence, and expertise to affect buyer confidence ($F_{1,216} = 3.49$, $p = .06$). For the stronger product G, experts' confidence levels did not vary significantly between strategies regardless of whether the target was presented first ($Z = .15$, $p = > .10$) or second ($Z = 1.55$, $p > .10$). There was also no effect of strategy on novices' confidence when G was presented first ($Z = .09$, $p > .10$) or second ($Z = .43$, $p = > .10$).

However, for K, confidence differences did exist across strategies depending upon the order of presentation. For experts, confidence levels increased for agenda over compensatory presentations when the target was shown first ($Z = 3.00$, $p = < .01$). There was no strategy effect on experts' confidence when K was shown second ($Z = .72$, $p = > .10$).

Novices' confidence in the decision was lower for agenda than for compensatory conditions when K was presented first ($Z = .03$, $p = > .10$). There was no strategy effect on novices' confidence when K was presented second ($Z = 1.74$, $p = .08$).

Effects on Difficulty

Table 17 gives results of the general linear model (GLM) analysis for the dependent variable, difficulty. The model is not an interpretable model because the overall F test for the model is not significant ($F_{31,216} = 1.30$ $p = > .10$).

H2a hypothesized that buyers would perceive decisions made in agenda conditions as less difficult than decisions made in compensatory conditions. H5a hypothesized that this strategy effect would be stronger for novices than experts, and H8a proposed that the effect would be stronger for buyers in a discrete rather than a relational exchange. There was no support for H2a, H5a, or H8a.

Effects on Satisfaction

Table 18 presents results of the general linear model (GLM) analysis for the dependent variable, satisfaction. The results are not interpretable because the overall F test for the model is not significant ($F_{31,216} = 1.24$, $p = > .10$).

H2c predicted that buyers would be more satisfied with decisions made under agenda strategies than with decisions made under compensatory strategies. H5c postulated that this strategy effect on satisfaction would be stronger for novices than for experts. H8c hypothesized that the strategy effect on satisfaction would be stronger for buyers in a discrete rather than a relational exchange. There was no support for H2c, H5c, or H8c.

TABLE 17

GENERAL LINEAR MODEL — DIFFICULTY

DEPENDENT VARIABLE: DIFF

SOURCE	DF	SUM OF SQUARES	MEAN SQUARE	F VALUE	PR > F
MODEL	31	70.0481448	2.25961885	1.30	0.1438
ERROR	216	375.37430656	1.73784401		
CORRECTED TOTAL	247	445.42249104			

R^2	C.V.	ROOT MSE	MANIP MEAN
0.157262	36.69267	1.3182731	3.5927419

SOURCE	DF	TYPE III SS	MEAN SQUARE	F VALUE	PR > F
STRAT	1	0.05027366	0.05027366	0.03	0.8651
RELATE	1	5.27114143	5.27114143	3.03	0.0830
PRODUCT	1	0.81632262	0.81632262	0.47	0.4938
SEQUENCE	1	0.74063894	0.74063894	0.43	0.5146
EXPCAT	1	2.43743791	2.43743791	1.40	0.2376
STRAT*EXPCAT	1	3.36368165	3.36368165	1.94	0.1656
STRAT*RELATE	1	0.38854312	0.38854312	0.22	0.6368
STRAT*SEQUENCE	1	0.44471172	0.44471172	0.26	0.6135
SEQUENCE*EXPCAT	1	0.97498019	0.97498019	0.56	0.4547
RELATE*SEQUENCE	1	11.10408017	11.10408017	6.39	0.0122
STRAT*PRODUCT	1	1.53879664	1.53879664	0.89	0.3478
RELATE*PRODUCT	1	2.63693624	2.63693624	1.52	0.2194
PRODUCT*SEQUENCE	1	0.99611821	0.99611821	0.57	0.4498
PRODUCT*EXPCAT	1	2.93635258	2.93635258	1.69	0.1950
RELATE*EXPCAT	1	1.03304631	1.03304631	0.59	0.4415
STRAT*RELATE*PRODUCT	1	0.21336907	0.21336907	0.12	0.7264
STRAT*PRODUCT*EXPCAT	1	6.40560884	6.40560884	3.69	0.0562
STRAT*PRODUC*SEQUENCE	1	0.54121462	0.54121462	0.31	0.5774
RELATE*PRODUC*EXPCAT	1	0.29462654	0.29462654	0.17	0.6809
RELATE*PRODUC*SEQUEN	1	9.22395316	9.22395316	5.31	0.0222
PRODUC*SEQUEN*EXPCAT	1	5.80733918	5.80733918	3.34	0.0689
STRA*RELA*PROD*EXPCA	1	0.28412130	0.28412130	0.16	0.6864
STRA*RELA*PROD*SEQUE	1	1.12085220	1.12085220	0.64	0.4228
RELA*PROD*SEQU*EXPCA	1	1.18128063	1.18128063	0.68	0.4106
STRA*PROD*SEQU*EXPCA	1	4.14805264	4.14805264	2.39	0.1238
STRAT*RELATE*EXPCAT	1	4.48872299	4.48872299	2.58	0.1095
STRAT*RELATE*SEQUENC	1	2.13836694	2.13836694	1.23	0.2685
STRAT*SEQUENC*EXPCAT	1	7.24311736	7.24311736	4.17	0.0424
RELATE*SEQUEN*EXPCAT	1	0.06280991	0.06280991	0.04	0.8494
STRA*RELA*SEQU*EXPCA	1	0.00652087	0.00652087	0.00	0.9512
STR*REL*PRO*SEQ*EXPC	1	5.45328595	5.45328595	3.14	0.0779

TABLE 18

GENERAL LINEAR MODEL — SATISFACTION

DEPENDENT VARIABLE: SAT

SOURCE	DF	SUM OF SQUARES	MEAN SQUARE	F VALUE	PR > F
MODEL	31	22.17014694	0.71516603	1.24	0.1935
ERROR	216	125.01981722	0.57879545		
CORRECTED TOTAL	247	147.18996416			

R^2	C.V.	ROOT MSE	SAT MEAN
0.150623	13.27450	0.7607861	5.7311828

SOURCE	DF	TYPE III SS	MEAN SQUARE	F VALUE	PR > F
STRAT	1	1.83089476	1.83089476	3.16	0.0767
RELATE	1	0.44138667	0.44138667	0.76	0.3835
PRODUCT	1	0.03858340	0.03858340	0.07	0.7965
SEQUENCE	1	0.49723164	0.49723164	0.86	0.3550
EXPCAT	1	3.34592052	3.34592052	5.78	0.0170
STRAT*EXPCAT	1	2.50384044	2.50384044	4.33	0.0387
STRAT*RELATE	1	0.00353492	0.00353942	0.01	0.9377
STRAT*SEQUENCE	1	0.18992188	0.18992188	0.33	0.5674
SEQUENCE*EXPCAT	1	0.24778468	0.24778468	0.43	0.5136
RELATE*SEQUENCE	1	0.92747554	0.92747554	1.60	0.2069
STRAT*PRODUCT	1	0.08279760	0.08279760	0.14	0.7056
RELATE*PRODUCT	1	1.34754513	1.34754513	2.33	0.1285
PRODUCT*SEQUENCE	1	0.21129635	0.21129635	0.37	0.5463
PRODUCT*EXPCAT	1	0.85920761	0.85920761	1.48	0.2244
RELATE*EXPCAT	1	0.15550798	0.15550798	0.27	0.6048
STRAT*RELATE*PRODUCT	1	0.00047875	0.00047875	0.00	0.9771
STRAT*PRODUCT*EXPCAT	1	1.04773270	1.04773270	1.81	0.1799
STRAT*PRODUC*SEQUENCE	1	0.09383562	0.09383562	0.16	0.6876
RELATE*PRODUC*EXPCAT	1	0.54412860	0.54412860	0.94	0.3333
RELATE*PRODUC*SEQUEN	1	1.46864678	1.46864678	2.54	0.1126
PRODUC*SEQUEN*EXPCAT	1	2.47972025	2.47972025	4.28	0.0397
STRA*RELA*PROD*EXPCA	1	0.10674242	0.10674242	0.18	0.6680
STRA*RELA*PROD*SEQUE	1	0.13564893	0.13564893	0.23	0.6288
RELA*PROD*SEQU*EXPCA	1	0.46821268	0.46821268	0.81	0.3694
STRA*PROD*SEQU*EXPCA	1	0.73584187	0.73584187	1.27	0.2608
STRAT*RELATE*EXPCAT	1	0.41319879	0.41319879	0.71	0.3991
STRAT*RELATE*SEQUENC	1	0.27419722	0.27419722	0.47	0.4920
STRAT*SEQUENC*EXPCAT	1	0.17091821	0.17091821	0.30	0.5874
RELATE*SEQUEN*EXPCAT	1	0.45897854	0.45897854	0.79	0.3742
STRA*RELA*SEQU*EXPCA	1	0.29057943	0.29057943	0.50	0.4794
STR*REL*PRO*SEQ*EXPC	1	0.11991637	0.11991637	0.21	0.6494

Summary of Hypothesis Support

Table 19 summarizes the hypotheses and the degree of support for each. Those hypotheses which were wholly or at least partially supported by the results are preceded by "+" or "partial," respectively. Unsupported hypotheses are marked with a "-." "Opposite" denotes evidence in the opposite direction than that predicted.

Hypotheses 1, 2, and 3 predict that strategy type will have a main effect on buyers' purchase behaviors and attitudes. Specifically, these hypotheses predict that agendas will have a greater effect than compensatory presentations on consideration set (H1a), choice (H1b), choice difficulty (H2a), confidence (H2b), satisfaction (H2c), and seller expertise (H3a). H3b predicts that agendas will not increase buyer's perceptions of seller manipulativeness.

Results supported H1a and H3. Buyers were more likely to include the target product in their consideration set when agendas were used than when compensatory strategies were used. Furthermore, the use of agendas increased buyers' perceptions of seller expertise and did not affect buyers' perceptions of seller manipulativeness. In fact, perceptions of seller manipulativeness were significantly lower for agendas than for compensatory presentations.

TABLE 19

SUMMARY OF SUPPORT FOR HYPOTHESES

Type of Support	Hypothesis	
	H1.	Compared to compensatory presentations, with agenda presentations the buyer will be more likely to:
+	a.	include the seller's product in the consideration set
—	b.	select the seller's product as the final choice
	H2.	Compared to compensatory presentations, with agenda presentations the buyer will:
—	a.	perceive the choice process as less difficult
—	b.	be more confident regarding the choice process
—	c.	be more satisfied with the final choice
	H3.	Compared to compensatory presentations, with agenda presentations, the buyer will perceive the seller as:
+	a.	more expert
+	b.	no more manipulative
	H4.	The effect of strategy type (agenda vs. compensatory) will be greater for buyers with low expertise than for buyers with high expertise for:
Partial	a.	inclusion of the seller's product in the consideration set
Opposite	b.	selection of the seller's product as the final choice
	H5.	The effect of strategy type (agenda vs. compensatory) will be greater for buyers with low expertise than for buyers with high expertise for:
—	a.	perception of choice process difficulty
Opposite	b.	confidence regarding the choice process
—	c.	satisfaction with the final choice

TABLE 19
(Continued)

Partial	H6.	The effect of strategy type (agenda vs. compensatory) on the perception of seller expertise will be greater for buyers with low expertise than for buyers with high expertise.
	H7.	The effect of strategy type (agenda vs. compensatory) will be greater for discrete exchange than for relational exchange for:
Partial		a. inclusion of the seller's product in the consideration set
+		b. selection of the seller's product as the final choice
	H8.	The effect of strategy type (agenda vs. compensatory) will be greater for discrete exchange than for relational exchange for:
—		a. perception of choice difficulty
—		b. confidence regarding the choice process
—		c. satisfaction with the final choice
Partial	H9.	The effect of strategy type (agenda vs. compensatory) will be greater for discrete exchange than for relational exchange for perception of seller expertise.
Opposite	H10.	The favorable effect on choice of agenda presentations (vs. compensatory presentations) will be greater for G (stronger product) than for K (weaker product).
—	H11.	The favorable effect on inclusion in the consideration set of agenda presentations (vs. compensatory presentations) will be greater for K (weaker product) than for G (stronger product).

Hypotheses 4, 5, and 6 predict a strategy*expertise interactive effect on purchase behavior and attitudes. The positive effects of agendas (versus compensatory presentations) were predicted to be greater for novices than for experts for consideration set (H4a), choice (H4b), choice difficulty (H5a) confidence (H5b), satisfaction H5c), and seller expertise

Agendas enhanced the probability of the target product being included in the consideration set for novices, and not for experts, but this effect occurred only in a discrete relationship.

Results for H4b were conflicting but tended to be in the opposite direction than that predicted. Agendas had a greater (positive) effect on choice for novices than for experts, but only for the weaker product K in a discrete exchange. Agendas had a greater (positive) effect on choice for experts than for novices for product K in a relational exchange and for the stronger product G in a discrete exchange. Agendas had a negative effect on choice for experts in the product G/relational exchange condition.

Results were in the opposite direction than that predicted by H5b. Agendas increased the confidence of experts, but not of novices.

Results also provided partial support for H6. The strategy*product* relationship interaction shows that agendas enhance novices' perceptions of seller expertise in three of the four product*relationship conditions. For experts, agendas enhance perceptions of expertise in only one of the four product*relationship conditions.

Hypotheses 7, 8, and 9 predict a strategy*relationship interaction on purchase behavior and attitudes. These hypotheses predicted that the effects of agendas would be stronger in a discrete exchange than a relational exchange for consideration set (H7a), choice (H7b), choice difficulty (H8a), confidence (H8b), satisfaction (H8c), and seller expertise (H9). Results supported H7 in whole or in part. Agendas had a greater (positive) effect on consideration set probabilities for novices than experts, but only in a discrete relationship. The effect of strategy type in a relational exchange was not significant for novices or for experts. These results provide partial support for H7a.

Results also found that strategy had a significant effect on choice for discrete exchange, but not for relational exchange. Choice probability was greater when agendas were used in discrete exchanges than when compensatory presentations were used, supporting H7b.

Results provided partial support for H9. When the relationship was discrete, agendas enhanced buyers' perceptions of seller expertise in three of the four product*expertise conditions. When the relationship was relational, agendas increased perceptions of seller expertise in only one of the four product*expertise conditions.

