

Call for Papers – Marketing Education Review Special Issue

Special Issue Title: Advancing Excellence in Professional Selling and Sales Management Education

Submission Deadline: *August 1st, 2026*

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Special Issue Overview

Professional selling remains a critical engine of economic activity, a primary driver of firm revenue, and a foundational career path for a significant percentage of business graduates. The sales function is where strategy meets the market, and its effectiveness is paramount to organizational success. Consequently, the education and training of sales professionals—from undergraduate students taking their first sales course to seasoned executives honing their leadership skills—is a matter of vital importance to both academia and industry (Scribner, Delpechitre & Lastner, 2024).

Despite its enduring significance, sales education exists in a state of continuous evolution. It stands at the nexus of profound disruptions transforming higher education and the business world simultaneously (Alavi & Habel, 2021). Educators must navigate a complex environment characterized by shifting student expectations for flexibility and relevance, intense economic pressures on universities to demonstrate value, and rapidly evolving workforce demands from an industry grappling with technological change and new buyer behaviors (Cardinali et al., 2025).

A central and persistent challenge in this domain is bridging the gap between academic theory and professional practice (Metsola, 2025). Sales education must provide students with a rigorous theoretical foundation in areas like consumer behavior, persuasion, and strategic management, while also equipping them with the tangible, career-ready skills demanded by employers. This dual mandate requires a thoughtful and evidence-based approach to curriculum design, pedagogical innovation, and learner assessment. The scope of this challenge is broad, encompassing the full spectrum of learning contexts: traditional university degree programs and concentrations, corporate sales training and onboarding programs designed to shorten ramp-up times, and the development of sales acumen for entrepreneurs and small business owners.

This special issue of *Marketing Education Review* seeks to consolidate and advance our collective knowledge of how to best educate and train the sales professionals and leaders of today and tomorrow. We invite empirical, conceptual, and methodological contributions from

across the entire landscape of professional selling and sales management education. The goal is to create a comprehensive special issue that addresses foundational questions, explores contemporary challenges, and provides actionable insights for educators, administrators, and training professionals dedicated to advancing excellence in the field.

Illustrative List of Topics

Submissions are welcome on a wide range of topics. The following non-exhaustive list is intended to illustrate the broad scope of the special issue:

1. Pedagogical Strategies and Curricular Innovation

- **Effectiveness of Teaching Modalities:** As student demands for flexibility grow, rigorous research is needed to compare the effectiveness of different delivery formats. We welcome comparative studies on learning outcomes in in-person, online, hybrid, and asynchronous sales courses.
- **The Role of Experiential Learning:** Sales is a performance-based discipline. What is the assessed impact of experiential learning tools such as in-class role-plays, live sales call exercises, complex case studies, and participation in national sales competitions on student confidence, skill acquisition, and career readiness?
- **Curriculum Design and Content:** We solicit research on the optimal design of sales curricula. This includes studies on the structure of a sales major, minor, or concentration; the sequencing of courses; and the integration of core concepts such as prospecting, needs discovery, negotiation, relationship management, and closing.

2. Learner Development, Assessment, and Career Outcomes

- **Measuring Learning and Competency:** How do we know our teaching is effective? This special issue encourages the development and validation of robust instruments and rubrics to assess the acquisition of specific sales skills and competencies, moving beyond simple course grades.
- **The Link Between Education and Performance:** There is a pressing need to demonstrate the return on investment for sales education, both for students and for the organizations that hire them. This imperative requires research that connects educational inputs to tangible outputs. University programs are increasingly highlighting career outcomes, such as post-graduation employment rate, as a key indicator of success. We therefore strongly encourage longitudinal studies that track the career trajectories, performance metrics (e.g., quota attainment, promotion speed), and long-term success of graduates from university sales programs.
- **Student Engagement and Motivation:** What factors drive student interest, persistence, and success in the sales discipline? We invite research exploring the influence of faculty mentorship, the role of student organizations (e.g., chapters of Pi Sigma Epsilon), and the impact of early exposure to successful sales role models.

