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Advertising Sales Performance at A Traditional Media Company Operating in the Digital Age

Michael Pettiette

Faculty of the Usc Rossier School of Education
University of Southern California

ABSTRACT

ZAP Corporation, a traditional media company, has experienced a lack of revenue growth related to the industry-wide disruption caused by digital media. Role clarity is an important asset for organizations that require innovation and creativity to prosper, and the ZAP Corporation will likely require innovation and creativity to cope with this industry-wide disruption. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to evaluate the degree to which the ZAP Corporation is meeting the stakeholder goal of achieving 100% perceived role clarity among salespeople, based on survey data, by the end of 2019. Two different groups of salespeople at the ZAP Corporation were surveyed regarding knowledge, motivational, and organizational factors uncovered through a literature review related to role clarity. The survey results show that many of the salespeople do not perceive themselves as fully knowledgeable about the digital media assets that they are selling. The survey results also demonstrate that the salespeople do not perceive their sales goals to be achievable, timely, or fair. They perceive their goals as being too voluminous, and they do not believe that the organization properly balances short-term and long-term goals. To address these findings, I recommend three actions. First, the organization must change its goal-setting practices so that the goals are perceived to be achievable, timely, and fair. Further inquiry might be required to better understand what specific changes would address these goal-setting issues. Second, education-based digital industry training will arm the salespeople with deeper industry knowledge that may be more valuable than simple product-specific knowledge, given that the products themselves are rapidly-changing. Third, training on metacognition (reflective practices) may help the salespeople become clearer on how their goals reciprocally support the goals of the organization, how digital ties in with these goals, and how metacognition can be used as a tool to help salespeople think through their voluminous goals so that they may better prioritize them.

INTRODUCTION TO PROBLEM OF PRACTICE

For many of the largest media companies in the world, the sale of advertising space represents a major percentage, and in many cases a majority, of overall revenue (Arsenault & Castells, 2008; Macnamara, 2010). A company's ability to generate profits is important for financial success and the firm's long-term competitiveness (Lafley & Charan, 2008; Sarkees & Hulland, 2009). The overall media industry has seen consistent growth in recent years (Letang & Leszenga, 2017), although the mix of revenue has shifted from traditional advertising to digital advertising in many cases (Arsenault & Castells, 2008; Letang & Leszenga, 2017; Macnamara, 2010). During this industry growth, a division of the ZAP Corporation has not achieved its revenue budgets and has experienced revenue declines in each of the past three years (internal documents¹). This problem could be caused by a number of factors. To ensure that this inquiry remains appropriately focused and effective, I chose to focus on the area of role clarity. It is possible that this industry-wide digital disruption has reduced the clarity of roles and expectations for the people working within traditional media companies as the employees struggle to understand how to move forward in a changed landscape (Briggs, Jaramillo, & Weeks, 2012; Horst & Moisander, 2015; Karimi & Walter, 2015; Maidell, 2015). In addition to this industry change, ZAP Corporation was also undergoing internal change during this inquiry. Because role clarity is directly linked with change success (Hall, 2008), role clarity is a relevant consideration in this situation given the internal and external changes taking place. It is a problem that this division of the ZAP Corporation has not achieved revenue growth over the past three years.

¹ specific citation information has been omitted to maintain confidentiality

This inquiry focused on one potential contributing factor to this problem: the possible lack of role clarity for salespeople operating within the ZAP Corporation. Training for salespeople in digital media and reflective practice, and changes in goal-setting practices are indicated as possible solutions to coping with the numerous factors suggested in the data that may be inhibiting role clarity.

Organizational Context and Mission

The ZAP Corporation is a publicly traded, mass-media firm operating businesses that include broadcast and digital media interests in major media markets in the United States. The mission of the organization is to deliver shareholder value while serving the communities it operates within by delivering timely, informative, and entertaining content to consumers: broadcast, streaming, digital video, digital articles, and via other means (ZAP website, 2016²). In 2015, a majority of ZAP's revenue came from advertising sales (Forbes.com, 2016³). Although there are several different measures of financial performance that are important for the organization's stock price, sustainable topline revenue growth, regardless of market conditions, is the paramount organizational goal within the company.

Importance of Addressing the Problem

A company's ability to generate profits is important for financial success and the firm's long-term competitiveness (Lafley & Charan, 2008; Sarkees & Hulland, 2009). ZAP Corporation's upper management has repeatedly verbalized the need to grow revenue every year in national earnings calls. Furthermore, it is also clear that market changes created by the digital disruption are likely to remain uncertain for some time: The business models that have been adopted and that are being modified show that the industries are adapting to the new environment and responding to consumers' readiness to embrace the Internet. It is also clear that for both producers and users, change is ongoing. (Ala-Fossi et al., 2008, p. 166)

ZAP's mission and organizational goals must be examined within the context of these market changes.

Organizational Performance Goal

Many traditional media companies have seen digital revenue experience double-digit growth as traditional media revenue sources decline (Ala-Fossi et al., 2008). Ala-Fossi et al. (2008) pointed out that these growing digital revenue streams make up too small a percentage of many traditional media companies' revenue to overcome the declines in the traditional core business. With an understanding of these market changes, ZAP's organizational goal is to achieve a sustainable and consistent three percent annual growth in sales each year starting in 2020.

Stakeholder of Focus and Stakeholder Goal

ZAP has multiple stakeholder groups: the organization is vast and includes many disparate businesses and stakeholders. For the purposes of this inquiry, I have focused on the salespeople as my stakeholder of focus. Salespeople are responsible for generating advertising revenue. Because I am focused on role clarity for this inquiry, the stakeholder goal is to achieve 100% perceived role clarity among the salespeople based on survey data by the end of 2019.

Purpose of the Project and Questions

The purpose of this project was to evaluate the degree to which ZAP Corporation is meeting the stakeholder goal of achieving 100% perceived role clarity among the salespeople based on survey data by the end of 2019. The analysis focused on the knowledge, motivation, and organizational influences related to achieving the stakeholder goal. The questions that guided this study are the following:

1. To what extent are the salespeople at ZAP Corporation meeting the stakeholder goal of achieving 100% perceived role clarity by the end of 2019?

² specific citation information has been omitted to maintain confidentiality

³ specific citation information has been omitted to maintain confidentiality

2. What are the knowledge, motivation, and organizational influences related to achieving ZAP Corporation's stakeholder goal of achieving 100% perceived role clarity among the salespeople?
3. What are the recommendations for ZAP Corporation's organizational practice in the areas of knowledge, motivation, and organizational resources as they relate to achieving 100% perceived role clarity among the salespeople?