Hypotheses 10 and 11 predicted a strategy*product interaction. H10 predicts that the positive effect of agendas on choice will be stronger for product G, the stronger product, than for product K, the weaker product. H11

predicts that the positive effect of agendas on consideration set will be stronger for product K than for product G. Results for H10 tended to be in the opposite direction. Agendas increase the probability that product K will be chosen in three of the four relationship*expertise conditions. Agendas increase the probability that product G will be chosen in only one of these four conditions.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

Overview

Chapter 5 examines conclusions and implications that may be drawn from the results of this dissertation. The first section provides a broad description of the findings relating to each of the four independent variables, sales presentation types, buyer expertise, the buyer/seller relationship, and relative competitive strength. Findings will be summarized for each variable in turn followed by a discussion of their implications and a presentation of possible future research issues relating to that particular variable. The second section of this chapter reviews the limitations of this research. The third section considers directions for future research. The final portion of this chapter examines the overall contributions from this dissertation. Theoretical, methodological, and substantive contributions are addressed.

Sales Presentation Types

The overarching objective of this research was to investigate the impact of sales strategy selection upon salesperson effectiveness. Although researchers have suggested that the effective salesperson adjusts sales strategies to meet the needs of specific selling situations, little work has

focused on specific strategy development. This dissertation operationalized and empirically tested the contrast in effectiveness for two sales strategies—the agenda and the compensatory sales presentations.

Increased sales resulting from the use of a strategy is a typical measure of a strategy's effectiveness. The corresponding measure in this study was whether or not the target product was the final choice. Although choice probabilities weren't significantly higher for agenda strategies, overall they were in the predicted direction. In addition, agendas did significantly increase choice under certain contingencies, which are discussed later.

Agenda strategies did exhibit an advantage over compensatory strategies for other measures of effectiveness. In general, agenda strategies increased the likelihood that the target product would be part of the buyer's consideration set. Of course, inclusion in the consideration set logically precedes the selection of a product as a buyer's final choice. In addition, however, a product's serious consideration, even though that product is not ultimately chosen, can be in itself important to future sales of the product. Serious contenders in a past purchase may be top-of-the-mind alternatives and more readily considered for the next similar purchase.

While providing some answers, these findings raise new questions as well. In this study, one "best" agenda was constructed for each target product. Perhaps agenda strategies would have stronger effects on choice if the agenda constraints were sequenced according to specific buyer

preferences. While data reveal that the agenda attributes used in the questionnaire all had above average importance for the majority of respondents, some attributes had greater overall importance than others (productivity 5.3, service 6.7, and reliability 6.8). The agendas in the questionnaire used what results showed to be the least important of the attributes as the first constraint. An agenda that begins with the attribute most important to a specific buyer or to all buyers in general may be more effective. Although sellers must be guided by the strengths and weaknesses of their particular product and the competition in constructing agendas, more needs to be learned about how to use this information to devise optimally effective agendas. How can sellers determine the most advantageous attribute sequence? Is it beneficial to adapt agendas to specific customers? Is there is a particular number of agenda stages which seems to work best? Does the proportion of suggested product eliminations at any one stage influence the acceptance or rejection of the agenda? Research directed at answering questions regarding how to best construct agendas will add to our understanding of the relationship between agenda strategies and selling effectiveness.

A second set of questions arise concerning the findings that agenda strategies increased the likelihood of inclusion in the consideration set. The rationale was given that a product's serious consideration by a buyer may be likely to positively influence future as well as present choice probabilities. Will

this suggested future benefit of a product's inclusion in a previous consideration set be greater for agenda presentations than for other types of sales presentations? This advantage may come from the fact that the buyer may acquire new categories for products and then use those categories in future decision making. Will the agenda's suggested structure for the purchase decision and reshaping of the buying criteria be enduring and influence future decisions? Is product information presented in agenda format easier to recall than that provided during more traditional compensatory presentations?

This research also considered perceptions of the seller and the choice process to be measures of selling effectiveness. Overall, seller's that used agenda strategies (vs. compensatory strategies) were perceived as more expert with respect to their knowledge of their product and industry and were thought to possess better selling skills. This may have been true because sellers using agendas provide buyers with product information regarding both their own product and a number of competitive products as well. Sellers using this strategy may have increased opportunities to demonstrate product knowledge and greater industry knowledge in general. This research also investigated whether the agenda's more overt attempt to shape the decision process might be seen as manipulative in nature. The risk was that buyers' possible feelings of being controlled might have translated to a decrease in selling effectiveness. In actuality, buyers perceived sellers using agenda

strategies to be significantly less manipulative that those employing compensatory strategies.

These findings regarding the perceptions of the seller seem counter to some conventional wisdom which suggests that it can be dangerous to mention competitive products in a sales presentation. First, many believe that showing that a seller's product performs better than specific competitive products might possibly be seen as degrading the competition and may consequently reflect negatively upon the seller. That notion was not borne out in this study. Second, it is often thought that making specific references to the competition may increase search by alerting buyers to new alternatives. The reverse may be true. Perhaps the competitive information provided in agendas may sufficiently educate and satisfy buyers that search is reduced. More research is needed to better understand the effect of supplying competitive information in agenda presentations on selling effectiveness.

Finally, using agendas vs. compensatory presentations did not alone effectively alter perceptions of the choice process. Neither strategy produced overall significant differences in the levels of perceived difficulty, confidence, or satisfaction regarding the choice and choice process. Part of the rationale for the hypothesized differences was that agendas, more so than compensatory strategies, would simplify the decision and reduce information processing by reducing the number of alternatives to be evaluated. This research did not explicitly examine how buyers compared the information

processing load for the two strategies. It may be that the addition of the competitive information used in agendas offsets any perception of simplification gained by gradually reducing the number of alternatives.

A second major purpose of this dissertation was to investigate possible moderating effects to the relationship between sales presentation types and selling effectiveness. Hypotheses were advanced concerning the moderating effects of buyer expertise, the buyer/seller relationship, and the relative competitive strength of the product. Each of these variables will next be discussed regarding pertinent findings, implications, and future research issues.

Buyer Expertise

Findings relating to the moderating effect of buyer expertise were somewhat difficult to interpret. The hypothesized two-way interactions between sales presentation types and expertise were not significant. However, in some cases partial support can be found within 3 and 4-way higher-order interactions discussed in Chapter 4. It was expected that for agenda strategies (vs. compensatory) consideration set inclusion probabilities would be significantly greater for novices than for experts. It was believed that experts are generally more able to handle information processing tasks and would have less need for choice simplification strategies such as agendas. Novices, on the other hand, might more readily accept a simplification strategy regarding which products to consider. Results partially supported this

thinking. When agenda strategies were used, novices were more likely to include the target in the consideration, but only in a discrete buyer/seller relationship. Similar results existed for product evaluations. When agenda strategies were used, novices rated the target products significantly higher in discrete conditions only. In sifting through information and alternatives, novices may have first placed emphasis on the relationship with the seller and then looked to the evidence provided in the agenda. When no on-going relationship was present (discrete exchange), the type of sales presentation may have taken on greater importance for novices.

Similarly, choice probabilities were not generally higher for novices than experts under agenda conditions. This only held true for novices in a discrete exchange including the weaker product K. Overall, results indicated partial support in the opposite direction. The greatest effect of agenda strategies on choice probabilities occurred for experts rather than novices. However, even here results were mixed. While for experts, agendas increased choice probabilities in three of the four product/relationship conditions, agendas were associated with decreased choice probabilities when the experts were presented with the stronger product G within a relational exchange. The reason for these outcomes is not immediately apparent. One explanation is that the one decline of choice probabilities occurring for experts in a relational exchange might be due to reactance and higher levels of perceived seller manipulativeness, but other data do not support this idea. Specifically, there

was no significant increase in perceived seller manipulativeness when agenda strategies (vs. compensatory strategies) were used for experts in a relational exchange for either of the two target products.

Expertise was also expected to interact with strategy type to affect perceptions of the seller. It was reasoned that novices would possess fewer established buying criteria and have less experience in evaluating alternatives than experts. Thus, novices would be more likely to rate a seller as more expert if that salesperson provided a logical decision strategy and demonstrated knowledge of numerous competitive products as well as the seller's own. This hypothesized 2-way interaction was not significant over all conditions, but novices did perceive salespeople using agendas as more expert in three of the four product/relationship conditions. In the fourth product/relationship condition (product K, relational exchange), the agenda effect on seller expertise was in the expected direction for novices, but was not significant. On the other hand, agendas significantly increased perceived seller expertise for experts for only one condition (product G, discrete exchange).

Finally, it was also anticipated that expertise would interact with sales presentation type to affect perceptions of the choice and choice process. Here again, novices were seen as more likely than experts to be helped by an agenda's choice simplification strategy and as a result have greater confidence in the choice process, more satisfaction with their choice, and to have rated

the choice as less difficult to make. The only significant effect on perceptions of the choice and choice process was for confidence, and then it was in the opposite direction than predicted. Agendas increased the confidence of experts, but not novices. An understanding of this finding may be related to the issue of information processing load discussed earlier in this chapter. Although agendas were expected to simplify a choice, experts and novices may have assessed the information load present in each of the two sales strategies differently. Processing the additional competitive information presented in the agendas may have been more taxing for novices. Experts, on the other hand, may have been better at using the additional competitive information effectively and therefore gained greater confidence in the process. Also, this dissertation did not examine the frequency with which novices and experts normally use agenda or compensatory strategies. It may be that experts gained confidence when agenda presentations were used because the suggested agendas used criteria that expert buyers find more important, or perhaps the agendas closely resembled choice strategies that these experts had used in previous copier purchase decisions. Some evidence supporting this possibility exists in that experts rated the initial agenda criterion (productivity) as more important than did novices ($M_E = 5.53$, $M_N = 5.00$, $F_{1,244} = 12.15$, $p = .001$).

The difficulty in interpreting the expertise results may be related to sampling or measurement issues. As discussed in Chapter 4 (Table 5), 87%

of the sample had previously been involved in a copier purchase, which means that most of the novices were experienced. Perhaps better tests of expertise effects would have resulted if the sample had included more buyers with no copier purchase experience. Future research should address this expertise measurement issue.

Buyer/Seller Relationship

The study also investigated possible moderating effects of the buyer/seller relationship on the relationship between sales presentation types and selling effectiveness. The superiority of agenda presentations over compensatory presentations was hypothesized to be greater under discrete than under relational exchange. As discussed in Chapter 2, for the seller in a discrete exchange that does not have the benefit of the relational norms to heighten his effectiveness, the choice of sales strategy may be more important.

As predicted, choice probabilities under agenda (vs. compensatory) strategies were significantly greater under discrete than relational exchange. When relational norms were lacking, using an agenda strategy significantly increased the target product's chances of being the final choice. Effects were similar for product evaluation. Respondents rated both G and K significantly higher under discrete exchange. This idea of an agenda strategy's effectiveness being seen more clearly in discrete exchange was only partially supported regarding inclusion in the consideration set. An agenda strategy's advantage in discrete exchange was significant for novices only.

Following a rationale similar to that presented above for choice and consideration set, it was anticipated that an agenda strategy (vs. compensatory) would result in more significant increases in perceived seller expertise under discrete than relational exchange. This was partially supported by the 4-way interaction discussed in Chapter 4. In three of the four expertise/product conditions, perceived seller expertise was significantly higher for agenda (vs. compensatory) strategies in discrete exchange. The only exception occurred for experts shown the weaker product K. Conversely, there was a significant difference in perceived seller expertise across strategies for only one of the expertise/product conditions under relational exchange (novices shown the stronger product G). It is likely that a halo effect occurred for sellers under relational exchange. Buyers tended to attribute greater expertise to sellers with whom they have important and on-going relationships. Once more, when the advantage of selling a product under relational norms was absent (discrete exchange), there was greater opportunity for strategy to influence the level of selling expertise which buyers believed sellers to possess.

Relationship did not interact with strategy to affect perceptions of the choice and choice process. There were no significant differences in seller expertise across strategies for perceptions of choice difficulty, satisfaction with the final choice, and confidence regarding the choice process.

In total, this entire section discussing findings relating to relationship should not be interpreted to mean that agenda presentations are of no benefit under relational exchange and that salespeople should avoid using them. Instead, agendas should be seen as somewhat contributing to selling effectiveness in most cases of relational exchange. While using agendas under relational exchange may not significantly increment selling effectiveness, in most cases, agendas were as good or better than compensatory strategies. One difficulty in assessing the contribution of agenda sales strategies under relational exchange situations is that much still needs to be learned about the impact of relationship alone. In the future, an increased understanding of both relationship and strategy may allow researchers to disentangle the contributions of each.

The interaction of strategy and relationship produced an additional unhypothesized result pointing to yet another positive effect of agenda strategies. As a second check on the relationship manipulation, buyers were asked to indicate with which seller they felt the strongest relationship. Under relational exchange, there was no difference across strategies regarding the percent of respondents that felt their strongest relationship to be with the target seller (agenda 71.7%; compensatory 71.7%). However, under discrete exchange (where there was no difference between relationship manipulations), more buyers felt the strongest relationship to be with the target seller under agenda strategies (53.2%) than under compensatory strategies (27.3%). This

finding deserves greater investigation in future research. It may be that, even when no relationship is present, a seller using an agenda presentation may enjoy advantages somewhat similar to those of sellers in on-going relationships.

Relative Competitive Strength

The relative competitive strength of the product was also examined regarding its moderating effect on the relationship between sales strategy and selling effectiveness. It was hypothesized that all products would not benefit equally from agenda strategies. It was thought that the favorable effect on choice of agenda presentations (vs. compensatory presentations) would be greater for stronger product G. The advantageous effect on inclusion in the consideration set of agenda (vs. compensatory) presentations was predicted to be greater for the weaker product K. It was expected that G would be strong enough to be included in consideration sets, regardless of strategy, and would be most helped by being chosen more frequently under agenda rather than compensatory strategies. K, on the other hand, may not be good enough to be chosen frequently, but could possibly be helped into consideration sets by the positive effects of agenda (vs. compensatory) strategies. The predicted 2-way interactions were not significant, and there was no further support for the anticipated effect on consideration set. However, results of the 4-way interaction discussed in Chapter 4 showed the effects on choice to be different for the two products, but in the opposite direction than that predicted.

Agendas increased choice probabilities for product K in three of the four relationship/expertise conditions. Agendas only improved choice probabilities for G in one of those four conditions. Two reasons seem likely to have produced this result: (1) G was better than was thought, or the impact of any kind of sales presentation was underestimated; or (2) K had a better agenda.

In addition to choice, relative competitive strength (product) was a part of significant 4-way interactions for several of the other measures of selling effectiveness (product evaluation, seller expertise, seller manipulativeness, and buyer confidence). Clearly, the relative competitive strength of a product does interact with strategy and other variables to impact selling effectiveness, but additional questions may need answering before we may be able to fully understand these results. What types of products are most helped by agenda strategies? What is the range of relative competitive strength positions that products can occupy and be helped by agendas? How strong an advantage should exist on a product attribute before it is included in an agenda presentation? Much more research is needed across a variety of products to answer these questions about relative competitive advantage.

