

MARK 4397
Managing Sales Force Productivity

Prof. James D. Hess and Niladri Syam
375H and 375 J Melcher Hall
jhess@uh.edu nbsyam@uh.edu
Off. Hrs. M-F 2:00-3:00

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES

Sales organizations face a multitude of management problems that cannot be effectively solved by seat-of-the-pants thinking: sales forecasting, measuring the effectiveness of sales contests, sales route selection, territory design, quota determination, or rating sales effectiveness. The sales force's productivity can be improved by using spreadsheets to improve these types of decisions.

Learning Objectives

- To build your knowledge of a variety of sales management problems.
- To develop basic analysis skills to diagnose decision relevant information for marketing decisions.
- To increase your analytical skills and expose you to several commonly used 'advanced' modeling techniques that help improve firm profitability
- Develop experience building computer spreadsheets to facilitate sales force management.

We will accomplish this through conceptual readings, computer exercises, and discussion of business cases that cover a wide range of realistic sales management decisions. The course will involve online video lectures and in-class discussions of applications to business cases.

REQUIRED COURSE MATERIAL

This is a computer intense class. Bring your laptop to class if you have one.

1. **Readings:** There is no textbook, but there are readings on Blackboard Learn.
2. **Video lectures:** prior to coming to class, it will be assumed that you have studied the video lectures and done the related exercises. Links to these video lectures may be found on Blackboard Learn.
2. **Cases:** Each time the class meets, there will be cases related to sales force management to discuss. The cases are posted on Blackboard Learn, along with some thought provoking questions that might guide your analysis of the problem.
3. **Software:** Computer applications will use EXCEL. Make certain that you have installed the Solver and Data Analysis.

Blackboard Learn

We will use the Blackboard Learn system as a bulletin board to facilitate electronic communication. On our MARK 7397, we will post cases, datasets, simpleton's guides, lecture notes, and links to video lectures. You can log onto Blackboard from any computer that has Web access to <http://www.uh.edu/blackboard/>.

ASSIGNMENTS

First, to keep the classroom lively, all sessions will include a discussion of a case. Some specific questions to help you organize your thoughts about the case are provided in the table below. Each of you is expected to contribute to class discussions. This is wonderful opportunity to practice presenting and discussing marketing issues from an analytic perspective.

You will be assigned one case as a "primary" discussion leader or one case as a "secondary" discussion leader. That guarantees that you will have lots of airtime for those cases. To get the most out of any case discussion, you should come to class with your own ideas but form a final opinion based upon the discussion. For each case discussion, a student will receive a grade of 5, 3, 1 or 0 as follows:

5= Extraordinary contribution to the discussion

3= Relevant contribution to discussion.

1= Minor contribution to the discussion

0= Lack of contribution to discussion.

At the end of the course your accumulated points will be z-scored in comparison to other students.

Note: given that this class only meets seven times, it is expected that you will attend all sessions.

Second, two case reports. You must write precisely two short (2 page) reports on cases of your choice. These are due via e-mail attachment to jhess@uh.edu by 5:00, the day **after** the case discussion. The usual warning applies: you should not discuss cases with any students who may have studied them in a prior years or get any input on these cases outside class discussion. This includes, but is not limited to, input from any other external file or written material including those on the Internet.

Third, there will be one midterm exam and a cumulative final exam.

GRADING Class participation 30%, Case reports 20%, Midterm Exam 20%, Final Exam 30%

Schedule of Topics, Readings and Cases

Day	Topic	Date of Class	Notes and Cases
1	Spreadsheets in sales force management	Th Jan 2	Excel Solver
2	Prospecting and Qualifying Leads: identifying "angels and devils" Sales Forecasting	Fri Jan 3	Regression ABB case UNILABS case
3	Measuring effectiveness of sales contests Call Planning: Which Customers? What Products?	M Jan 6	PROMOTER case CALLPLAN case
4	Midterm Exam Shortest Path to the Customer Route design for Traveling Salesman	Tu Jan 7	Dijkstra Algorithm Concorde TSP
5	Territory Design and redesign	Wed Jan 8	Hess- Samuels
6	Setting Quotas and Commission rates Designing Sales Contest	Th Jan 9	QUOPLAN
7	Sales Response Frontiers Analysis: rating salespeople Final Exam	Fri Jan 10	

Academic Honesty: The University of Houston Academic Honesty Policy is strictly enforced by the C. T. Bauer College of Business. No violations of this policy will be tolerated in this course. A discussion of the policy is included in the University of Houston Student Handbook, <http://www.uh.edu/dos/hdbk/acad/achonpol.html>. Students are expected to be familiar with this policy.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities: The C. T. Bauer College of Business would like to help students who have disabilities achieve their highest potential. To this end, in order to receive academic accommodations, students must register with the Center for Students with Disabilities (CSD) (telephone 713-743-5400), and present approved accommodation documentation to their instructors in a timely manner.