Review of the Literature

The traditional media industry's revenue problem caused by the digital disruption is well researched (Gianatasio, 2017; Truong, McColl &, Kitchen, 2010; Yoon & Kim, 2001; Zhu, 2001). Traditional media spending is predicted to stagnate while digital media revenue is predicted to grow at annual rates as high as 40% (Truong et al., 2010, p. 711). The current sales strategies that are based on traditional media models will likely require reexamination and creative modification to remain effective (Truong et al., 2010). Therefore, to achieve more than middling revenue growth, media companies need to better understand how best to effect cultural change, innovation, and creativity within the traditional media organizations as digital media alters the landscape. To that end, according to Schein (2004), it is important that before cultural change can be addressed, "one needs to (1) have a clear definition of the operational problem or issue that started the change process and (2) formulate *specific* new behavioral goals" (p. 324).

Insufficient role clarity has been empirically demonstrated to reduce the individual's creativity and innovativeness (Donnelly & Ivancevich, 1975; Lyons, 1971; Tang & Chang, 2010). Moreover, the literature highlights the need for clear decision-making to create successful change (Rogers & Blenko, 2006). In addition to industry change, ZAP Corporation was also undergoing significant internal change during this inquiry; because role clarity is directly linked with change success (Hall, 2008), it is an important factor to consider in this situation given the internal and external environments. Therefore, there are strong arguments present in the literature that the problem of insufficient role clarity would have a negative effect on traditional media companies and individuals because these organizations, like many organizations, must produce culture change and creative innovations as mechanisms for coping with industry disruption and declining sales (Donnelly & Ivancevich, 1975; Gianatasio, 2017; Karimi & Walter, 2015; Lyons, 1971; Tang & Chang, 2010; Truong et al., 2010; Yoon & Kim, 2001; Zhu, 2001).

Perceived Role Clarity and Perceived Role Ambiguity

There is recognition in the literature that role clarity itself suffers from a lack of clarity in terms of definition. In his seminal work, Sawyer (1992) recognized that the terms role clarity and role ambiguity are really two sides of the same coin that contain a combination of the same constructs. According to Tang and Chang (2010), "Role clarity refers to how clearly a set of activities expected from an individual are expressed. Role ambiguity...is the reverse situation" (p. 870). Experienced role ambiguity involves perceived confusion about responsibilities (Tang & Chang, 2010; Sawyer, 1992). Many scholars have thus chosen to focus their inquiry on perception when looking at role clarity (Bliese, & Castro, 2000; Donnelly & Ivancevich, 1975; Singh, & Rhoads, 1991; Walker, Churchill, & Ford, 1975). Therefore, it can be assumed that references to role ambiguity and role clarity throughout this inquiry are synonymous (two sides of the same coin) in terms of the perceptual constructs that were being referenced and measured during the inquiry.

Perceived Role Conflict

Role conflict "results from two or more sets of incompatible demands involving work-related issues" (Tang & Chang, 2010, p. 871). As highlighted by Tang and Chang (2010), the literature frequently refers to role conflict as a separate and distinct element that may contribute to role ambiguity. Role conflict may take place when components of the role definitions conflict with each other (Floyd & Lane, 2000; Sawyer, 1992; Tang & Chang, 2010; Walker et al., 1975). As an example, salespeople must deliver on their clients' objectives as well as their company's objectives. The company (ZAP) wants more profit, and the client (advertiser) wants more profit. This may create a role conflict for the salesperson because they want to get a high price for their company, and their own pocketbook if they are paid on commission, and a low price for their clients (Floyd & Lane, 2000). This role conflict is an aspect of role clarity because there is some evidence that this conflict can create perceived ambiguity (Floyd & Lane, 2000; Sawyer, 1992; Singh & Rhoads, 1991; Tang & Chang, 2010; Walker et al., 1975).

The company may have some awareness that this conflict is present for the salesperson as they balance the needs of their client and their company (Floyd & Lane, 2000; Sawyer, 1992; Tang & Chang, 2010; Walker et al., 1975). However, role conflict may also take place in a way that is not planned or understood during industry disruption or innovation (Horst & Moisander, 2015).

Multiple empirical studies (Briggs et al., 2012; Horst & Moisander, 2015; Karimi & Walter, 2015; Maidell, 2015) demonstrate that the digital media disruption is creating a need for strategic renewal among traditional media companies: each study finds some evidence of role conflict created by innovation and strategic renewal. If a media salesperson is told to sell broadcast advertising and digital advertising, how do they decide how to tackle those responsibilities? Even if there is a clear answer, if the salesperson does not perceive the answer to be clear, she may suffer from perceived role conflict because the two objectives appear to be at odds (Floyd & Lane, 2000). This role conflict for the media salesperson may, therefore, contribute to role ambiguity. It is possible that some role conflict pushes people to arrive at creative solutions, while too much conflict creates too much stress and reduces creativity (Tang & Chang, 2010). Tang and Chang (2010) link this concept of role conflict with stress and arousal theories: some stress, perhaps created by role conflict, is beneficial for creating performance and creativity, but too much stress may kill out performance and creativity.

Knowledge, Motivation, and Organizational Influences

Knowledge and Skills

In this section, I will review the literature that focuses on knowledge-related influences that are pertinent to the achievement of the stakeholder goal of achieving role clarity. According to Clark and Estes (2008), “it is necessary to determine whether people know how (and when, what, why, where, and who) to achieve their performance goals” (p. 44). These aspects of knowledge appear to directly correlate with sales success: in an empirical study of salespeople, Sharma, Levy, and Evanschitzky (2007) found that “knowledge structure variables explain 50.2 percent of the variance in sales performance” (p. 169). Therefore, it is important to examine the relevant aspects of knowledge that are necessary for role clarity and organizational effectiveness within these stakeholders’ context.

Knowledge influences.

I will examine literature that is relevant to salespeople within ZAP Corporation with a special emphasis on role expectations knowledge and metacognitive knowledge factors. I will examine these factors broadly and then look at the concepts as they pertain to salespeople in the media industry. It is important to examine role expectations knowledge because there is evidence that knowledge of one’s role expectations and goals is a critical aspect of creativity and persistence (Shalley & Gilson, 2004; Tang & Chang, 2010). And, within a sales context, Bell, Mengüç, and Widing (2010) pointed to several organizational learning benefits related to having well-defined role expectations and a thorough understanding of how the roles interact in a sales organization. It is important to examine metacognitive knowledge factors because, according to Matsuo (2011) “metacognitive knowledge facilitates decision-making, problem solving, and task performance” (p. 312).