Limitations

The results reported in Chapter 4 and the ideas discussed in the preceding section need to be interpreted in light of the limitations of this research. Two broad categories of limitations will be discussed here: those imposed by the

very nature of an experiment and those relating to other methodological and measurement issues.

First, it would have been ideal to study the impact of agenda sales strategies on selling effectiveness using real salespeople selling their products to actual buyers. However, that setting would have introduced many extraneous factors which would have confounded results and made measurement difficult (variance in the amount and manner in which information was presented due to interruptions by buyer questions, differences in salespeople's tone of voice and emphasis, advantages or disadvantages due to buyers' brand name perceptions, salesperson attractiveness issues, complex organizational and personal relationship factors, etc.).

Because theory testing, the primary objective here, required a level of control not likely to be achieved in an actual sales setting, the natural sales environment was sacrificed in favor of field experiment methodology. While making manipulation of variables easier, the use of an experiment did impose limits on the types of agendas that could be constructed. First, the agendas had to be inflexible to be consistent across treatments and had to be presented without the customary interaction between buyer and seller. In a real call, the salesperson would have the opportunity to react to and revise agenda presentations based on feedback from the buyer. Recognizing the benefits of two-way communication, it would seem that agenda presentations would be even more effective when used in real purchase situations. Also, for

the purposes of this simulation, the agenda presentations were all concluded within a single sales call. In reality, these strategies might be developed over a series of calls. Of course, one benefit of using a simulation is the ability it gives researchers to study phenomena that generally occurs over longer periods of time. However, in this case, condensing the agenda presentation, may have made it less effective than it would be in more real circumstances. In the simulation, the salesperson had to quickly develop the elimination rationale and could not benefit from making the same point on repeated occasions as would often be allowed in a real selling situation.

Acknowledging that experiments provide greater internal validity at the cost of external validity, the simulation was made as realistic as possible. Every effort was made to add realism to the scripts. A commercially sold product guide and the researcher's experience selling copiers were used as sources to insure information authenticity and commonly used sales call format. The copier product features and the agenda attributes discussed were representative of product features and capabilities of existing products. Finally, the sample was drawn from the field of actual copier buyers. External validity will continue to increase as future research on agenda presentations involves a variety of consumer and industrial products sold in a variety of markets.

Despite the benefit of studying expertise effects using actual buyers, the distribution of respondents' number of copier purchasing experiences and the

expertise measure developed for the study may have limited what could be learned regarding expertise and how it interacts with sales presentation types. Only 87% of the sample had previously been involved in a copier purchase decision and 74% had either made a final recommendation or been a final decision maker on the most recent purchase. As defined in this study, experts have established choice criteria and ways of evaluating alternatives. It is very possible that even after one experience of high level responsibility for a copier purchase the buyer may no longer be a novice by this definition. In addition, the expertise scale showed good psychometric properties but did not do well in producing much variance in the responses. The expertise distribution tended to cluster around the mean and thus raised the question as to whether or not the large groups of respondents just above or below the mean split were actually different enough in expertise to warrant assignment to novice and expert conditions. Although the scale may provide a foundation for future studies, perhaps expanding the scale to include objective measures of product knowledge and purchase experience would aid in better delineating between expert and novice copier buyers.

A final limitation to be discussed in this section relates to the manipulation of relationship. Admittedly the results of this study need to be interpreted in light of the fact that a written description of a buyer/seller relationship cannot incorporate all the complexities that are involved in real world relationships. However, there is evidence that the relationship manipulation was successful.

First, results of the manipulation checks were statistically significant. Second, in responding to an open-ended question asking why they chose the copier that they did, a number of respondents included the relationship with the salesperson as part of their reason to purchase.

Directions for Future Research

This dissertation has provided some basic understanding of the relationship between sales presentation types and selling effectiveness and the impact on that relationship of a number of moderating variables. However, additional research is required to better clarify this study's findings and to increase understanding of a number of issues which this research has raised.

This study has shown that agendas can influence selling effectiveness, but little is known about how best to strengthen that influence by creating optimally effective agendas. To understand how best to develop agendas, future research may wish to address topics such as the most effective sequencing of constraints, the impact of different numbers of agenda stages, how important attributes should be before including them in an agenda, and the impact of narrowing the alternatives quickly vs. more slowly. Examining repeated purchase behavior may also better our understanding of agenda effectiveness. It would be helpful for sales management to know if the constraints established in agenda presentations are more readily recalled and more frequently used as criteria in subsequent decisions than the information gained in compensatory presentations.

Despite the presentation of competitive information, sellers using agendas were perceived positively as evidenced by increased perceptions of seller expertise and no increase in perceptions of seller manipulativeness. This is counter to conventional wisdom that suggests that such behavior will backfire on the seller because it will be seen as degrading other products. Another fear is that buyers learning of other alternatives will include the new alternatives in their search. If true, this could, of course, decrease choice probabilities for the original product. What made the difference in this study? Was it important that the agendas presented positive as well as negative information regarding competitors? How can salespeople most effectively present competitive information to their own advantage? And, what is the impact on search of presenting competitive information in agenda format? Further study may begin to supply some answers to these questions.

This research also raised issues regarding buyer expertise. Findings showed that the choice probabilities of experts, rather than novices, were most influenced by agendas. Why did this occur? Were experts just better able to appreciate the logical appeal of the agenda, or were agenda strategies more comfortable because of similarity to strategies that experts already use? Would the effect be the same if respondents included less experienced "novices?" Only further investigation can resolve these issues.

Much current research focuses on the impact and advantages of an on-going relationship for the partners in a marketing exchange. Sellers, however,

must be ready to handle new customers as well. Agendas have been shown here to be a particularly effective strategy when a relationship did not exist previously (discrete exchange). In fact, when sellers used agendas in a discrete exchange, a significant number of buyers felt that their strongest relationship was with that seller. Can an agenda strategy in some way compensate for the lack of a buyer/seller relationship? Does an agenda strategy hasten the building of buyer trust in a salesperson? Studies focusing on interactions between relationship and sales strategy would be important to researchers and sales managers alike.

This dissertation investigated how the relative competitive strength of a product moderated agenda effects. Results were counter to those predicted in that the weaker product was helped the most in choice. Stronger products may incur few benefits from an agenda, but it is also possible that a more effective agenda was inadvertently constructed for the weaker product in the current study.

Among sales practitioners, the topic of the most effective order in which suppliers should meet with buyers has long been of interest. Some salespeople feel it best to be the first to make a presentation, while others prefer to be last on the scene. These two preferences speak to primacy and recency effects, respectively. In this research, the counterbalancing of the experimental design with regard to presenting the target product first or second introduced significant order effects in many cases. In general,

advantage went to the seller whose product was presented second. Although sellers do not always control the order in which they and their competitors meet with buyers, they do frequently have some ability to manage this aspect of selling. Buyers, eager to emphasize their intentions to meet with a seller's competitors before making a decision, often inadvertently reveal the timing of their plans to do so. Based on this research, it would seem advantageous to sellers to delay their appointments until the competition has first visited. It would be important to sales management to confirm this finding. In addition, the situation is complicated by the fact that buyers often see numerous vendors before reaching a decision. Will the advantage of presenting second still remain in these situations, or will the advantage fall to the one presenting last regardless of the number of predecessors? Under what circumstances would it be advantageous for a salesperson to be the first to meet with a buyer? These and other issues relating to sequence of presentation merit investigation in future research.

Equally as important to sales practitioners as information regarding sequence of presentation are issues relating to how agendas might be effectively incorporated into sales training programs. A beginning point may be to determine if and under what circumstances sellers currently use agendas in their presentations and to what result. If infrequently or ineffectively used, information and techniques need to be developed to help sales management train their sales force on the use of agenda sales strategies

Contributions of This Research

The final section of this dissertation focuses on the contributions of this research. The discussion will be organized with respect to conceptual, methodological and substantive contributions.

Conceptual

Agenda and Compensatory Sales Strategies

This research focused on one aspect of selling effectiveness, sales strategy selection and development. While sales strategy has long been recognized as important, little work has directly dealt with this aspect of selling effectiveness. This dissertation tested the effect of sales strategy in the form of agenda and compensatory sales presentations and introduced agendas to the sales literature. Findings of this study contribute to our knowledge of the effectiveness of attempts to shape the buyer's choice process by suggesting the order in which alternatives are eliminated.

Identification of Moderating Variables

The specific conceptual model developed for this study proposed several moderators to the relationship between sales presentation type and selling effectiveness. The constructs of Buyer Expertise, Buyer/Seller Relationship, and Relative Competitive Strength corresponded to Weitz's constructs of Characteristics of Customer's Buying Task, Characteristics of the Salesperson-Customer Relationship and Resources of Salesperson, respectively. Findings

of this research point to the significant impact of each of these variables on the relationship between sales presentation type and selling effectiveness.

Support for Weitz's Contingency Framework

By testing a conceptual model compatible with Weitz's Contingency Model of Salesperson Effectiveness (1981), this dissertation has provided support for Weitz's work. While the Contingency Model is widely accepted, researchers have had difficulty finding evidence of the interactions underlying the rationale for the model. While the findings of this research show limited support for Weitz's proposed 2-way interactions, ample evidence exists of the higher order interactions (in this case, 3 and 4-way interactions) which Weitz suggested may exist as well.

Integration of Sales and Choice Literature

Sales management and decision literature were integrated for this research. This effort to better understand influences on selling effectiveness extended work on contingent and adaptive aspects of decision making in both domains. Findings of this study point to a number of contingencies which alter the effectiveness of the two strategies tested. In addition, results suggest how salespeople may wish to adapt their sales strategy choices based on the buyer's expertise, the type of existing buyer/seller relationship, and the competitive position of the product s/he represents.

Methodological

Computer-Interactive Questionnaire and Purchase Simulation

Experimental control in sales research is tremendously difficult due to personal relationship factors, salesperson attractiveness issues, and differences in tone of voice and emphasis used. This research suggests one solution, which is the use of simulated sales calls. A computer-interactive questionnaire in the form of a purchase simulation was developed for this study of sales strategy. Scripts developed for each of the sales presentations and delivered via computer insured that there would be consistency across treatments. The use of the computer as opposed to real salespeople insured uniformity regarding the delivery of the presentations, the administration of scales and manipulations, and control of the type and amount of information provided. While involving a substantial initial time investment, the scripts can be used in future studies of sales strategy involving a copier purchase context or can act as a pattern for developing purchase simulations for other products.

Manipulations

The manipulation of relationship developed for this study will contribute to future sales and choice research. Text was developed for a manipulation of relationship. These manipulations of discrete and relational exchange were presented as descriptions of the respondent's (buyer's) previous interactions with the salesperson about to make a presentation. The bases for these

descriptions were the relational norms of role integrity, solidarity, and harmonization chosen for their likely influence on the acceptance or rejection of a sales presentation. Manipulation checks showed that discrete and relational exchange were successfully manipulated.

Scales

A number of scales were developed in the course of this research. These scales included measures for buyer expertise, perception of seller expertise, perception of seller manipulativeness, perception of choice difficulty, confidence in the choice process, and satisfaction with the final choice. Each of the scales showed satisfactory psychometric properties.

Substantive

Agendas as Selling Tools

In general, agendas were shown to be as good as or better than compensatory strategies. These findings suggest that salespeople should at least consider the use of an agenda whenever making a sales presentation. Agendas were shown to be particularly effective in discrete exchange conditions. Because of this, agendas should perhaps be given even more serious consideration in those situations where sellers are trying to create initial rapport and trust and to educate a new perspective buyer about the product that s/he represents. Situations in which an existing relationship with the buyer is lacking have always been problematic for salespeople. Agendas

may prove extremely effective here because buyers may tend to perceive these sellers as high in expertise and may feel a stronger relationship with that seller than if a compensatory strategy were used. In addition, the reinterpretation of buying criteria which agendas suggest may also be just what is needed for an "out" supplier to break in on any straight rebuy situations of which he or she learns.

Agenda Training

This work has shown that agenda sales presentations can be effective sales strategies. This knowledge can mean the addition of an important sales tool for those sellers not currently using agendas in their presentations. Among sales forces not familiar with agendas, sales management may wish to consider information regarding this strategy in their sales training programs. The operationalization of agenda sales presentations developed here may provide guidance as to how to develop agenda presentations for these possible training sessions.

Appendix A

AGENDA SCRIPT FOR COPIERS G AND K

Agenda Script for Copier G

Hello! It's nice to see you again. I appreciate the opportunity to help you with your purchase of a mid-volume copier. You've previously explained your buying criteria to me, and what I'd like to do today is show you what an excellent job Copier G will do for your company.

Press any key to continue.

I have lots of good things to say about our Copier G, but that's really only half the story. To see what Copier G can do, let's compare it to what the other copiers offer. That way you'll have more information to make your decision.

Of course, some copiers may not suit your needs, so as we go why don't you tell me which ones you're still interested in. That way we can focus on the copiers that do meet your needs, and what I hope to show you is that Copier G really is the best for you.

Is this procedure okay with you?

Press 1 for Yes
2 for No
3 for Not Sure

(Screen if answer was No or Not Sure)

Let me show you what I mean. I think you'll like having the information.

(Script proceeds as if answer had been Yes)

First let's talk about getting copying done fast. As you know, TIME IS MONEY! Fast copying frees up employees to do other jobs, increasing productivity and saving money for your business.

Copier G delivers a first copy from glass to output tray in only 6 1/2 seconds. Also, Copier G completes the standard measure of two-sided copying (10 sets of 10 two-sided originals) in only 7 minutes, 25 seconds.

Are productivity goals emphasized in your business?

Press 1 for Yes
2 for No

(Script proceeds regardless of answer)

Most copiers are advertised as being productive, but buyers have learned they need to be careful about those claims!

Many products rated at 40 to 45 copies per minute fail to deliver that speed during actual use. That's because the rated speed is based on making multiple copies of a single sheet of paper placed on the glass. But, productivity can fall off drastically when the automatic feeder and other copier features are used - sometimes up to 60%!

Press any key to continue.

The GOOD NEWS is that some copiers maintain productivity levels better than others. Copier G loses only 29% of its productivity when using the automatic feeder - less than half the productivity loss of some other products in its class that can lose as much as 60%.

Because it is so key, the copier industry has documented measures of productivity. Only you can decide how important this is, but our experience shows that a slow down of more than one-third frustrates buyers and is unacceptable.

So, I've grouped together copiers that fall above and below that guideline. The productivity losses shown next are based on rated multiple-copy speeds ranging from 40 to 45 copies per minute.

Press any key to continue.

As you see, copiers in Group I meet the suggested guideline of no more than one-third productivity loss when using an automatic feeder, but those in Group II do not. Given this information, do you want to eliminate products in Group II from further consideration? If you do, we can focus on Group I copiers, which have higher productivity.