3. Educating for Sales Management and Leadership

- **Teaching Sales Management:** Research on effective pedagogical approaches for teaching core sales management topics is critical. This includes curriculum design for subjects such as sales force compensation and incentives, contest design, territory alignment, sales forecasting, and performance management.
- **Managing & Leveraging Technology Strategically:** Modern sales leaders must be adept at selecting, implementing, and driving adoption of a complex sales technology stack, from CRM and analytics platforms to AI-powered coaching and sales enablement tools. We invite research on how to educate future managers on evaluating the ROI of these technologies, integrating them into the sales process to enhance productivity, and using technology to support, rather than replace, effective coaching and performance management.
- **Developing Coaching Skills:** Effective coaching is a key differentiator between average and elite sales managers. How can we effectively teach the art and science of sales coaching in a classroom setting? We solicit research on pedagogies for developing coaching frameworks, feedback techniques, and motivational strategies in future sales leaders.
- **Strategic Alignment:** Influential scholars argue that sales management must be tightly integrated with a firm's overall business strategy to be effective. We welcome papers that explore how to teach this crucial connection, preparing students to think beyond tactical selling and understand the strategic role of the sales function.

4. The Academia-Industry Interface

- **The Role of University Sales Centers:** University sales centers have become pivotal in advancing the discipline. We seek studies that examine the impact and best practices of these centers in fostering industry partnerships, enriching the student experience, and generating relevant research. The work of the University Sales Center Alliance (USCA) provides a rich context for this research.
- **Effective Industry Partnerships:** What forms of industry collaboration are most impactful? We invite studies on the effectiveness of corporate advisory boards, guest speaker series, company-sponsored curriculum projects, and the use of industry professionals as mentors and coaches.
- **The Legitimacy Project:** We welcome conceptual or historical papers on the role of organizations like the Sales Education Foundation (SEF) and USCA in establishing sales as a legitimate, rigorous, and respected academic discipline and professional career, changing perceptions in both academia and the corporate world.

5. Ethical, Global, and Cultural Dimensions of Sales Education

- **Teaching Sales Ethics:** Beyond a single lecture, how can educators embed ethical decision-making into every facet of the sales curriculum? We seek papers on innovative pedagogies, case studies, and frameworks for cultivating a strong ethical compass in sales students.
- **Global Sales Education:** What adaptations are needed to prepare students for careers in international sales? This includes research on teaching cross-cultural negotiation, adapting sales models to non-Western frameworks, and managing global sales teams.

- **Developing Cultural Intelligence & Competencies:** As sales becomes increasingly global and customer bases more diverse, the ability to understand, adapt to, and leverage cultural differences is a critical skill. We invite research on pedagogical methods for developing and assessing cultural intelligence (CQ) in sales students. This could include studies on the effectiveness of immersive experiences, cross-cultural case studies, and frameworks for adapting communication and negotiation styles to different cultural contexts.
- **Student Well-Being:** Higher education is witnessing rising levels of student anxiety and burnout. What is the role of the sales educator in this context? We solicit research on fostering resilience, managing performance pressure, and supporting student mental health within the demanding context of sales education.

Submission Guidelines and Key Dates

Manuscripts should follow the *Marketing Education Review* formatting and submission requirements. Submissions must clearly articulate both theoretical and practical contributions, with particular emphasis on how the work addresses challenges or opportunities in professional selling and sales management education. Authors are encouraged to demonstrate the applicability, adaptability, and potential impact of their insights on instructional design, student engagement, curriculum development, or broader educational practice.

When submitting, authors must select the special issue option, "Advancing Excellence in Professional Selling and Sales Management Education," and not the regular issue. Manuscripts should be between 4,000 and 7,000 words (15 to 30 pages), plus appropriate references, tables, and other supporting materials. Please consult the *MER* website for complete submission formatting requirements.

Important Dates:

Manuscript Submission Portal Opens	January 15 th , 2025
Manuscript Submission Deadline	August 1 st , 2026

Contact Information:

For inquiries regarding this call for papers, please contact the Special Issue Editors or the Editor-in-Chief.

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