Role expectations is a concept referenced in several areas of the literature (Bell et al., 2010; Shalley & Gilson, 2004; Tang & Chang, 2010). I have chosen to adopt the knowledge of one’s role expectations as a precept for this inquiry because there are specific links with this concept and role clarity, creativity, and innovation present within the literature (Bell et al., 2010; Shalley & Gilson, 2004; Tang & Chang, 2010). There is a distinction here between role expectations knowledge and the more granular elements that make it up: declarative and procedural knowledge. Furthermore, there may be a link with role expectations knowledge and metacognitive knowledge, as the literature frequently addresses metacognitive thought as it relates to one’s role expectations (Bell et al., 2010; Shalley & Gilson, 2004). Do the salespeople understand what is expected in their role? Do they know how to fulfill those expectations? If they do not have the appropriate knowledge to answer affirmatively to these first two questions, they may have a gap in their role expectations knowledge. Do they understand that they do not yet have this role expectations knowledge (metacognitive knowledge)?

Some metacognition may take place as the salesperson examines if they do, in fact, understand their own role expectations, especially given the evidence that perception is the driving force behind experienced role clarity (Bliese, & Castro, 2000; Donnelly & Ivancevich, 1975; Singh, & Rhoads, 1991; Walker et al., 1975).

Role expectations knowledge. One must possess some procedural and declarative knowledge to understand one's role expectations and responsibilities (Banks & Millward, 2007; Tang & Chang, 2010). According to Banks and Millward (2007), "procedural knowledge is defined as 'the steps, procedures, sequences, and actions required for task performance'" (p. 4).

As a part of their role, salespeople are required to know the steps about what they are supposed to do and have declarative knowledge about their products and industry so that they can appropriately execute these steps (Jones, Chonko, Jones, & Stevens, 2012). Role expectations knowledge for a salesperson includes knowing how to sell and knowing about what they are selling; the salespeople must have knowledge of their own role and responsibilities and have enough clarity to engage in creative selling behaviors (Tang & Chang, 2010).

Understanding what to do is as important as understanding how to do each task (Banks & Millward, 2007). In a sales role, one must know the procedures related to getting an appointment, asking questions to uncover potential needs, handling objections, negotiations, etc. (Jones et al., 2012). Jones et al. (2012) label one of these steps as "prescription" (p. 109). In the prescription step, salespeople work to fully understand the customer's challenges and to develop appropriate solutions (Jones et al., 2012). Without the necessary procedural knowledge highlighted by Sharma et al. (2007), the prescription step mentioned by Jones and colleagues may not be effective. Effective salespeople need to have the role expectations knowledge that drives them to understand the required procedures to uncover customer needs (asking questions and doing research). Moreover, there is empirical evidence to support the strength of the predictive relationship between these abilities and sales success (Sharma et al., 2007). If you do not know the steps in selling, you will likely not sell the client anything, but, if you sell the client the wrong product, they may not stay your client for long. Lack of product knowledge is a problem often noted by customers who interact with salespeople (Jones et al., 2012). Therefore, role expectations knowledge includes both an understanding of the required procedures of the sales process, and the declarative product knowledge of what products are appropriate to sell to which clients.

The need for procedural knowledge related to this prescription step among media salespeople at ZAP may be even more essential given clients' general uncertainty related to digital media and the industry's corresponding disruption (Gianatasio, 2017; Truong et al., 2010; Yoon & Kim, 2001; Zhu, 2001). There is also a link with procedural knowledge and creativity and, given the industry's disruption, creative solutions may be an important part of developing positive client outcomes (Evans, McFarland, Dietz, & Jaramillo, 2012; Truong et al. 2010; Yoon & Kim, 2001; Zhu, 2001). According to Evans et al. (2012), these critical aspects of procedural knowledge of salespeople may enhance their ability to adapt creatively to unusual and challenging situations. Therefore, there is strong evidence in the literature related to the importance of procedural knowledge in the context of a rapidly changing media sales context (Banks & Millward, 2007; Evans et al., 2012; Jones et al., 2012; Sharma et al., 2007; Truong et al. 2010; Yoon & Kim, 2001; Zhu, 2001). As an expectation of their role, media salespeople at ZAP Corporation are also required to gain declarative knowledge across a variety of broadcast, event sponsorship, and digital advertising products. The relatively recent digital declarative knowledge requirements are challenging given the speed of industry change (Gianatasio, 2017; Truong et al. 2010; Yoon & Kim, 2001; Zhu, 2001). Both the declarative information about the product and industry, and the steps of selling are important components of role expectations knowledge.

Metacognitive knowledge. According to Matsuo (2011), self-reflection is a critical element of our ability to adapt and learn. Three key areas of metacognitive knowledge are "strategic knowledge, knowledge about cognitive tasks, and self-knowledge" (p. 312). In an empirical study of salespeople, Matsuo (2011) found a statistically significant link between metacognitive knowledge and sales performance. Salespeople who engage in metacognition related to achieving their customers' objectives and their own personal goal achievement are more likely to achieve goals in the early stages of their careers (Matsuo, 2011).

Given that ZAP Corporation operates in an industry undergoing rapid change (Gianatasio, 2017; Truong et al. 2010; Yoon & Kim, 2001; Zhu, 2001), and because there is evidence that metacognition and reflection enhance the individual's ability to adjust to a rapidly changing environment (Immordino-Yang, Christodoulou, & Singh, 2012; Isaacson & Fujita, 2006; Rodgers, 2002), there is a strong argument present in the literature related to the value of metacognition. There may also be an argument related to the power of reflection and role clarity; even if some role clarity is provided by management, the mere perception of role ambiguity is enough to affect outcomes (Lyons, 1971; Tang & Chang, 2012). Therefore, metacognition (reflection) may aid a salesperson in enhancing their own role expectations knowledge over time as they continuously think about their own knowledge as it relates to their role. Reflective activity related to one's self and one's organization could mitigate perceived role ambiguity merely through the metacognitive activity of thinking through one's role: this process may in and of itself reduce the perception of ambiguity (Immordino-Yang et al., 2012; Isaacson & Fujita, 2006; Rodgers, 2002). If the salesperson does not possess the appropriate knowledge related to the expectations of their role, it is possible that metacognition could help them recognize this (Immordino-Yang et al., 2012; Isaacson & Fujita, 2006; Rodgers, 2002; Shalley & Gilson, 2004). The salesperson needs the factual and procedural knowledge that encompasses their role, and metacognition could help them recognize if they do not have clarity on critical aspects of that role (Isaacson & Fujita, 2006; Immordino-Yang et al., 2012; Rodgers, 2002).