GROUP I	LOSS	GROUP II	LOSS
G	29 %	Y	49 %
J	29 %	L	55 %
T	33 %	W	60 %
H	8 %	N	39 %
R	23 %		
P	3 %		
K	8 %		
V	13 %		

Do you want to eliminate Group II copiers?

Press 1 for Yes
2 for No

(Screen for respondents who do not eliminate Group II)

Perhaps you want to eliminate only a few of the Group II copiers. If you do, use the ARROW key to move the bar to any copier you want to eliminate and then press ENTER. When you finish, use the arrow key to select "NONE OF ABOVE/NO MORE."

GROUP I	LOSS	GROUP II	LOSS
G	29 %	Y	49 %
J	29 %	L	55 %
T	33 %	W	60 %
H	8 %	N	39 %
R	23 %	NONE OF ABOVE/ NO MORE	
P	3 %		
K	8 %		
V	13 %		

(Screen for all respondents)

Now think about how important it is to get a quick response when something goes wrong. Even the fastest copier is unsatisfactory without quick repair.

The time that it takes for the repair technician to arrive is only part of the story. The turnaround time until the repair is finished also depends on experienced and well trained technicians with reasonable workloads and available replacement parts.

Copier G's repair teams do well on all of these! Technicians receive the latest factory training and specialize in repairing particular models. Service vans are stocked with more than 90% of possible replacement parts. And, we keep workloads small to maintain our quick response.

Press any key to continue.

Brand G copier owners NEVER wait two business-days (16 hours) for service, as many copier owners do. Brand G's average service turnaround time is only ten hours, with many calls completed even faster.

When you are checking out options, what kind of service time do buyers look for? It seems reasonable to be wary of companies that can't respond in under 12 hours or one and a half business days. This means that you would expect that a repair call submitted early one day be done by noon the following business day.

So let's look at service call turnaround times for the copiers in which you are still interested. These are the average number of business hours between the service request and the completed repair.These copiers are grouped to show whether their turnaround times are better or worse than the suggested guideline of 12 hours (1 1/2 business days).

(Screen reflects all eliminations made in productivity section.
Assumes Group II was eliminated.)

As you see, Group I copiers meet the suggested guideline of less than 12 hours service turnaround time, while Group II does not. Given this information, do you want to eliminate products in Group II from further consideration? If you do, we can focus on Group I copiers, which have better service times.

GROUP I	TURNAROUND	GROUP II	TURNAROUND
G	10 Hrs.	T	14 Hrs.
J	2 Hrs.	K	18 Hrs.
H	6 Hrs.		
R	6 Hrs.		
P	4 Hrs.		
V	12 Hrs.		

Do you want to eliminate Group II copiers?

Press 1 for Yes
2 for No

(Screen for respondents who do not eliminate Group II for Service Turnaround)

Perhaps you want to eliminate only a few of the Group II copiers. If you do, use the ARROW key to move the bar to any copier you want to eliminate and then press ENTER. When you finish, use the arrow key to select "NONE OF ABOVE/NO MORE."

GROUP I	TURNAROUND	GROUP II	TURNAROUND
G	10 hrs.	T	14 hrs.
J	2 hrs.	K	18 hrs.
H	6 hrs.	NONE OF ABOVE/NO MORE	
R	6 hrs.		
P	4 hrs.		
V	12 hrs.		

(Screen for all respondents)

A final point to consider is your copier's reliability — perhaps the most important factor in customer satisfaction.

Over time, most buyers are only happy if their copier is consistently up and running.

Is buying a copier with high reliability important to you?

Press 1 for Yes
2 for No

As you may know, there are tremendous differences in reliability, even for new copiers!

Luckily, INDEPENDENT research firms run rigorous reliability tests and report their results to the market-place. They run copiers 24 hours a day, 7 days a week to compile breakdown data and offer long-term reliability projections for new-model copiers. I can show you the ratings of an independent research lab that uses a scale of from 1 to 10, where

10 = outstanding reliability
1 = poor reliability.

Press any key to continue.

This independent laboratory has awarded Copier G a reliability rating of 9, among the higher possible ratings!

Now let's see the reliability ratings of all of the copiers in which you are interested. Because buyers are generally not willing to compromise on reliability, I have only included copiers with high ratings of 8 and above in Group I. Copiers with more average reliability ratings, 7 and below, are part of Group II.

Press any key to continue.

(Reflects all eliminations for productivity and service turnaround time)

As you see, Group I copiers have higher reliability ratings (8 and above). Do you want to eliminate the less reliable Group II copiers? If you do, we can focus on Group I copiers with better reliability.

GROUP I	RATING	GROUP II	RATING
G	9	J	5
V	9	H	7
		R	5
		P	3

Do you want to eliminate Group II copiers?

Press 1 for Yes
2 for No

(Screen for respondents who do not eliminate Group II)

Perhaps you want to eliminate only a few of the Group II copiers. If you do, use the ARROW key to move the bar to any copier you want to eliminate and then press ENTER. When you finish, use the arrow key to select "NONE OF ABOVE/NO MORE."

GROUP I	RATING	GROUP II	RATING
G	9	J	5
V	9	H	7
		R	5
		P	3
		NONE OF ABOVE/NO MORE	

You have seen how well Brand G copiers perform with regard to performance, service turnaround time, reliability and product features. The best news is that Brand G copiers offer all this at a very reasonable price.

You will get our Brand G copier equipped with automatic feeder, sorter, reduction and enlargement settings, and automatic two-sided copying capabilities. All this is available to you for the following low price:

Copier Price	$11,800
Supply Cost Per Copy	0082 cents
Warranty	3 Year Warranty (all parts & labor)

Agenda Script for Copier K

Hello! It's nice to see you again. I appreciate the opportunity to help you with your purchase of a mid-volume copier. You've previously explained your buying criteria to me, and what I'd like to do today is show you what an excellent job Copier K will do for your company.

Press any key to continue.

I have lots of good things to say about our Copier K, but that's really only half the story. To see what Copier K can do, let's compare it to what the other copiers offer. That way you'll have more information to make your decision.

Of course, some copiers may not suit your needs, so as we go why don't you tell me which ones you're still interested in. That way we can focus on the copiers that do meet your needs, and what I hope to show you is that Copier K really is the best for you.

Does this sound like a good way to proceed?

Press 1 for Yes
2 for No
3 for Not Sure

(Screen if previous answer was No or Not Sure)

Let me show you what I mean. I think you'll like having the information.

Press any key to continue.

First let's talk about getting copying done fast. As you know, TIME IS MONEY! Fast copying frees up employees to do other jobs, increasing productivity and saving money for your business.

Copier K delivers a first copy from glass to output tray in only 5 1/2 seconds. Also, Copier K completes the standard measure of two-sided copying (10 sets of 10 two-sided originals) in only 6 minutes, 55 seconds.

Are productivity goals emphasized in your business?

Press 1 for Yes
2 for No

Most copiers are advertised as being productive, but buyers have learned they need to be careful about those claims.

Many products rated at 40 to 45 copies per minute fail to deliver that speed during actual use. That's because the rated speed is based on making multiple copies of a single sheet of paper placed on the glass. But, productivity can fall off drastically when the automatic feeder and other copier features are used - sometimes up to 60%.

Press any key to continue.

The GOOD NEWS is that some copiers maintain productivity better than others. Copier K loses only 8% of its productivity when using the automatic feeder - less than a sixth of the productivity loss of some other products in its class that can lose as much as 60%.

Because it is so key, the copier industry has documented measures of productivity. Only you can decide how important this is, but our experience shows that a slow down of more than ten percent frustrates buyers and is unacceptable. So I've grouped together copiers that fall above and below that guideline. The productivity losses shown next are based on rated multiple-copy speeds of from 40 to 45 copies per minute.

Press any key to continue.

As you see, copiers in Group I meet the suggested guideline of less than a ten percent productivity loss when using an automatic feeder, but those in Group II do not. Given this information, do you want to eliminate products in Group II from further consideration? If you do, we can focus on Group I copiers, which have higher productivity.

GROUP I	LOSS	GROUP II	LOSS
H	8%	Y	49%
P	3%	L	55%
K	8%	W	60%
		J	29%
		T	33%
		G	29%
		R	23%
		N	39%
		V	13%

Do you want to eliminate Group II products?

Press 1 for Yes
2 for No

(Screen for respondents who do not eliminate Group II)

Perhaps you want to eliminate only a few of the Group II copiers. If you do, use the ARROW key to move the bar to any you want to eliminate and then press ENTER. When you're finished, use the arrow key to select "NONE OF ABOVE/NO MORE."

GROUP I	% LOSS	GROUP II	% LOSS
H	8%	Y	49%
P	3%	L	55%
K	8%	W	60%
		J	29%
		T	33%
		G	29%
		R	23%
		N	39%
		V	13%
		NONE OF ABOVE/NO MORE	

(Screen for all respondents)

A final point to consider is your copier's reliability — perhaps the most important factor in customer satisfaction.

Over time, most buyers are only happy if their copier is consistently up and running.

Is buying a copier with high reliability important to you?

Press 1 for Yes
2 for No

As you may know, there are tremendous differences in reliability, even for new copiers!

Luckily, INDEPENDENT research firms run rigorous reliability tests and report their results to the market-place. They run copiers 24 hours a day, 7 days a week to compile breakdown data and offer long-term reliability projections for new- model copiers. I can show you the ratings of an independent research lab that uses a scale of from 1 to 10, where

10 = outstanding reliability

1 = poor reliability.

Press any key to continue

This independent laboratory has awarded Copier K a better than average reliability rating of 6!

Now let's see the reliability ratings of all of the copiers in which you are interested. Because buyers are generally not willing to compromise on reliability, I have only included copiers with better than average ratings of 6 and above in Group I. Copiers with average to below average ratings, 5 or less, are part of Group II.

Press any key to continue.

(Screen reflects all eliminations made in productivity section.
Assumes Group II was eliminated.)

As you see, Group I copiers have better than average reliability ratings (6 and above). Do you want to eliminate the less reliable Group II copiers? If you do, we can focus on Group I copiers with better reliability.

GROUP I	RATING	GROUP II	RATING
H	7	P	3
K	6		

Do you want to eliminate Group II products?

Press 1 for Yes
2 for No

(Screen for respondents who do not eliminate Group II)

Perhaps you want to eliminate only a few of the Group II copiers. If you do, use the ARROW key to move the bar to any you want to eliminate and then press ENTER. When you finish, select "NONE OF ABOVE/NO MORE."

GROUP I	LOSS	GROUP II	LOSS
H	7	P	3
K	6	NONE OF ABOVE/NO MORE	

You have seen why overall Brand K is the best copier for you. You have learned how well Brand K copiers measure up with regard to performance, reliability, and product features. The best news is that Brand K copiers offer all this at a very reasonable price.

The Brand K copier is equipped with automatic feeder, sorter, reduction and enlargement settings, and automatic two-sided copying capabilities. All this is available to you for the following low price:

Copier Price	$11,500
Supply Cost Per Copy	.0076 cents
Warranty	3 Year Warranty (all parts & labor)

Press any key to continue.

Appendix B

COMPENSATORY SCRIPT FOR COPIERS G AND K

Compensatory Script for Copier G

Hello! It's nice to see you again. I appreciate the opportunity to help you with your purchase of a mid-volume copier. You've previously explained your buying criteria to me, and what I'd like to do today is show you what an excellent job Copier G will do for your company.

Press any key to continue.

First let's talk about getting copying done fast. As you know, TIME IS MONEY! Fast copying frees up employees to do other jobs, increasing productivity and saving money for your business.

Copier G delivers a first copy from glass to output tray in only 6 1/2 seconds. Also, Copier G completes the standard measure of two-sided copying (10 sets of 10 two-sided originals) in only 7 minutes, 25 seconds.

Are productivity goals emphasized in your business?

Press 1 for Yes
2 for No

(Screen for all respondents regardless of previous response)

Most copiers are advertised as being productive, but buyers have learned they need to be careful about those claims!

Many products rated at 40 to 45 copies per minute fail to deliver that speed during actual use. That's because the rated speed is based on making multiple copies of a single sheet of paper placed on the glass. So, productivity can fall off drastically when the automatic feeder and other copier features are used - sometimes up to 60%!

Press any key to continue.

The GOOD NEWS is that some copiers maintain productivity levels better than others. Copier G loses only 29% of its productivity when using the automatic feeder - less than half the productivity loss of some other products in its class that can lose as much as 60%.

Press any key to continue.

Now think about how important it is to get a quick response when something goes wrong. Even the fastest copier is unsatisfactory without quick repair.

The time that it takes for the repair technician to arrive is only part of the story. The turnaround time until the repair is finished also depends on experienced and well trained technicians with reasonable workloads and available replacement parts.

Copier G's repair teams do well on all of these! Technicians receive the latest factory training and specialize in repairing particular models. Service vans are stocked with more than 90% of possible replacement parts. And, we keep workloads small to maintain our quick response.

Press any key to continue.

Brand G copier owners NEVER wait two business-days (16 hours) for service, as many copier owners do. Brand G's average service turnaround time is only ten hours, with many calls completed even faster.

Press any key to continue.

A final point to consider is your copier's reliability - perhaps the most important factor in customer satisfaction.

Over time, most buyers are only happy if their copier is consistently up and running.

Is buying a copier with high reliability important to you?

Press 1 for Yes
2 for No

(Screen for all respondents regardless of previous answer.)

As you may know, there are tremendous differences in reliability, even for new copiers!

Luckily, INDEPENDENT research firms run rigorous reliability tests and report their results to the market-place. They run copiers 24 hours a day, 7 days a week to compile breakdown data and offer long-term reliability projections for new-model copiers. I can show you the ratings of an independent research lab that uses a scale of from 1 to 10, where

10 = outstanding reliability
1 = poor reliability.

Press any key to continue.

This independent laboratory has awarded Copier G a reliability rating of 9, among the highest possible ratings!

Press any key to continue.

You have seen how well Brand G copiers perform with regard to performance, service turnaround time, reliability and product features. The best news is that Brand G copiers offer all this at a very reasonable price.

You will get our Brand G copier equipped with automatic feeder, sorter, reduction and enlargement settings, and automatic two-sided copying capabilities. All this is available to you for the following low price:

Copier Price	$11,868
Supply Cost Per Copy	.0082 cents
Warranty	3 Year Warranty (all parts & labor)

Press any key to continue.

Compensatory Script for Copier K

Hello! It's nice to see you again. I'm glad that you have time to meet with me today. I know that you are in the market for a mid-sized copier, and I appreciate the opportunity to assist you with that. You've told me something about what criteria you have for the purchase, and what I'd like to do today is show you what an excellent job Copier K could do for your company.

Press any key to continue.

TIME IS MONEY! Copiers that reduce copying time frees up employees to do other jobs, increasing productivity and saving money for your business.

Copier K delivers a first copy from glass to output tray in only 5 1/2 seconds. Also, Copier K completes the standard measure of two-sided copying (10 sets of 10 two-sided originals) in only 6 minutes, 55 seconds.

Press any key to continue.

You can find other mid-volume products rated at 42 copies per minute, but look out - many copiers fail to deliver the promised level of productivity in actual use. That's because the rated speed is based on multiple copies of a single page placed on the glass. But, productivity falls off when the automatic feeder and other copier features are used. All copiers lose some of their speed when automatic feeders are used, but for some the drop is drastic - up to 60%.

The GOOD NEWS is that a few copiers do maintain good productivity levels. Compared to a possible 60% drop for some copiers, Copier K loses only 8% of its productivity when the automatic feeder is used. With Copier K, you always receive your copies quickly.

Do you understand why productivity drops are so important?

Press 1 for Yes
2 for No

(Screen if previous answer is no)

In other words, the commonly quoted multiple-copy speed refers to the speed if only one copy is made by placing the original directly on the glass. When the automatic feeder or sorter is used, the speed of many copiers drops terribly. What is worse is that many copier buyers don't learn the disappointing news about the lost productivity until after the purchase.

Copier K maintains its productivity! It loses only 8% of its speed compared to 60% for some competitors.

Press any key to continue.

Your copier's reliability may be the most important factor in customer satisfaction. Over time, you're only happy if your copier is up and running. What some people don't realize is that even brand new copiers differ tremendously with regard to reliability.

Press any key to continue.

To help customers assess the reliability of new products, INDEPENDENT research firms perform rigorous product tests and report their results to the marketplace. Continuously working copiers 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, these laboratories are able to record breakdown data and to offer you long-term reliability projections for new-model copiers operating in typical business situations. One such independent research lab has recently rated new copiers using a scale of from 1 to 10, where

10 = outstanding reliability
1 = poor reliability.

That independent laboratory has awarded Copier K a reliability rating of 6, or better than average reliability!

Do you think it's important to have better than average reliability?

Press 1 for Yes
2 for No

You have seen why overall Brand K is the best copier for you. You have learned how well Brand K copiers measure up with regard to performance, reliability, and product features. The best news is that Brand K copiers offer all this at a very reasonable price.

The Brand K copier is equipped with automatic feeder, sorter, reduction and enlargement settings, and automatic two-sided copying capabilities. All this is available to you for the following low price:

Copier Price	$11,500
Supply Cost Per Copy	.0076 cents
Warranty	3 Year Warranty (all parts & labor)

Press any key to continue.

Appendix C

Relationship Manipulations

Discrete Exchange Manipulation

Gary Griffin, the salesperson for Copier G, has now come to tell you about his product. He has already learned something about your needs during a previous call.

On the next screen, I describe your previous inter-actions with Gary. As I do, try to form an impression of what he is like. If you wish, you can make notes on the Product Comparison Chart about anything you want to remember from Gary's presentation .

Press any key to continue.

Your firm has bought products from Gary Griffin, the Copier G salesperson, in the past. Gary has provided you with detailed information about the products that he represents. Sales calls focus on information that directly pertains to the purchase of these products - information that you found to be very helpful in your purchase decisions. Gary visits with you to talk about products you have purchased or products you may need, but you don't have him visit with you on a regular basis to discuss general business conditions or practices.

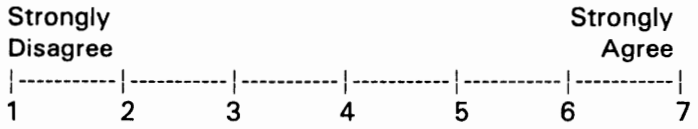
Press any key to continue.

Although you have bought products from Gary Griffin in the past, it is not important to you to develop or maintain an on-going relationship with him. Once Gary has fulfilled the terms of a purchase agreement, your relationship with him ends until your next purchase, when you may or may not give him a call.

Press any key to continue.

Relationship Manipulation Checks

Use the scale below to indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statements about Gary Griffin. If you want to review the previous information about you and Gary before you answer, press ESC twice.



1. Gary is just another supplier.

2. My relationship with Gary involves many different areas of business activity.

3. I would tend to trust Gary more than I would most other salespeople.

4. It is likely that Gary and I will be working closely together in the future.

Relational Exchange Manipulation

Gary Griffin, the copier salesperson for Copier G will now visit to talk with you about Copier G. He has already learned something about your needs during a previous sales call.

If you wish, you can make notes about anything you want to remember from his presentation on the Product Comparison Chart.

Press any key to continue.

Before he calls, I want to describe your past experience with Gary. As I do, try to form an impression of what he is like.

Press any key to continue.

Your company has bought products from Gary Griffin, the Copier G salesperson, in the past. But, there's a lot more to your working relationship with Gary than just buying and selling products.

During sales calls, you and Gary share information on many topics besides product purchases — things like cost reductions, office productivity, and customer satisfaction that are very useful in solving general business problems. Gary is so helpful that it's worthwhile to you to have him visit you on a regular basis.

Press any key to continue.

You and Gary are careful to maintain a cooperative relationship, and both of you want to continue the working relationship. Even if you don't purchase your copier from Gary, you know there will be no hard feelings, and you'll work together in the future. Both of you are committed to developing and maintaining a good working relationship — one that will last a long time.

Press any key to continue.

Relationship Manipulation Checks

The same manipulation checks are used here as were used for the discrete relationship manipulation.

Appendix D

MEASURES

Expertise Scale

1. I understand the features of a copier well enough to be considered an expert when evaluating different brands.

2. I know exactly what product characteristics are needed to select the very best copier.

3. If a friend of mine were buying a copier, I would be an excellent source of information for that friend.

4. If I were asked to make a copier purchase decision today, I would know exactly what to look for.

5. Regarding how to purchase a good copier, I would consider myself more of an expert than most copier buyers.

Consideration Set

Initial Measure. If you were buying today and had ONLY the information on the chart (Product Comparisons Chart), how many copiers would you want to investigate furthe?

Final Measure. Knowing what you do now, which copiers are you still very seriously considering buying?

Choice

Final Choice. It is time to make a final selection of the ONE copier that you would purchase if you were asked to buy today. Please type the number that is in front of the ONE copier brand that you would buy today if this were a real purchase.

Second Choice. Which copier would you purchase if your first choice weren't available?

Evaluation of the Target Product (7-point Likert scale)

I am particularly interested in what you thought of Copier G(K). Regardless of whether or not you chose Copier G(K), how good do you think it is? (anchored by poor and excellent)

Perceptions of Choice Difficulty (7-point Likert scales)

1. How hard was it for you to make a decision?
   (anchored by Not At All Hard & Extremely Hard)

2. How complicated was it to make your decision?
   (anchored by Not At All Complicated & Extremely Complicated)

3. How confusing was it to make your decision?
   (anchored by Not At All Confusing & Extremely Confusing)

Confidence Regarding the Choice Process (7-point Likert scales)

1. How confident are you that you made the best choice for you?
   (anchored by Not At All Confident & Extremely Confident)

2. How certain are you that you made a good decision?
   (anchored by Not At All Certain & Extremely Certain)

3. How sure are you that your decision was a good one?
   (anchored by Not At All Sure & Extremely Sure)

Satisfaction with the Final Choice (7-point Likert scales)

1. How satisfied do you think you will be with your decision?
   (anchored by Not At All Satisfied & Extremely Satisfied)

2. How happy do you think you would be with the copier you chose?
   (anchored by Not At All Happy & Extremely Happy)

3. How pleased are you with your decision?
   (anchored by Not At All Pleased & Extremely Pleased)

Perceptions of Seller Expertise (7-point Likert scales comparing seller to average salesperson)

1. How much does Gary(Ken) know about Copier G(K)?

2. How much sales experience does Gary(Ken) seem to have?

3. How good are Gary's(Ken's) selling skills?

4. How knowledgeable is Gary(Ken) about the competitive products in this industry?

Perceptions of Seller Manipulativeness (7-point Likert scales— anchored by Strongly Agree and Strongly Disagree)

1. Gary(Ken) may have been "bending the facts" to create the impression he wanted.

2. Gary(Ken) was up front with important information that might affect my choice.

3. Gary(Ken) honestly represented product features.

Appendix E

COVER LETTER

Date _____

Ms. Jane Smith
ABC Company
100 Main Street
Roanoke, VA 99999

Dear Ms. Smith:

Thank you for your generous and much appreciated offer to participate in my dissertation research project. This project is necessary for me to complete my Ph.D. in Marketing from Virginia Tech.

As explained during the telephone conversation, I am hoping to learn how you would make a copier purchase decision and how people such as yourself interact with salespeople.

I have enclosed all the materials necessary for you to record your ideas and to participate in the study. In addition to this letter, you should find the following:

1) Instruction Sheet — this will help you get started as well as provide answers to some questions that may come up.

2) Sealed Envelope — contains information that will be helpful later. You will be asked to open the envelope at the appropriate time during the interview.

3) Diskette & Mailer — inside the padded mailer is the diskette that you will use to record your responses to interview questions. Please KEEP the mailer because it will provide you with a safe and postage-paid way to return the completed diskette to me.

Please carefully read the entire Instruction Sheet before beginning. Although I need this information whenever you can provide it, it would be particularly great if you could mail back the completed diskette by (date)

Once again, thank you in advance for your help. I very much appreciate the gift of your time. It's only through the help of busy people like you that my project is possible. May good things come your way!

Yours truly,

Judy Wagner

Appendix F

COMPENSATORY PRESENTATION FOR COPIER H

Hello! It's great to see you again. I appreciate the chance to help you with your purchase of a mid-volume copier. You've previously explained your buying criteria to me, and what I'd like to do today is to show you what an excellent job Copier H could do for your company.

Press any key to continue.

Copier H is a market leader - and for good reason! It delivers the productivity, reliability, and service satisfaction that today's businesses demand. And what's doubly remarkable is that Copier H offers all this at a very affordable price.

You probably agree that copiers that operate at speeds which greatly reduce copying time increase office productivity and save you money.

Copier H delivers a first copy from glass to output tray in only 5 1/2 seconds. No other mid-volume copier has a faster first copy speed. Also, Copier H produces the standard measure of two-sided copying, 10 sets of 10 two-sided originals, in only 6 minutes 55 seconds.

Press any key to continue.

Many other mid-volume products are rated in the 40 to 45 copies per minute range, but fail to deliver the promised level of productivity in actual use with an automatic feeder. While every copier loses some speed when you use automatic feeders or other accessories, copiers differ a lot on how much speed is sacrificed.

The multiple copy speed of our Copier H, calculated by placing a single sheet of paper on the glass and making multiple copies, is 42 copies per minute. But while some copiers lose up to 60% of their speed with the autofeeder, our copier H loses only 8%! With Copier H, you actually get the increased productivity and savings you seek!

Was my explanation of productivity drops clear?

Press 1 for Yes
2 for No

(Screen if previous answer is no)

In other words, the commonly quoted multiple-copy speed refers to the speed if only one copy is made by placing the original directly on the glass. When the automatic feeder or sorter is used, the speed of many copiers drops terribly. What is worse is that many copier buyers don't learn the disappointing news about the lost productivity until after the purchase.

Copier H maintains its productivity! It loses only 8% of its speed compared to 60% for some competitors.

Press any key to continue.

You need more than copier speed - you need quick repair if your copier is temporarily out of service. During these times, what counts is service turnaround time — the time between the customer's service call and a totally repaired copier. Some copier companies make owners wait up to two business-days (16 hours) for a repair.

Brand H's average service turnaround time is a mere 6 hours, with many calls being completed even sooner. So call for help early in the day will put you back on your copier before the end of business that same day.

Is service turnaround time important to your company?

Press 1 for Yes
2 for No

Copier H service teams stay on top of things because of our commitment to: state-of-the-art technician training, realistic workloads, and a well-stocked inventory of replacement parts. We are dedicated to quick response!

But even with fast service time, you would love to have a product that never breaks down. The reality is that all copiers require service at times. But you can find out which machines are most reliable before you buy. INDEPENDENT research firms report the results of rigorous product tests that work copiers 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

We are proud an independent laboratory test shows that COPIER H IS MORE RELIABLE THAN THE MAJORITY OF ITS COMPETITORS!

Do product testing results help you make a decision?

Press 1 for Yes
2 for No

You probably realize by now why Copier H is a market leader! You can see how well Brand H copiers measures up in terms of productivity, service turnaround time, reliability, and product features.

Now perhaps the best news of all! As promised earlier, Copier H offers all this at a very reasonable price.

Our Brand H copier, equipped with automatic feeder, sorter, reduction and enlargement settings, and automatic two-sided copying capabilities is available to you for the following low price:

Copier Price	$12,100
Supply Cost Per Copy	.0085 cents
Warranty	3 Year Warranty (all parts & labor)

Appendix G

COMPETITIVE SALES CALLS

Would you like to have sales calls for other copiers? If so, which ones?

Please press the letters for the copiers for which you would like to have sales calls.

Copier
G
Y
L
W
J
T
H
R
N
P
K
V

The salespeople for G and H happened to come by at a time when you're making a purchase.

Are there any other copiers shown on the Product Comparison Chart that you are interested in enough to ask for a sales call? You may already have enough information to make a good purchase, but if you don't, please take the time to request calls for the other copiers you are considering.

NOTE: Any calls you do request will be relatively brief.

Would you like to have sales calls for any of the other copiers? (If you answer yes, you will be able to choose which ones.)

Press 1 for Yes
2 for No

Use the ARROW key to move the bar to any copier that you want a sales call for, and then press ENTER. You may request as many sales calls as you like. When you finish, select NO/NO MORE.

Copier Y
Copier V
Copier L
Copier W
Copier T
Copier K
Copier J
Copier R
Copier N
Copier P
NO/NO MORE

If you make a mistake, press ESC.

Competitive Sales Call for Copier Y

You have requested a call from the salesperson representing Copier Y. That salesperson, Yancy Young, is at your office door ready to tell you about his product.

You may want to refer to the product chart and jot down a few notes as you are talking with Yancy. Notes may be of help later when you make your copier purchase.

Press any key to continue.

This is not the first time that you have met Yancy Young. He has dropped by several times — first to introduce himself and then to ask if there was anyway that he could be of help to you.

You don't know much about Yancy, but your general impression of him is that he is a professional and competent salesperson. You have not purchased any products from him in the past but you are interested in what he has to say regarding Copier Y.

Press any key to continue.

Now, here comes Yancy, the salesperson for Copier Y!

Press any key to continue.

Hello! It's nice to see you again. I'm glad that you have time to meet with me today. I know that you are in the market for a mid-sized copier, and I appreciate the opportunity to assist you with that. You've told me something about what criteria you have for the purchase, and what I'd like to do today is show you what an excellent job Copier Y could do for your company.