Motivation

According to Clark and Estes (2008) "motivation is the internal, psychological process that gets us going, keeps us moving, and helps us get jobs done" (p. 44). For the purposes of understanding role clarity within ZAP Corporation, I focused this literature review on goal orientation and self-efficacy with an emphasis on how these concepts affect role clarity, creativity, and innovation. According to Clark and Estes (2008), motivation factors have influence on our choices as they relate to pursuing goals, persisting in the face of adversity as we work to achieve these goals, and the amount of mental effort we invest in achieving these goals. Therefore, motivation is a critical element of salesperson success in situations that require the adoption of challenging goals, persistence, and investment of mental effort.

Goal orientation. Anderman (2015) provided a working definition of the goal orientation concepts in the context of student learning that includes mastery orientation and performance orientation. Mastery-oriented individuals are focused on deeply understanding the concepts at hand and are more likely to persist in many tough situations. Performance-oriented individuals simply want to demonstrate that they have abilities that are appropriate as they relate to the measured abilities of others. The performance-oriented individual is frequently more extrinsically motivated than the mastery-oriented individual. It is important to emphasize that people can simultaneously "be both mastery-approach oriented and performance-approach oriented; such a student truly wants to learn and master the material but is also concerned with appearing more competent than others" (Anderman, 2015, para. 4). There is also some evidence that an individual's attitude towards intelligence affects their predisposition to mastery versus performance; people who believe that intelligence is modifiable through hard work are more likely to hold a mastery orientation (Anderman, 2015; Dweck & Leggett, 1988; Elliott & Dweck, 1988). According to VandeWalle, Brown, Cron, and Slocum (1999), goal orientation may have a positive link with self-regulation. These self-regulation tactics include individual goal-setting behaviors (VandeWalle et al., 1999).

Salesperson goal orientation. There are specific aspects of goal orientation that apply uniquely to salespeople. Bell et al. (2010) suggested that aspects of goal orientation should be considered in the hiring process and that training programs may be less important than once thought. However, the goal orientation motivation-effect may be moderated by repeated individual failure: salespeople may become more performance-oriented and less mastery-oriented in the face of adversity (Boichuk et al., 2014). Boichuk et al. (2014) referred to this type of performance orientation as "sales-oriented behaviors" that "can be defined as customer-directed influence attempts that are indifferent to customers' unique needs and intended to spur immediate sales" (p. 95). When engaging in this type of sales-oriented behavior, salespeople may effectively ignore any role expectations knowledge or metacognitive knowledge they may have gained in favor of engaging in behaviors that disregard the steps of the sales process (Jones et al., 2012) in hopes of creating quick, perhaps one-time, sales that may snub client needs (Boichuk et al., 2014). An example of sales-oriented behavior might involve making a generic advertising campaign and trying to sell it to multiple clients with high-pressure tactics:

The salesperson is just trying to make a sale without worrying about what would work for the client in the long-term. This type of motivation issue may be an orientation problem rather than a persistence problem (Boichuk et al., 2014; Pintrich, 2003).

This sales-oriented behavior is a form of “learned helplessness” where there is still some motivation to persist in the sales effort, but when the proper techniques (role expectations knowledge) are abandoned (Boichuk et al., 2014, p. 96). According to Boichuk et al. (2014), “We contend that salespeople also behave helplessly during their interactions with customers by way of engaging in sales-oriented behaviors, which, unlike the avoidance behaviors studied to date, aim to make a sale” (p. 97). There is also evidence that role conflict may reduce intrinsic motivation that, therefore, reduces creative solution-seeking (Tang & Chang, 2010). The findings of Boichuk et al. (2014) and Tang and Chang (2010) appears to draw compatible conclusions that job stress, perhaps related to role conflict or sales failure, may affect motivation in a way that encourages sales-oriented behavior and reduces the type of creativity that is necessary to develop customized and effective client solutions.

Goal content. Clark and Estes (2008) argued that effective “C³” goals are “concrete,” “challenging,” and “current” (p. 26). The term concrete is defined as “clear, easily understandable, and measurable” (p. 26). Clark and Estes (2008) also wrote about the concept of “cascading goals” (p. 35). They argued that members of an organization are most effective if they have a clear understanding of what they need to do “this week (and next)” to hit the organization’s long-term organizational goals (p. 35). The most effective goals give short-term, intermediate, and long-term guidelines with demonstrated links among the steps; each step should also be concrete, challenging and current (Clark & Estes, 2008). Furthermore, Clark and Estes (2008) recommended caution related to a goal-setting challenge they refer to as “thrashing” (p. 27) that creates so many goals and layers of accountability measurement metrics such that each metric is reduced in its effectiveness at driving organizational outcomes. Paradoxically, this amount of goals and goal measurement may inhibit the individual’s ability to be accountable as they become overwhelmed with their responsibilities. According to Clark and Estes (2008), “Current evidence suggests people can think about approximately three to five new chunks or items at once, and that number decreases as stress increases” (p.27). The goal content must be C³ and cascading but cannot be so voluminous that the goals create thrashing (Clark & Estes, 2008). Miao, Evans, and Shaoming (2007) find that this type of voluminous goal setting does not properly function in the long-term because such specific goals are not adaptable enough to function in a changing environment. Miao et al. (2007) also found that this type of voluminous goal setting may kill out motivation because the individual has no room to experiment or apply new learnings they develop in the field.

There is a link between highly prescriptive goal content, role clarity, and self-efficacy (Tang & Chang, 2010). If role conflict and role ambiguity make individuals believe that their circumstances are difficult to control, self-efficacy can be negatively affected (Tang & Chang, 2010). Role ambiguity makes it more difficult for an individual to accurately access their skills: the individual needs to be able to visualize what ideal performance looks like to assess self-efficacy (Bandura, 1977; Tang & Chang, 2010).