Press any key to continue.

Some say you can't have it all, but with Copier Y you can! Productivity, reliability, and service - all available at great savings to you.

The makers of Copier Y understand the need of today's businesses to take advantage of every means possible to save time and money. For this reason Copier Y is designed to complete your copying jobs quickly and easily. The bottom line is increased office productivity and employees with more time to focus on other duties.

Press any key to continue.

Copier Y's fast first copy speed is great for those many occasions when you only want to make one quick copy of a letter or other document. More complicated copying jobs are also quickly done on Copier Y. The automatic feeder and sorter allow you to make up to 20 sorted-sets, each up to 50 pages in length, without once having to stop to reload the feeder or remove copies from the sorter. Also, Copier Y simplifies what is perhaps the hardest job, two-sided copying, to the touch of a single button.

It's easy to see that Copier Y is designed to help you maintain office productivity while saving your business time and money!

Is productivity encouraged in your business?

Press 1 for Yes
2 for No

You'll be happy to know that Copier Y saves you time and money in other ways as well. Even a productive copier is unsatisfactory if a needed service call results in excessive time delays and long interruptions in your work day.

When your copier is down, what really matters is shortening the service turnaround time, or the time between placing the call and your having a fully operating copier once again. With Copier Y, you don't experience the long waits for service that owners of some other brands have to endure. In fact, industry information shows that in some cases Copier Y's service team of factory- trained technicians completes calls almost twice as quickly as some of our competition.

Do you value the importance of quick service turnaround on any copier you purchase?

Press 1 for Yes
2 for No

You may be doubting that you'll even need service on a new copier. But, what many people don't realize is that all copiers need preventative maintenance from time to time and that even brand new copiers differ tremendously with regard to reliability and number of breakdowns.

That's why INDEPENDENT research firms perform rigorous product tests and compile and report data regarding the number and type of breakdowns that occur with different copier brands. These lab reports help prospective buyers just like you to estimate the overall reliability of new copiers before they purchase.

We are proud to state that after putting Copier Y through its paces 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, one unbiased laboratory has determined that Copier Y is among those copiers with ABOVE AVERAGE RELIABILITY.

Do you find these research results to be helpful in your decision?

Press 1 for Yes
2 for No

You have now seen why overall Brand Y is the best copier for you. You have learned how well Brand Y copiers measure up with regard to performance, service turnaround time, reliability, and product features. If you think all this sounds good, just wait till you hear the price — up to TWO THOUSAND DOLLARS LESS than some comparably equipped copiers!

The Brand Y copier which I have been describing to you is equipped with automatic feeder, sorter, reduction and enlargement settings, and automatic two-sided copying capabilities.

All this is available for the following low price:

Copier Price	$11,200
Supply Cost Per Copy	.0074 cents
Warranty	3 Year Warranty (all parts & labor)

Press any key to continue.

I have told you a lot about Copier Y. But is there any other specific piece of information you want to know about it?

Press 1 for Yes
2 for No

(Screen if previous answer is YES)
Information on Copier Y

Use the ARROW key to move the bar to the piece of specific information you want for Copier Y, and press ENTER. You may request as many pieces of information as you wish. Each bit of information will be given in a brief one-line statement. When you are finished, select NO/NO MORE.

Which pieces of information would you like to see?

Productivity Rating
Service Turnaround Time
Reliability Rating
Price
Supply Costs
Warranty Information
NO/NO MORE

(Screen if productivity & service information requested)

Here is the information that you have requested on Copier Y:

Maintains half of productivity! - 49% loss.
Service Turnaround Time - only 10 hours.

Press any key to continue.

(Opportunity to ask for demonstration)

You probably now agree that Copier Y has a lot to offer to your company. My customers usually like to see Copier Y demonstrated before they buy. This will take between one and two hours and gives you a chance to see the product in operation.

Would you like me to arrange a demonstration of Copier Y?

Press 1 for Yes
2 for No

(Screen if demo was requested)

That's great - you won't regret asking for a demonstration of Copier Y. I will give you a call tomorrow to set up a time.

Goodbye, and I'll be in touch soon!

Press any key to continue.

That's the end of the sales call for Copier Y. Yancy Young has left your office.

If you have requested other sales calls, they will follow immediately.

Press any key to continue.

Competitive Sales Call for Copier V

You have requested a call from the salesperson representing Copier V. That salesperson, Vic Vaughn, is at your office door ready to tell you about his product.

Press any key to continue.

This is not the first time that you have met Vic, the salesperson for Copier V. Vic Vaughn's visits with you generally focus on information directly pertaining to a purchase that you are considering. On several occasions Vic has provided you with detailed product information which has been very helpful to you in your decision making. You consider him a good resource for information regarding the products he represents.

Although you have bought products from Vic in the past, you don't think it is important to develop or maintain an on-going relationship with him. After a particular purchase, your interactions with Vic end until you may ask for his help with a new purchase sometime in the future.

Press any key to continue.

Now, here comes Vic Vaughn, the salesperson for Copier V!

Press any key to continue.

Hello! It's nice to see you again. I'm glad that you have time to meet with me today. I know that you are in the market for a mid-sized copier, and I appreciate the opportunity to assist you with that. You've told me something about what criteria you have for the purchase, and what I'd like to do today is show you what an excellent job Copier V could do for your company.

Press any key to continue.

Copier V is outstanding for its high level of productivity and superb reliability.

Copier V gets your copying jobs done quickly. That's particularly important for today's businesses where greater productivity can mean MONEY IN THE BANK!

No other copier on the market beats Copier V's 5 1/2 second delivery of first copy from glass to output tray. Copier V is also lightening fast at the hardest test of a copier's productivity, making two-sided copies. The standard measure of two-sided copying (10 sets of 10 two- sided originals) is complete on Copier V in only 6 minutes 55 seconds. That's almost a full 2 minutes faster than some of the competition!

Press any key to continue.

Copier V is so highly productive because it is designed to deliver what it promises. Copier V avoids the tremendous drop in speed displayed by many copiers when the automatic feeder and other accessories are used. All copiers exhibit some drop in speed, but for some the drop in speed can be as great as 60%! That means some of the competition copies at only 40% of the advertised multi-copy speed.

Copier V, on the other hand, only loses a fraction of its speed, a little more than 10%. That makes Copier V more productive than many products that are advertised to be faster! When you look at the speed of copies made when the feeder and other features are used, Copier V shines!

Was my explanation of the importance of productivity drops clear?

Press 1 for Yes
2 for No

(Screen if previous answer was no)

In other words, the commonly quoted multiple-copy speed refers to the speed if only one copy is made by placing the original directly on the glass. When the automatic feeder or sorter is used, the speed of many copiers drops terribly. What is worse is that many copier buyers don't learn the disappointing news about the lost productivity until after the purchase.

Copier V maintains its productivity! It loses only 13% of its speed compared to a 60% loss for some competitors.

Press any key to continue.

Reliability is another area where Copier V excels. And, perhaps no other aspect of a copier is more important than it being up and running when you really need it.

Many buyers think that a new copier won't break down. However, research shows that even brand new copiers differ tremendously with regard to reliability.

Press any key to continue.

To help potential buyers predict the reliability of new products before buyers close the deal, INDEPENDENT research firms run rigorous product tests and relate the results to the marketplace. The laboratories continuously work new models 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and analyze the number and kinds of breakdowns to form long-term reliability projections.

Copier V is proud of the reliability rating recently given by one independent research lab. Using a scale of from 1 to 10, where 10 means outstanding and 1 means poor, Copier V was awarded a reliability rating of 9. Copier V will be ready to work when you are!

Are research results like these helpful to you in your decision making?

Press 1 for Yes
2 for No

You have seen that Copier V is one of the most productive and reliable mid-volume copiers on the market. What's more, for those times when there is a need for maintenance, Copier V's factory-trained technicians are dedicated to quick response and a rapid return of your copier to full operation.

Press any key to continue.

Copier V is equipped with automatic feeder, sorter, reduction and enlargement settings, and automatic two-sided copying capabilities. All this, as well as those high levels of productivity and reliability, are available to you for the following price:

Copier Price	$12,400
Supply Cost Per Copy	.0089 cents
Warranty	3 Year Warranty (all parts & labor)

(Respondents were given an opportunity to ask for specific pieces of information for Copier V and to request a demonstration of that product. The sequence was identical to that previously shown for Copier Y.)

Competitive Sales Call for Copier L

You have requested a call from the salesperson representing Copier L. That salesperson, Lyle Lewis, is at your office door ready to tell you about his product. You may want to refer to the product chart and jot down a few notes as you are talking with Lyle. Notes may be of help later when you make your copier purchase.

Press any key to continue.

This is not the first time that you have met Lyle Lewis. He has dropped by several times — first to introduce himself and then to ask if there was anyway that he could be of help to you.

You don't know much about Lyle, but your general impression of him is that he is a professional and competent salesperson. You have not purchased any products from him in the past, but you are interested in what he has to say regarding Copier L.

Press any key to continue.

Now, here comes Lyle Lewis, the salesperson for Copier L!

Press any key to continue.

Hello! It's nice to see you again. I'm glad that you have time to meet with me today. I know that you are in the market for a mid-sized copier, and I appreciate the opportunity to assist you with that. You've told me something about what criteria you have for the purchase, and what I'd like to do today is show you what an excellent job Copier L could do for your company.

Press any key to continue.

It is easy to remember times when we or another employee had to make just one quick copy of something, and the copier was broken!

We probably remember how disgusted we felt and perhaps how much we had to rearrange our work to do without that copy. Maybe not being able to make that one copy made us less prepared for a meeting, or maybe we had to mail something out that was incomplete.

Has anything like this ever happened to you?

Press 1 for Yes
2 for No

Occasions such as these cost your business money in lost time and productivity. Wouldn't you like to protect your office productivity with a copier that is up and running when you need it — a copier that is truly reliable?

Copier L is just such a copier! But you don't have to take just my word for it. Recently an independent research firm - with no reason at all for making Copier L look good — has singled out Copier L and awarded it a perfect 10 for reliability.

Press any key to continue.

Here's how it worked! Copier L and the competition were run day and night. All the copiers were worked much harder than you would ever work copiers yourself. Records were kept of the number and kinds of breakdowns that occurred. Using a scale of from 1 (poor reliability) to 10 (outstanding reliability), the independent lab rated each copier. When the results were totaled, Copier L was a winner!

Lots of fancy bells and whistles mean nothing at all, if the copier doesn't run when you need it. As shown by the independent laboratory, Copier L is a copier that you can count on.

Would it be important for you to purchase a copier that is rated highly reliable?

Press 1 for Yes
2 for No

Of course we all realize that even a highly reliable copier such as Copier L requires occasional periodic maintenance. To keep our customers happy after the sale as well as before, we have put together a state-of-the-art service team dedicated to quick response.

Copier L's highly trained technicians complete their work in a way that maximizes your convenience and minimizes any interruptions in your business day. With our engineered reliability and dedication to service excellence, Copier L will be ready and working to help you meet that next big deadline.

Press any key to continue.

By this time you probably share the opinion of many that Copier L is an exceptional copier! And, you can get Copier L, the most reliable copier on the market, at a reasonable price.

Equipped with automatic feeder, sorter, reduction and enlargement settings, and automatic two-sided copying capabilities. Copier L is available to you for only:

Copier Price	$13,000
Supply Cost Per Copy	.0101 cents
Warranty	3 Year Warranty (all parts & labor)

Press any key to continue.

(Respondents were given an opportunity to ask for specific pieces of information for Copier L and to request a demonstration of that product. The sequence was identical to that previously shown for Copier Y.)

Competitive Sales Call for Copier W

You have requested a call from the salesperson representing Copier W. That salesperson, Wayne Walker, is at your office door ready to tell you about his product.

You may want to refer to the product chart and jot down a few notes as you are talking with Wayne. Notes may be of help later when you make your copier purchase.

Press any key to continue.

This is not the first time that you have met Wayne Walker. He has dropped by several times — first to introduce himself and then to ask if there was anyway that he could be of help to you.

You don't know much about Wayne, but your general impression of him is that he is a professional and competent salesperson. You have not purchased any products from him in the past, but you are interested in what he has to say regarding Copier W.

Press any key to continue.

Now, here comes Wayne Walker, the salesperson for Copier W!

Press any key to continue.

Hello! It's nice to see you again. I'm glad that you have time to meet with me today. I know that you are in the market for a mid-sized copier, and I appreciate the opportunity to assist you with that. You've told me something about what criteria you have for the purchase, and what I'd like to do today is show you what an excellent job Copier W could do for your company.

Press any key to continue.

Puzzled? Are all copiers starting to seem alike — so much alike, in fact, that you wonder how you will ever choose among them? If they are, it's not an illusion!

Tremendous similarity does exist between copiers on the market today. Even performing a careful feature comparison doesn't reveal big differences between copiers. Mid-volume copiers are generally equipped very much the same - with automatic feeders, sorters, automatic two-sided copying, and a number of ways of reducing and enlarging documents.

Press any key to continue.

Also alike are many mid-volume copier claims that a particular product is the answer to your office productivity problems. However, when actual speeds are compared, differences between copiers are measured in seconds or half seconds. If you are like many copier buyers, a half of a second is not a large enough difference to make them choose one copier over another!

Do you agree that speed differences of a half of a second are too small to be considered significant?

Press 1 for Yes
2 for No

I'm proud to say, my product, Copier W, is just like the rest except for one very important difference — PRICE! It's true, Copier W is available to you at one of the most affordable prices in the industry. In fact, with Copier W you will save up to THREE THOUSAND DOLLARS compared to prices of some competitive brands. You may be asking yourself what you have to sacrifice to get that savings. Happily, the answer is nothing!

Does learning about the tremendous savings with Copier W help you in your decision making?

Press 1 for Yes
2 for No

In Copier W you'll find the same copying features and capabilities available on more expensive copiers. You'll be able to perform your copying jobs quickly and efficiently using Copier W's automatic feeder and sorter. Also, two-sided copying and reduction and enlargement are easily accomplished on Copier W with just the touch of a button.

Copier W is designed to provide everything that customers have requested in a hard working, reliable, and affordable copier.

Press any key to continue.

Why pay more? Copier W offers you what you need for less!!!! The Brand W copier which I have been describing to you is equipped with automatic feeder, sorter, reduction and enlargement settings, and automatic two-sided copying capabilities. All this is available to you for the following low price:

Copier Price	$10,300
Supply Cost Per Copy	.0064 cents
Warranty	3 Year Warranty (all parts & labor)

Press any key to continue.

(Respondents were given an opportunity to ask for specific pieces of information for Copier W and to request a demonstration of that product. The sequence was identical to that previously shown for Copier Y.)

Competitive Sales Call for Copier T

You have requested a call from the salesperson representing Copier T. That salesperson, Tom Taylor, is at your office door ready to tell you about his product.

You may want to refer to the product chart and jot down a few notes as you are talking with Tom. Notes may be of help later when you make your copier purchase.

Press any key to continue.

This is not the first time that you have met Tom Taylor. He has dropped by several times — first to introduce himself and then to ask if there was anyway that he could be of help to you.

You don't know much about Tom, but your general impression of him is that he is a professional and competent salesperson. You have not purchased any products from him in the past, but you are interested in what he has to say about Copier T.

Press any key to continue.

Now, here comes Tom Taylor, the salesperson for Copier T!

Press any key to continue.

Hello! It's nice to see you again. I'm glad that you have time to meet with me today. I know that you are in the market for a mid-sized copier, and I appreciate the opportunity to assist you with that. You've told me something about what criteria you have for the purchase, and what I'd like to do today is show you what an excellent job Copier T could do for your company.

Press any key to continue.

I can tell you how great a product Copier T is, and you may still not be totally convinced. But what if someone with nothing to gain sang the praises of Copier T?

Press any key to continue.

That is exactly what has happened! An independent research firm - with no motive in making Copier T look good — has singled Copier T out and awarded it a perfect 10 for reliability. Copier T and the competition were run day and night, and all the copiers were worked much harder than you would ever work copiers yourself. Records were kept of the number and kinds of breakdowns that occurred. Using a scale of from 1 (poor reliability) to 10 (outstanding reliability), the independent lab rated each copier. When the results were in, Copier T was a winner!

As you know, copier reliability is perhaps the one thing that most determines whether or not you are happy with the copier that you buy. Lots of fancy bells and whistles mean nothing at all, if the copier doesn't run when you need it. As shown by the independent laboratory, Copier T is the copier that you can count on.

Is a high reliability rating like this helpful in deciding which copier to buy?

Press 1 for Yes
2 for No

Copier T also delivers the type of office productivity that today's businesses demand. Copier T has been designed to perform all copying jobs quickly and easily. Even making the standard measure of two-sided copying, perhaps the hardest of all copying tasks, is accomplished in 7 minutes and 38 seconds, more than a full minute faster than some well known competitors. Also, when you use the automatic feeder on Copier T, you never experience as drastic a drop in speed — as high as 60% — that you do using some copiers.

Is increasing productivity encouraged in your business?

Press 1 for Yes
2 for No

Even the most reliable copier requires occasional periodic maintenance. You'll be happy to know that maintenance for Copier T is set up to maximize your convenience and minimize any interruptions in your business day.

Our technicians are all factory trained and specialize in your particular model of Copier T. Parts are readily available from our service vans which we keep stocked with more than 90% of possible replacement parts for your copier. With our dedication to service excellence, Copier T will be ready and working to help you meet that next big deadline.

Press any key to continue.

One last piece of good news — you don't have to pay top dollar for Copier T. Copier T, offers its high reliability, productivity, and fine service at an extremely affordable price. It comes equipped with automatic feeder, sorter, reduction and enlargement settings, and automatic two-sided copying capabilities. Copier T is available to you for the following low price:

Copier Price	$11,800
Supply Cost Per Copy	.0082 cents
Warranty	3 Year Warranty (all parts & labor)

Press any key to continue.

(Respondents were given an opportunity to ask for specific pieces of information for Copier T and to request a demonstration of that product. The sequence was identical to that previously shown for Copier Y.)

(Used when Copier G is the target product)

Competitive Sales Call for Copier K

You have requested a call from the salesperson representing Copier K. That salesperson, Ken Keller, is at your office door ready to tell you about his product.

You may want to refer to the product chart and jot down a few notes as you are talking with Ken. Notes may be of help later when you make your copier purchase.

Press any key to continue.

This is not the first time that you have met Ken Keller. He has dropped by several times — first to introduce himself and then to ask if there was anyway that he could be of help to you.

You don't know much about Ken, but your general impression of him is that he is a professional and competent salesperson. You have not purchased any products from him in the past, but you are interested in what he has to say regarding Copier K.

Press any key to continue.

Now, here comes Ken Keller, the salesperson for Copier K!

Press any key to continue.

Hello! It's nice to see you again. I'm glad that you have time to meet with me today. I know that you are in the market for a mid-sized copier, and I appreciate the opportunity to assist you with that. You've told me something about what criteria you have for the purchase, and what I'd like to do today is show you what an excellent job Copier K could do for your company.

Press any key to continue.

TIME IS MONEY! Copiers that reduce copying time frees up employees to do other jobs, increasing productivity and saving money for your business.

Copier K delivers a first copy from glass to output tray in only 5 1/2 seconds. Also, Copier K completes the standard measure of two-sided copying (10 sets of 10 two-sided originals) in only 6 minutes, 55 seconds.

Press any key to continue.

You can find other mid-volume products rated at 42 copies per minute, but look out - many copiers fail to deliver the promised level of productivity in actual use. That's because the rated speed is based on multiple copies of a single page placed on the glass. But, productivity falls off when the automatic feeder and other copier features are used. All copiers lose some of their speed when automatic feeders are used, but for some the drop is drastic - up to 60%.

The GOOD NEWS is that a few copiers do maintain good productivity levels. Compared to a possible 60% drop for some copiers, Copier K loses only 8% of its productivity when the automatic feeder is used. With Copier K, you always receive your copies quickly.

Do you understand why productivity drops are so important?

Press 1 for Yes
2 for No

(Screen if previous answer is no)

In other words, the commonly quoted multiple-copy speed refers to the speed if only one copy is made by placing the original directly on the glass. When the automatic feeder or sorter is used, the speed of many copiers drops terribly. What is worse is that many copier buyers don't learn the disappointing news about the lost productivity until after the purchase.

Copier K maintains its productivity! It loses only 8% of its speed compared to 60% for some competitors.

Press any key to continue.

Your copier's reliability may be the most important factor in customer satisfaction. Over time, you're only happy if your copier is up and running. What some people don't realize is that even brand new copiers differ tremendously with regard to reliability.

Press any key to continue.

To help customers assess the reliability of new products, INDEPENDENT research firms perform rigorous product tests and report their results to the marketplace. Continuously working copiers 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, these laboratories are able to record breakdown data and to offer you long-term reliability projections for new-model copiers operating in typical business situations. One such independent research lab has recently rated new copiers using a scale of from 1 to 10, where

10 = outstanding reliability
1 = poor reliability.

That independent laboratory has awarded Copier K a reliability rating of 6, or better than average reliability!

Do you think it's important to have better than average reliability?

Press 1 for Yes
2 for No

You have seen why overall Brand K is the best copier for you. You have learned how well Brand K copiers measure up with regard to performance, reliability, and product features. The best news is that Brand K copiers offer all this at a very reasonable price.

The Brand K copier is equipped with automatic feeder, sorter, reduction and enlargement settings, and automatic two-sided copying capabilities. All this is available to you for the following low price:

Copier Price	$11,500
Supply Cost Per Copy	.0076 cents
Warranty	3 Year Warranty (all parts & labor)

Press any key to continue.

(Respondents were given an opportunity to ask for specific pieces of information for Copier K and to request a demonstration of that product. The sequence was identical to that previously shown for Copier Y.)

(Used when Copier G is the target product)

Competitive Sales Call for Copier G

You have requested a call from the salesperson representing Copier G. That salesperson, Gary Griffin, is at your office door ready to tell you about his product. You may want to refer to the product chart and jot down a few notes as you are talking with Gary. Notes may be of help later when you make your copier purchase.

Press any key to continue.

This is not the first time that you have met Gary Griffin. He has dropped by several times — first to introduce himself and then to ask if there was anyway that he could be of help to you.

You don't know much about Gary, but your general impression of him is that he is a professional and competent salesperson. You have not purchased any products from him in the past, but you are interested in what he has to say regarding Copier G.

Press any key to continue.

Now, here comes Gary Griffin, the salesperson for Copier G!

Press any key to continue.

Hello! It's nice to see you again. I'm glad that you have time to meet with me today. I know that you are in the market for a mid-sized copier, and I appreciate the opportunity to assist you with that. You've told me something about what criteria you have for the purchase, and what I'd like to do today is show you what an excellent job Copier G could do for your company.

Press any key to continue.

First let's talk about getting copying done fast. As you know, TIME IS MONEY! Fast copying frees up employees to do other jobs, increasing productivity and saving money for your business.

Copier G delivers a first copy from glass to output tray in only 6 1/2 seconds. Also, Copier G completes the standard measure of two-sided copying (10 sets of 10 two-sided originals) in only 7 minutes, 25 seconds.

Are productivity goals emphasized in your business?

Press 1 for Yes
2 for No

Most copiers are advertised as being productive, but buyers have learned they need to be careful about those claims!

Many products rated at 40 to 45 copies per minute fail to deliver that speed during actual use. That's because the rated speed is based on making multiple copies of a single sheet of paper placed on the glass. So, productivity can fall off drastically when the automatic feeder and other copier features are used - sometimes up to 60%!

Press any key to continue.

The GOOD NEWS is that some copiers maintain productivity levels better than others. Copier G loses only 29% of its productivity when using the automatic feeder - less than half the productivity loss of some other products in its class that can lose as much as 60%.

Press any key to continue.

Now think about how important it is to get a quick response when something goes wrong. Even the fastest copier is unsatisfactory without quick repair.

The time that it takes for the repair technician to arrive is only part of the story. The turnaround time until the repair is finished also depends on experienced and well trained technicians with reasonable workloads and available replacement parts.

Copier G's repair teams do well on all of these! Technicians receive the latest factory training and specialize in repairing particular models. Service vans are stocked with more than 90% of possible replacement parts. And, we keep workloads small to maintain our quick response.

Press any key to continue.

Brand G copier owners NEVER wait two business-days (16 hours) for service, as many copier owners do. Brand G's average service turnaround time is only ten hours, with many calls completed even faster.

Press any key to continue.

A final point to consider is your copier's reliability - perhaps the most important factor in customer satisfaction.

Over time, most buyers are only happy if their copier is consistently up and running.

Is buying a copier with high reliability important to you?

Press 1 for Yes
2 for No

As you may know, there are tremendous differences in reliability, even for new copiers!

Luckily, INDEPENDENT research firms run rigorous reliability tests and report their results to the market-place. They run copiers 24 hours a day, 7 days a week to compile breakdown data and offer long-term reliability projections for new-model copiers. I can show you the ratings of an independent research lab that uses a scale of from 1 to 10, where

10 = outstanding reliability
1 = poor reliability.

Press any key to continue.

This independent laboratory has awarded Copier G a reliability rating of 9, among the highest possible ratings!

Press any key to continue.

You have seen how well Brand G copiers perform with regard to performance, service turnaround time, reliability and product features. The best news is that Brand G copiers offer all this at a very reasonable price.

You will get our Brand G copier equipped with automatic feeder, sorter, reduction and enlargement settings, and automatic two-sided copying capabilities. All this is available to you for the following low price:

Copier Price	$11,868
Supply Cost Per Copy	.0082 cents
Warranty	3 Year Warranty (all parts & labor)

Press any key to continue.

(Respondents were given an opportunity to ask for specific pieces of information for Copier G and to request a demonstration of that product. The sequence was identical to that previously shown for Copier Y.)

Competitive Sales Call for Copier J

You have requested a call from the salesperson representing Copier J. That salesperson, John Jackson, is at your office door ready to tell you about his product. You may want to refer to the product chart and jot down a few notes as you are talking with John. Notes may be of help later when you make your copier purchase.

Press any key to continue.

This is not the first time that you have met John Jackson. He has dropped by several times — first to introduce himself and then to ask if there was anyway that he could be of help to you.

You don't know much about John, but your general impression of him is that he is a professional and competent salesperson. You have not purchased any products from him in the past, but you are interested in what he has to say regarding Copier J.

Press any key to continue.

Now, here comes John Jackson, the salesperson for Copier J!

Press any key to continue.

Hello! It's nice to see you again. I'm glad that you have time to meet with me today. I know that you are in the market for a mid-sized copier, and I appreciate the opportunity to assist you with that. You've told me something about what criteria you have for the purchase, and what I'd like to do today is show you what an excellent job Copier J could do for your company.

Press any key to continue.

What a team! Copier J — designed for productivity and reliability and the Copier J service staff — delivering the fastest service in the area.

The makers of Copier J understand the need of today's businesses to take advantage of every means possible to save time and money. For this reason Copier J is designed to complete your copying jobs quickly and easily. The bottom line is increased office productivity and employees with more time to focus on other duties.

Using Copier J, a first copy from glass to output tray appears in only 5 1/2 seconds. Also, Copier J reduces making two-sided copies to the touch of a button.

Press any key to continue.

Other mid-volume copiers rated at 45 copies per minute promise productivity but then fail to make good on their claims. That's because the rated speed is calculated by placing a single sheet of paper on the glass and making multiple copies. Copier users, however, are more interested in the speed that copies are produced when the automatic feeder and other copier features are used as well.

It is true that every copier loses some speed (e.g. when automatic feeders are used), but for some copiers the reduction is drastic - 60%. You will never experience such drastic drops in speed with Copier J. Copier J is designed to maintain productivity levels and reduce waiting time.

Do you understand the importance of productivity drops?

Press 1 for Yes
2 for No

(Screen if previous answer was no)

In other words, the commonly quoted multiple-copy speed refers to the speed if only one copy is made by placing the original directly on the glass. When the automatic feeder or sorter is used, the speed of many copiers drops terribly. What is worse is that many copier buyers don't learn the disappointing news about the lost productivity until after the purchase.

Press any key to continue.

Copier J saves you time and money in another very important way. With Copier J you do not have to put up with a two-day wait for service as you do with some other copiers. The service team for Copier J offers you the fastest service turnaround time in the area — an average of only 4 hours between the time a customer places a service call and full copier operation once again. Of course, many calls are completed in even less than 4 hours.

The Copier J service team realizes how much businesses depend on their copiers. They know what havoc can be caused when the copier is wearing an "Out of Order" sign. We at Copier J respond to the importance that customers place on quick copier repairs.

Would having a quick service turnaround time of only 4 hours be important for your business?

Press 1 for Yes
2 for No

To maintain our dedication to quick service, we hire the best technicians we can find and then make them better. Each of our technicians is trained by a team of master technicians sent from the factory. During training and after certification as well, each technician only works on copiers in which that technician has specialized.

Our service is the fastest for another important reason — EXCELLENT PLANNING! Our technicians have the smallest workloads in the area. Also, each technician has a specific grouping of copiers to maintain. That way technicians get to know individual customer needs and can schedule preventive maintenance at the customer's convenience. Service for Copier J in designed to keep your copier up and running when you need it!