However, according Griffin, Neal, and Parker (2007), it is also possible that too much role clarity via prescriptive goal content can create an external mode of control: “Role clarity facilitates an external mode of control because the procedures and processes are specified, so role incumbents know what to do, how to do it, and how they are evaluated” (p. 333). The literature often refers to this concept of external control as a low locus of control, and a low locus of control is associated with higher job-related stress, lower job satisfaction, and reduced job performance (Chen & Silverthorne, 2008; Lefcourt, 2014). Therefore, there is a tension present in the literature related to the amount of role clarity and prescriptive goal content that is appropriate to maintain self-efficacy: the individual needs to be able to visualize success without being micro-managed on all required behaviors needed to achieve that success (Bandura, 1977; Chen & Silverthorne, 2008; Griffin, et al., 2007; Lefcourt, 2014; Tang & Chang, 2010). The goal content must not be so voluminous that it cannot be well-understood (Clark & Estes, 2008). The goal content cannot be so specific that it is no longer adaptable to changing environments or restrains experimentation (Miao et al., 2007). The goal content cannot be so prescriptive that the internal locus of control is destroyed (Chen & Silverthorne, 2008; Griffin, et al., 2007; Lefcourt, 2014), and it cannot be so structured that all creativity is removed (Tang & Chang, 2010). However, the goal content must provide enough role clarity that success can be visualized and therefore self-efficacy can be maintained (Bandura, 1977; Tang & Chang, 2010).

Salesperson goal content. Boichuk et al. (2014) found that leadership practices that include “fostering the acceptance of group goals...reduces newly hired salespeople’s intentions to engage in sales-oriented behaviors during early stages of sales performance failure but that its efficacy diminishes as periods of failure accumulate” (p. 96). This empirical evidence is consistent with Clark and Estes’ (2008) research related to cascading goals. A clear understanding of how the salespersons’ short-term goals interacted with the organization’s higher-level group goals led to reduced instances of the improper sales-oriented behavior (Boichuk et al., 2014). Therefore, there is some empirical evidence that appropriate knowledge-related goal content may influence a salesperson’s mastery orientation (Boichuk et al., 2014).

However, there is also some evidence that these task-oriented, short-term activity goals could cause some reduction in motivation in a sales environment despite increasing role clarity if the short-term sales activities are not perceived as meaningful (Miao et al., 2007). Miao et al. (2007) found that many layers of controls and goals for specific behavioral activity: influence behavioral and outcome performance only through salesperson’s challenge seeking dimension of intrinsic motivation. Sales managers who rely on activity control must ensure that the assigned activity goals are considered useful and challenging by the salespeople. For instance, excessive use of detailed call reports may be perceived as less consequential and challenging than such activities as number of new accounts visited. (p. 423)

Again, the findings of Miao et al. are consistent with Clark and Estes’ (2008) contention that there is value in the individual’s clear knowledge of how their own short-term goals fit in with their own long-term goals, and how these goals fit in with the long-term goals of the organization as a whole, but caution is suggested related to micro-management removing all challenge and meaning: these are necessary aspects of motivation.

Industry disruption must also be considered in the area of salesperson goal content at ZAP Corporation (Gianatasio, 2017; Truong et al. 2010; Yoon & Kim, 2001; Zhu, 2001). The added layer of new digital industry knowledge requirements (Gianatasio, 2017; Truong et al. 2010; Yoon & Kim, 2001; Zhu, 2001) and the multiple goals related to digital advertising created by ZAP², may be counterproductive in this context insofar as “thrashing” could reduce motivation and role clarity (Clark & Estes, 2008, p. 27). Sales managers must strike a balance in providing an appropriate amount of clarity with the content of their goals: goal content that provides too much rigorous task prescription can actually reduce the motivation to complete the tasks (Miao et al., 2007).

Organizational Influences

According to Clark and Estes (2008), it is likely that, if knowledge and motivational factors have been addressed but the organization is still not performing, organizational barriers are the culprit. Clark and Estes recommended an examination of the organization’s technology tools, business processes, and operating procedures as a part of the organizational analysis (2008). To achieve lasting change, processes must be aligned with strategic goals, communication must be constant, and upper managers must be heavily involved in the process (Clark & Estes, 2008).

Rapidly changing goals with a short-term focus. Organizations that constantly change goals and have a bias towards focusing only on short-term objectives may encounter several challenges related to achieving organizational objectives. There is a large amount of evidence present within the literature that organizational decisions that have short-term benefits and decisions that have long-term benefits are frequently at odds with each other (Bogacz, McClure, Li, Cohen, & Montague, 2007; Gureckis & Love, 2009). Technology innovation frequently nullifies the competitive advantage of established companies in disrupted industries (Sabatier, Craig-Kennard, & Mangematin, 2012). The media industry has been disrupted by digital offerings (Gianatasio, 2017, Truong et al., 2010; Yoon & Kim, 2001; Zhu, 2001), and it is possible that goals must change somewhat frequently simply because the environment is changing rapidly. However, the frequent adoption of short-term goals that are ineffective in creating long-term change that addresses the new environment is not a path to success.

² Internal documents withheld to protect confidentiality

Sabatier et al. (2012) argued that managers in an industry will typically subscribe to a “dominant logic” in which many of the approaches, nomenclature, and salient business strategies become a type of shared knowledge among all competitors (p. 4). By definition, this type of disruption experienced in the media industry requires companies to take a hard look at their long-term strategies (i.e. their dominant logic) so that they can understand how best to address industry changes (Clark & Estes, 2008; Sabatier et al., 2012). Learners must develop a cognitive understanding of the new environments they are operating within before they can develop the new knowledge required to form effective long-term strategies (Gureckis & Love, 2009); they must challenge their dominant logic (Sabatier et al., 2012).

Many times, there are multiple components of the environment that initially appear to be very alike, but they are not. As an example, salespeople frequently have multiple products to sell that initially appear to them to be very similar. The salespeople “must deal with the problem of *perceptual aliasing*...where multiple states or situations in the world may map to a single percept” (Gureckis & Love, 2009, p. 3). However, it is possible that this aliasing can lead people to make incorrect decisions that aim only to provide short-term gain at the expense of long-term opportunity. If the salesperson has a choice between two products, traditional broadcast advertising and digital advertising, she may perceive the products to be basically the same. If one is easier to sell, she sells that. Upper management may operate in much the same way: if one strategy is easier to perceive than another, they may do the easier strategy rather than the correct strategy. One product, digital advertising, is growing at a significantly higher rate in the media marketplace, although it may be more difficult to sell in the short-term due to the more technical nature of the medium (Truong et al., 2010; Yoon & Kim, 2001; Zhu, 2001). If the two products are perceived as a single percept, it is somewhat natural for the organization to move towards things that appear to have more immediate payoff and less immediate effort (Gureckis & Love, 2009). At a macro level, leaders of an organization may also suffer from the perceptual aliasing effect in disrupted environments. This effect may contribute to the frequent difficulty that established firms have when faced with challenges from an innovator: the innovator does not suffer from aliasing or dominant logic and can be more creative in pursuing more effective long-term goals (Clemons, Croson, & Weber, 1996; Gureckis & Love, 2009; Sabatier et al., 2012).

In his seminal work, Narayanan (1985) found strong empirical evidence that managers frequently make decisions that favor short-term results at the expense of long-term opportunities. Stavrou, Kassinis, and Filotheou (2007) found that, while troubled firms may make the choice to downsize to enhance short-term financial returns, there is evidence that these decisions harmed returns in the long-term. Furthermore, according to Gigler, Kanodia, Saprà, and Venugopalan (2014), there is strong empirical evidence that the frequent financial reporting requirements of publicly traded firms may contribute to this low accountability for long-term goals:

When the results of operations are reported too frequently, capital market pricing becomes equivalent to premature evaluation of managerial actions whose benefits arrive mostly in later periods. Consequently, actions that produce large short-term benefits become more attractive and actions that do not immediately produce such benefits but would *ultimately* create more value for the firm become less attractive. (p. 41)
Therefore, it is possible that, merely by nature of being publicly traded, firms such as the ZAP Corporation are set up with an organizational economic incentive to engage in short-termism and low accountability to long-term goals (Gigler et al., 2014).

Culture of low trust and fear. A culture of low trust and fear may create several organizational barriers related to achieving organizational objectives. Trust is put forward by many scholars as a critical component of an effective organizational culture (Conchie, 2009; Lencioni, 2002). The benefits of trust within an organization are numerous: lower information-processing costs, greater satisfaction with interpersonal relationships, reduced uncertainty, and more (Bachmann & Zaheer, 2006). In an empirical study, organizations run by general managers that were perceived as highly trustworthy had higher sales, higher profitability, and lower employee turnover (Bachmann & Zaheer, 2006). There is also a link between trust and innovation (Drucker, 2015). To innovate, individuals need to feel free to share their ideas in a way that will not negatively affect them if their idea is not viewed as sound, and trust is one of the ways that this type of social capital is built (Drucker, 2015). Renzl (2008) also documented the knowledge-sharing benefits associated with organizations that have a high amount of trust.

To innovate and adapt, an organization needs a free flow of ideas, good and bad, and the organization needs to be able to discuss all ideas and select the best in a way that does not create an environment of fear or intimidation (Bachmann & Zaheer, 2006; Drucker, 2015; Renzl, 2008).

However, these shifts in strategy and the ensuing uncertainty and fear that the shifts cause are often framed by the organization’s political climate rather than pure logic (Kaplan, 2008). Managers who are politically strong and successful in framing the challenges may succeed in driving a new strategy agnostic to the prudence of their strategic plan (Kaplan, 2008). This framing is critical to the firm’s ability to operate within a changing environment: the frames are necessary for the organization to succinctly communicate ideas (Kaplan, 2008). However, the adopted frame is not necessarily chosen purely on the merit of the strategy: “Where frames about a strategic choice were not congruent, actors engaged in highly political framing practices to make their frames resonate and to mobilize action in their favor” (Kaplan, 2008, p. 729). Droege and Marvel (2009) linked these disruptions and the process of strategy formation within those environments with the presence of “perceived strategic uncertainty” (p. 43). That perceived uncertainty that creates fear, the organization’s struggle to understand the most salient strategy, the framing of that strategy, and the political selection of the frame may each contribute to a lack of clarity in terms of the strategic focus of the firm (Droege & Marvel, 2009; Gureckis & Love, 2009; Kaplan, 2008; Sabatier et al., 2012). When people are uncertain and scared, they may pick the wrong strategy based on the political strength of the framer (Kaplan, 2008).

Schoen and Fusarelli (2008) pointed out the body of research that argues that “fear not only inhibits creative thought but also causes dishonesty and competition which are counterproductive to achieving organizational goals” (p. 94). An organizational culture that has a large amount of fear may suffer depressed motivation and a lack of risk-taking (Wennberg, Pathak, & Autio, 2013). At times, the literature refers to the absence of fear as “psychological safety” (Walumbwa & Schaubroeck, 2009, p. 1276). The presence of psychological safety means there is a comfort with sharing differences in opinion without fear of negative consequences (Walumbwa & Schaubroeck, 2009). An organization with a high amount of trust and a low amount of fear may benefit from increased performance due to the effect of psychological safety (Bachmann & Zaheer, 2006; Drucker, 2015; Renzl, 2008; Schoen & Fusarelli, 2008; Walumbwa & Schaubroeck, 2009; Wennberg et al., 2013). An organizational culture of fear creates an environment that can lead to bad strategic choices.

Following this section, I have provided a table to summarize the relevant knowledge, motivational, and organizational influences uncovered through this literature review:

Table 1
ZAP Corporation Knowledge, Motivational, and Organizational Factors

Organizational Mission

To deliver shareholder value while serving the communities ZAP operates within by delivering timely, informative, and entertaining content (broadcast, streaming, podcasts, digital video, digital articles, etc.) to consumers.

Organizational Goal

To achieve a sustainable and consistent three percent annual growth in sales each year starting in 2020.

Stakeholder Goal

To achieve 100% perceived role clarity among the salespeople based on survey data by the end of 2019.

<u>Knowledge Influence</u>	<u>Knowledge Type</u>	<u>Knowledge Influence Assessment</u>
Role Expectations Knowledge – knowledge about the expectations of the job that includes procedural knowledge of how to sell and factual knowledge about what product is appropriate to sell.	Procedural/Declarative	Survey

Metacognitive Knowledge – how one’s personal and professional goals reciprocally support the organization’s outcome-based mission and global goals. Metacognitive Knowledge Survey

Assumed Motivational Influences **Motivational Assessment** **Influence**

Goal Orientation – focus on learning and mastery rather than looking superior: intrinsic goal orientation (mastery) and extrinsic goal orientation (compensation and competition). Survey

Goal Content – goals are Strategic, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Timely. Survey

Assumed Organizational Influences **Organizational Assessment** **Influence**

Rapidly Changing Goals with a Short-Term Focus Survey

Culture of Low Trust and Fear Survey

Conceptual Framework

According to Maxwell (2013), a conceptual framework is a “theory, however tentative or incomplete” that presents “ideas and beliefs that you hold about the phenomena studied” (pp. 39–40). Although I have endeavored to thoroughly explain each of the top influences I believe to be involved in reaching the stakeholder goal, these influences do not represent an exhaustive list. Furthermore, the influences must not be considered in isolation: they are interdependent. For the purposes of this inquiry, I have utilized the knowledge, motivation, and organization framework put forward by Clark and Estes (2008). I have utilized this framework to analyze possible gaps that are interfering with the sales organization’s ability to grow revenue with an emphasis on issues related to role clarity. The below figure is meant to illustrate the interconnectedness of these variables as they interact to enhance or impede the achievement of the stakeholder goal.