Press any key to continue.

You are probably convinced by now that Copier J is the copier for you! You know how well Copier J measures up with regard to performance, service turnaround time, reliability, and product features. The best news is that Brand G copiers offer all this at a very reasonable price.

The Brand J copier which I have been describing to you is equipped with automatic feeder, sorter, reduction and enlargement settings, and automatic two-sided copying capabilities. All this is available to you for the following low price:

Copier Price	$12,400
Supply Cost Per Copy	.0089 cents
Warranty	3 Year Warranty (all parts & labor)

(Respondents were given an opportunity to ask for specific pieces of information for Copier T and to request a demonstration of that product. The sequence was identical to that previously shown for Copier Y.)

Competitive Sales Call for Copier R

You have requested a call from the salesperson representing Copier R. That salesperson, Ron Riverton, is at your office door ready to tell you about his product. You may want to refer to the product chart and jot down a few notes as you are talking with Ron. Notes may be of help later when you make your copier purchase.

Press any key to continue.

This is not the first time that you have met Ron Riverton. He has dropped by several times — first to introduce himself and then to ask if there was anyway that he could be of help to you.

You don't know much about Ron, but your general impression of him is that he is a professional and competent salesperson. You have not purchased any products from him in the past, but you are interested in what he has to say regarding Copier R.

Press any key to continue.

Now, here comes Ron Riverton, the salesperson for Copier R!

Press any key to continue.

Hello! It's nice to see you again. I'm glad that you have time to meet with me today. I know that you are in the market for a mid-sized copier, and I appreciate the opportunity to assist you with that. You've told me something about what criteria you have for the purchase, and what I'd like to do today is show you what an excellent job Copier R could do for your company.

Press any key to continue.

What more could you ask for? Copier R — designed for productivity and reliability and the Copier R service staff — rated among the fastest in the area.

The makers of Copier R have responded to the need of today's businesses to take advantage of every means possible to save time and money. For this reason Copier R is designed to complete your copying jobs quickly and easily. The bottom line is increased office productivity and employees with more time to focus on other duties.

Using Copier R, a first copy from glass to output tray appears in only 6 seconds. Also, Copier R reduces making two-sided copies to the touch of a button.

Press any key to continue.

Other mid-volume copiers rated at 40 copies per minute promise productivity but then fail to make good on their claims. That's because the rated speed is calculated by placing a single sheet of paper on the glass and making multiple copies. Copier users, however, usually want copies produced with the automatic feeder and other copier features.

While every copier loses some speed (e.g. when automatic feeders are used), for some copiers the reduction is drastic. Not with Copier R! In fact, independent testing sources have reported that any necessary slow down with Copier R is kept to about one-third of what you would experience with some of our competitors. Copier R is designed to maintain productivity levels and reduce waiting time!

Was my explanation of productivity drops clear?

Press 1 for Yes
2 for No

(Screen if previous answer was no)

In other words, the commonly quoted multiple-copy speed refers to the speed if only one copy is made by placing the original directly on the glass. When the automatic feeder or sorter is used, the speed of many copiers drops terribly. What is worse is that many copier buyers don't learn the disappointing news about the lost productivity until after the purchase.

Copier R maintains its productivity! It loses only 23% of its speed compared to 60% for some competitors.

Press any key to continue.

Copier R saves you time and money in another very important way. With Copier R you do not have to put up with a two-day wait for service as you do with some other copiers. The service team for Copier J offers you one of the fastest service turnaround times in the area — an average of only 6 hours between the time a customer places a service call and full copier operation once again. Of course, many calls are completed in even less than 6 hours.

Would your business be satisfied waiting two days for service as some copier owners must do?

Press 1 for Yes
2 for No

The Copier R service team realizes how much businesses depend on their copiers. They know what havoc can be caused when the copier is wearing an "Out of Order" sign. To maintain our quick service, we hire the best technicians we can find and then make them better. Each of our technicians is trained by a team of master technicians sent from the factory. During training and after certification as well, each technician only works on copiers in which that technician has specialized.

Our service is among the fastest for another important reason — EXCELLENT PLANNING! Our technicians have the smallest workloads in the area. Also, each technician has a specific grouping of copiers to maintain. That way technicians get to know individual customer needs and can schedule preventive maintenance at the customer's convenience. Service for Copier R in designed to keep your copier up and running when you need it!

Press any key to continue.

I am sure you realize by now that Copier R is the copier for you! You have learned how well Copier R measures up with regard to performance, service turnaround time, reliability, and product features. The best news is that Brand R copiers offer all this at a very reasonable price.

The Brand R copier which I have been describing to you is equipped with automatic feeder, sorter, reduction and enlargement settings, and automatic two-sided copying capabilities. All this is available to you for the following low price:

Copier Price	$13,300
Supply Cost Per Copy	.0104 cents
Warranty	3 Year Warranty (all parts & labor)

Press any key to continue.

(Respondents were given an opportunity to ask for specific pieces of information for Copier R and to request a demonstration of that product. The sequence was identical to that previously shown for Copier Y.)

Competitive Sales Call for Copier N

You have requested a call from the salesperson representing Copier N. That salesperson, Nick Nelson, is at your office door ready to tell you about his product.

You may want to refer to the product chart and jot down a few notes as you are talking with Nick. Notes may be of help later when you make your copier purchase.

Press any key to continue.

This is not the first time that you have met Nick Nelson. He has dropped by several times — first to introduce himself and then to ask if there was any way that he could be of help to you.

You don't know much about Nick, but your general impression of him is that he is a professional and competent salesperson. You have not purchased any products from him in the past, but you are interested in what he has to say regarding Copier N.

Press any key to continue.

Now, here comes Nick Nelson, the salesperson for Copier N!

Press any key to continue.

Hello! It's nice to see you again. I'm glad that you have time to meet with me today. I know that you are in the market for a mid-sized copier, and I appreciate the opportunity to assist you with that. You've told me something about what criteria you have for the purchase, and what I'd like to do today is show you what an excellent job Copier N could do for your company.

Press any key to continue.

If I alone told you how great a product Copier N is, you might still not be totally convinced. But what if someone other than myself sung the praises of Copier N — someone unbiased with absolutely no reason to make Copier N look good compared to the competition?

That is exactly what has happened! An independent research firm — with no motive in making Copier N look good — has reported that tests of Copier N show it to have above average reliability! Copier N and the competition were run day and night, and all the copiers were worked much harder than you would ever work copiers yourself. Records were kept of the number and kinds of breakdowns that occurred. When the results were in, Copier N had stood up well to whatever was asked of it.

Would buying a copier with above average reliability be important to you?

Press 1 for Yes
2 for No

As you know, copier reliability is perhaps the one thing, more than anything else, that determines whether or not you're happy with the copier that you buy. Lots of fancy bells and whistles mean nothing at all, if the copier doesn't run when you need it. As shown by the independent laboratory, Copier N is a copier that you can count on.

Have you ever before used research reports in reaching a purchase decision?

Press 1 for Yes
2 for No

Copier N can also be counted on to deliver the type of office productivity that today's businesses demand. Copier N has been designed to perform all copying jobs quickly and easily.

It's fast first copy speed of only 7 seconds is great for those times when you need to make a single quick copy. Even making two-sided copies, perhaps the hardest of all copying tasks, is accomplished automatically with only the touch of a single button.

Press any key to continue.

Even the most reliable and productive copier requires service occasionally. You'll be happy to know that maintenance for Copier N is set up to maximize your convenience and minimize any interruptions in your business day.

Our technicians are all factory trained and specialize in your particular model of Copier N. Parts are readily available from our service vans which we keep stocked with more than 90% of possible replacement parts for your copier. With our dedication to service excellence, Copier N will be ready and working to help you meet that next big deadline.

Press any key to continue.

One last piece of important news — you don't have to pay an arm and a leg to get all these advantages. Copier N offers all this at great savings to you. Surprisingly, Copier N saves you between ONE AND TWO THOUSAND DOLLARS when compared with some of our competitors!

Copier N comes equipped with automatic feeder, sorter, reduction and enlargement settings, and automatic two-sided copying capabilities. Best of all, Copier N is available to you at this very reasonable price:

Copier Price	$11,500
Supply Cost Per Copy	.0076 cents
Warranty	3 Year Warranty (all parts and labor)

Press any key to continue.

(Respondents were given an opportunity to ask for specific pieces of information for Copier R and to request a demonstration of that product. The sequence was identical to that previously shown for Copier Y.)

Competitive Sales Call for Copier P

As you requested, Paul Patterson, the salesperson for Copier P has just arrived. He is anxious to explain the benefits of Copier P to you.

Press any key to continue.

This is not the first time that you have met Paul. Patterson's visits with you generally focus on information directly pertaining to a purchase that you are considering. On several occasions, Paul has provided you with detailed product information which has been very helpful to you in your decision making. You consider him a good resource for information regarding the products he represents.

Although you have bought products from Paul in the past, you don't think it is important to develop or maintain an on-going relationship with him. After a particular purchase, your interactions with Paul end until you may ask for his help with a new purchase sometime in the future.

Press any key to continue.

Now, here comes Paul Patterson, the salesperson for Copier P!

Press any key to continue.

Hello. Thanks for letting me visit today to tell you about all the good things that we can offer you with Copier P. I know you'll be as excited about Copier P as I am once you learn what a big difference Copier P can make for your business.

Press any key to continue.

Productivity is more than a buzz word — it can translate into big money savings. That's why copier buyers insist on products that reduce copying time and free up employees to do other important jobs.

Copier P delivers a first copy from glass to output tray in only 5 1/2 seconds. No other mid-volume copier is faster.

And, more complicated jobs are also a snap — Copier P is the fastest copier in its class at making two-sided copies. The standard measure of two-sided copying, 10 sets of 10 two-sided originals, is finished in only 6 minutes 8 seconds — a full two and a half minutes faster than some comparable copiers.

Press any key to continue.

While other mid-volume products may equal Copier P's fast first copy speed, they just don't maintain that speed for multiple copies when the accessories like the automatic feeder are used. All copiers lose some speed with accessories, but some can have a loss of productivity as great as 60%.

With Copier P's design, this drop is negligible — only 3% when the automatic feeder is used. When it counts, and you often do use those accessories, Copier P can maintain a speed of 44 copies per minute. No other copier in its class is more productive!

Do you understand why productivity drops are so important?

Press 1 for Yes
2 for No

(Screen if previous answer was no)

In other words, the commonly quoted multiple-copy speed refers to the speed if only one copy is made by placing the original directly on the glass. When the automatic feeder or sorter is used, the speed of many copiers drops terribly. What is worse is that many copier buyers don't learn the disappointing news about the lost productivity until after the purchase.

Copier P maintains its productivity! It loses only 3% of its speed compared to 60% for some competitors.

Press any key to continue.

Not only is Copier P productive, we have designed our service to minimize that down time that interrupts your work. We can offer you four hour turnaround from the time you call to the time the repair is completed. You'll never wait for two business days, as you would with some copiers. Call early in the morning, and you'll be back in business by lunch.

The secret to our service excellence is our fine staff of Copier P technicians. These factory trained experts respond so quickly because we design their workloads to meet that goal, and make sure our service vans carry 90% of all replacement parts.

Is quick service turnaround time important to your decision of which copier to buy?

Press 1 for Yes
2 for No

You are probably already convinced that Copier P is the best choice for you, but I have saved the best news for last. We are one of the lowest priced mid-volume copiers. Equipped with automatic feeder, sorter, reduction and enlargement settings, and automatic two-sided copying capabilities, Copier P is still available to you at the following low price:

Copier Price	$10,600
Supply Cost Per Copy	.0069 cents
Warranty	3 Year Warranty (all parts and labor)

Press any key to continue.

(Respondents were given an opportunity to ask for specific pieces of information for Copier P and to request a demonstration of that product. The sequence was identical to that previously shown for Copier Y.)

Demonstration Results

At this point, you have met with all of the salespeople that you requested a call from.

You may have requested demonstrations regarding one or more copiers. Please assume that you have witnessed these demonstrations and that ALL copiers for which you requested demonstrations have performed very SATISFACTORILY and have met all your expectations.

Press any key to continue.

Last Request for Information

You may not want an entire sales call, but you may be interested in some quick and specific information on particular copiers. It doesn't matter whether or not you've had a sales call for that product. Each requested bit of information will be given to you in a brief one-line statement.

Would you like to see additional pieces of information on any of the copiers?

Press 1 for Yes
2 for No

(Screen if previous answer was yes)

On the next screen I will ask you to indicate on which copiers you need additional information. Following that, I will ask which pieces of information you would like to see for each of your choices.

Press any key to continue.

Use the ARROW key to move the bar to any copiers for which you would like one or more pieces of information and then press ENTER to select them. The next screens will ask which pieces of information you would like for each. When you are finished, select NO/NO MORE.

On which copiers would you like to see additional pieces of information?

Copier H
Copier Y
Copier V
Copier L
Copier W
Copier T
Copier K
Copier G
Copier J
Copier R
Copier N
Copier P
NO/NO MORE

(Screen if information requested for Copier H)

Information Requests for Copier H

Use the ARROW key to move the bar to any piece of specific information you would like to have on Copier H and then press ENTER. You may request as many pieces of information as you wish. When you are finished, select NO/NO MORE.

Which pieces of information would you like to see?

Productivity Rating
Service Turnaround Time
Reliability Rating
Price
Supply Costs
Warranty Information
NO/NO MORE

Here is the information that you have requested on Copier H:

(Information displayed here.)

Consideration Set Measure

You have now met salespeople and gotten information on all brands that you were initially interested in. Knowing what you do now, which copiers are you still very seriously considering buying?

Use the ARROW key to move the bar to any copier you are very interested in, and then press ENTER to select each. Select any and all copiers that you are seriously considering purchasing at this point. When finished, select NO/NO MORE. If you make a mistake press ESC.

Copier H
Copier Y
Copier V
Copier L
Copier W
Copier T
Copier K
Copier G
Copier J
Copier R
Copier N
Copier P
NO/NO MORE

Choice Measure

It is time to make a final selection of the ONE copier that you would purchase if you were asked to buy today. Please type the number that is in front of the ONE copier brand that you would buy today if this were a real purchase.

1 Copier H
2 Copier Y
3 Copier V
4 Copier L
5 Copier W
6 Copier T
7 Copier K
8 Copier G
9 Copier J
10 Copier R
11 Copier N
12 Copier P

Press ENTER to continue.

Second Choice

Which copier would you purchase if your first choice weren't available?

Please type the number that is in front of the ONE copier brand that would be your second choice.

1 Copier H
2 Copier Y
3 Copier V
4 Copier L
5 Copier W
6 Copier T
7 Copier K
8 Copier G
9 Copier J
10 Copier R
11 Copier N
12 Copier P

Press ENTER to continue.

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