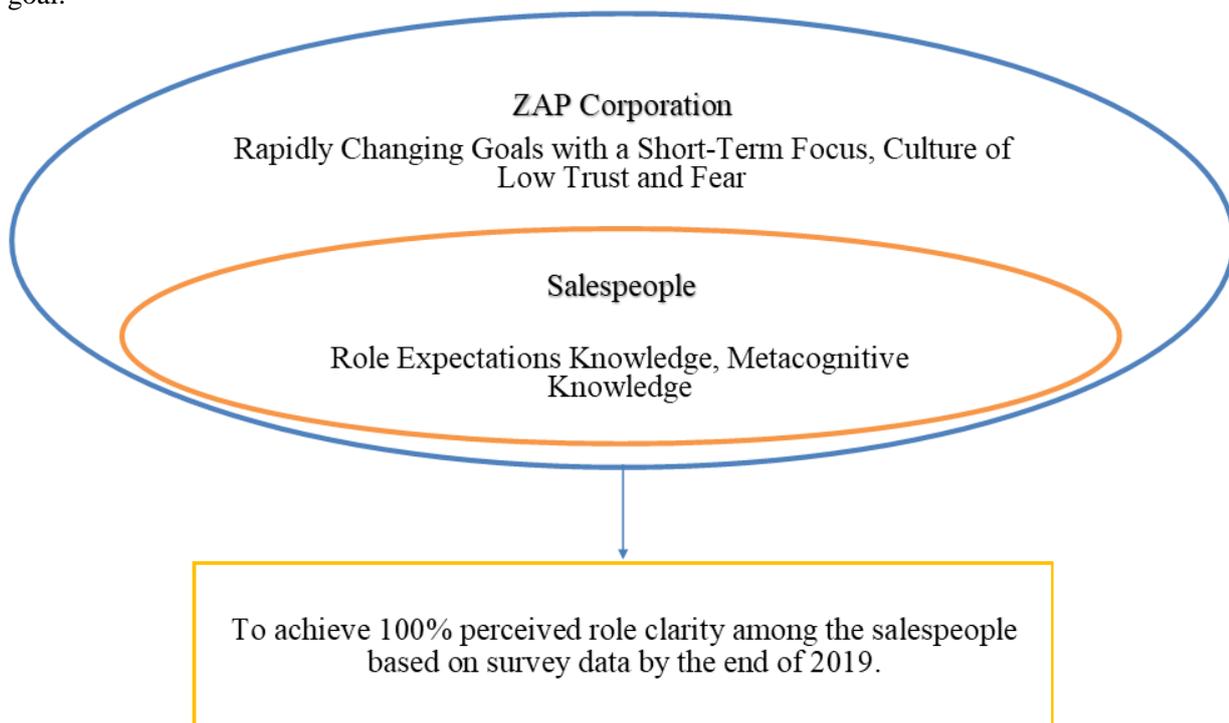


Figure 1. ZAP Corporation conceptual framework.

The salespeople operate within the ZAP Corporation. The organization sets a strategy that affects the necessary knowledge and motivation that is required of the salespeople. Salespeople cannot achieve the role clarity necessary to achieve revenue growth if they do not first have a clearly defined organizational strategy. The salespeople's knowledge and motivation influence the organization, too. As knowledge and motivation change, the salespeople will need different support from their organizations: new products need new organizational systems, new technological support, strategies, and goals. The stakeholder (salespeople) sits inside the organization and influences the organization's choices and needs. The combined organization works as a unit towards achieving revenue growth.

DATA COLLECTION AND INSTRUMENTATION

The literature demonstrates that, because role clarity is a construct of the individual, the perception of role clarity is itself an appropriate measurement mechanism for role clarity (Bliese, & Castro, 2000; Donnelly & Ivancevich, 1975; Singh & Rhoads, 1991; Tang & Chang, 2010; Walker et al., 1975). Quantitative surveys have been demonstrated to be effective at measuring individual attitudes and opinions (Fink, 2012). Therefore, because the perception of role clarity appears to be important to examine (Tang & Chang, 2010), I chose quantitative surveys as the primary method of data collection because they have been demonstrated to be an effective measure of individual attitudes and opinions (Fink, 2012). I also utilized a small amount of open-ended qualitative survey questions: this inquiry is technically mixed-methods, although the majority of the questions were quantitative in nature.

Survey

I administered the surveys using Survey Monkey. I utilized an anonymous survey relying heavily on Likert scales related to the salespeople's perceived role clarity as it relates to the knowledge, motivation, and organizational factors uncovered in the literature (full instrument and results are included in the appendixes). I primarily used the 5-point Likert scale to allow room for the respondent to be indifferent to the question (neither agree nor disagree). This choice may have reduced the chance for a bias in the survey towards finding role ambiguity as it relates to knowledge, motivation, and organization factors: the salespeople had the option to answer in a neutral way. The survey included 21 Likert scale questions and three open-ended questions. Survey instruments and responses can be found in Appendix A.

Data Analysis

In terms of analyzing the qualitative component, I set up some *a priori* codes that reflect the knowledge, motivation, and organizational aspects identified. I used the counting method in a matrix (Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2013) as the first round of a codebook. I also identified certain *in vivo* codes (Miles et al., 2013) in the matrix that emerged from the data (timeliness of goals as an example). This qualitative coding process served to frame my interpretation of the quantitative data. I also utilized triangulation of the data between the quantitative and qualitative results (Creswell, 2014).

Validity and Reliability

According to Salkind (2017), "Validity is, most simply, the property of an assessment tool that indicates that the tool does what it says it does. A valid test is a test that measures what it is supposed to" (p. 123). I utilized subject matter experts in sales (sales managers and sales researchers) as well as experts in the knowledge, motivation, and organizational constructs (education researchers) put forward by Clark and Estes (2008) to enhance content validity (Salkind, 2017). I asked each of these pilot reviewers to evaluate the survey and then I asked each of them for feedback on the validity and biases of the items.

There is some bias inherent in non-response (Berg, 2005). To minimize this as a concern, increase confidence in my sample, and generally reduce bias, I took a number of actions. I sent the survey to two different sales offices within the organization. I had a member of the human resources team send out the link to the sales groups. Before the survey was sent, I had this person send out an email explaining that a survey would be sent in the future to further enhance response rate (Fink, 2012).

I piloted the survey to enhance reliability (Fink, 2012). I asked several individuals who are similar to individuals in the sample, but are not located in offices that I sampled, to pilot the survey. To get a good sample size, I also wanted to make sure the survey could be taken quickly (Fink, 2012). To that end, I limited the survey to 24 questions (a mix of 21 Likert questions and 3 qualitative questions). I paid attention to how long the surveys took the pilot respondents to complete with the goal of keeping the survey time under 10 minutes. I had the HR professional mention in the email that went out before the survey that the survey would take under 10 minutes to complete. I believe this enhanced my response rate and aided in reducing non-response bias. Of the population of approximately 98 salespeople, I had a survey response rate of 41 (42%).

I did not have access to all of the offices within the ZAP Corporation. I had to balance my desire to obtain information from individuals across the entire company with my ability to collect the data (Fink, 2012). I gained access to two markets of sales teams for my sample, which, hopefully, added to the validity of the inquiry as well as helped the salespeople understand that, because multiple markets were surveyed, it would be more difficult for any responses to be traced back to an individual. The multiple-market approach also provided additional anonymity in the data.

FINDINGS

Knowledge Findings

Role expectations knowledge. The survey data demonstrate that the respondents perceive themselves to be very knowledgeable about the process of selling: they feel very confident in their product knowledge and in their knowledge of the sales process (Figure 2 and Figure 3).

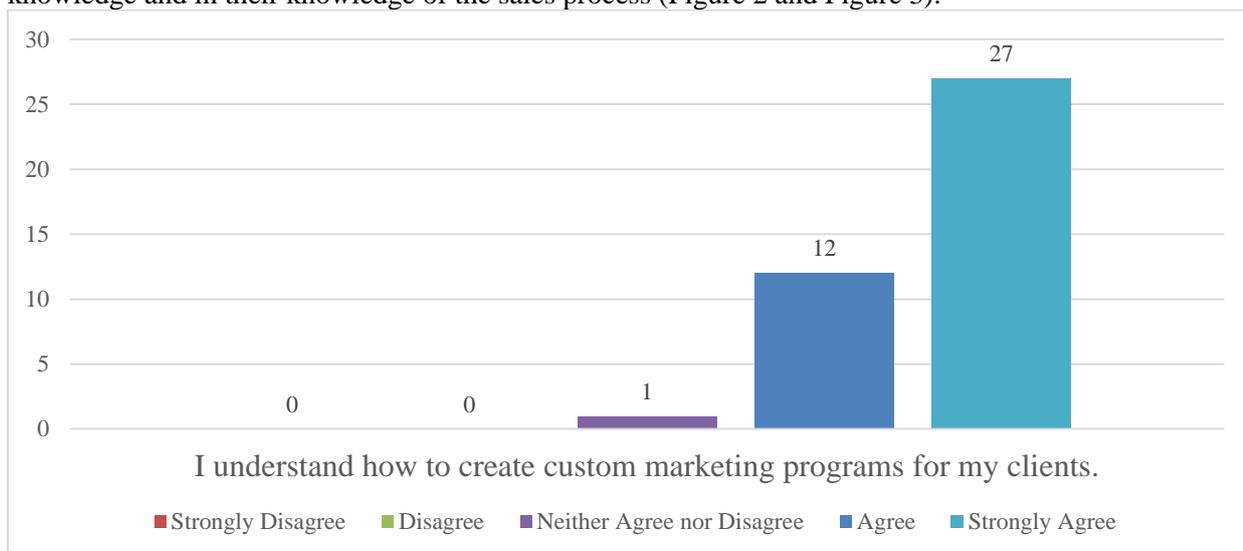


Figure 2. Custom marketing Likert

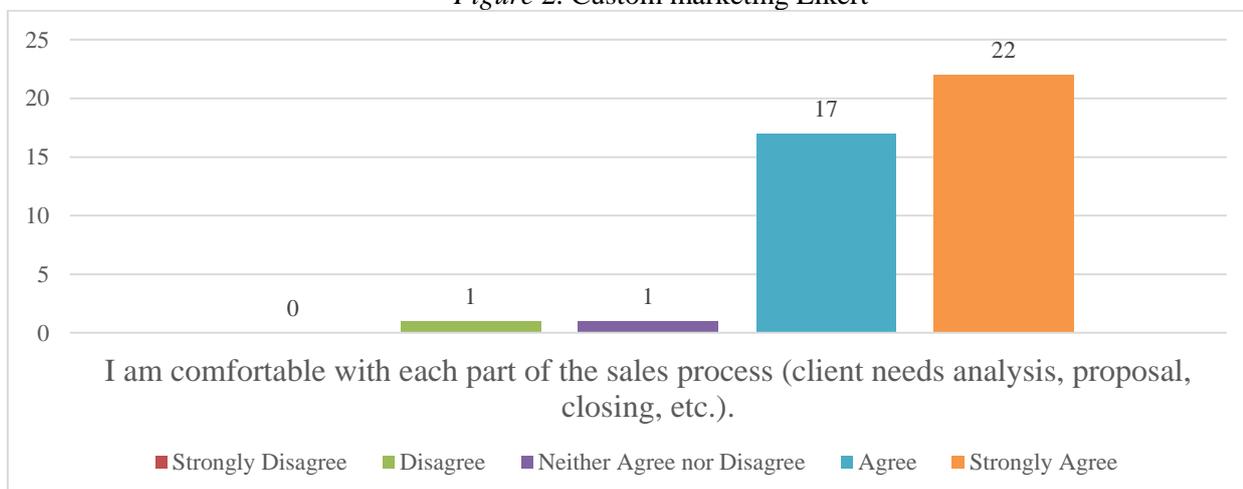


Figure 3. Sales process Likert

It is possible that this is an overly-optimistic appraisal of participants’ role expectations knowledge. According to Clark and Estes (2008), people are frequently not aware of their own lack of knowledge, and, even if they are aware, they may be hesitant to admit these gaps. However, in this case, I am most interested in their perception of their own knowledge rather than actual knowledge because perception is the driving force behind experienced role clarity (Bliese, & Castro, 2000; Donnelly & Ivancevich, 1975; Singh, & Rhoads, 1991; Walker et al., 1975). There is some evidence that there is a lack of perceived knowledge for digital when compared to the survey responses related to product knowledge for broadcast advertising (Figure 4 and Figure 5):

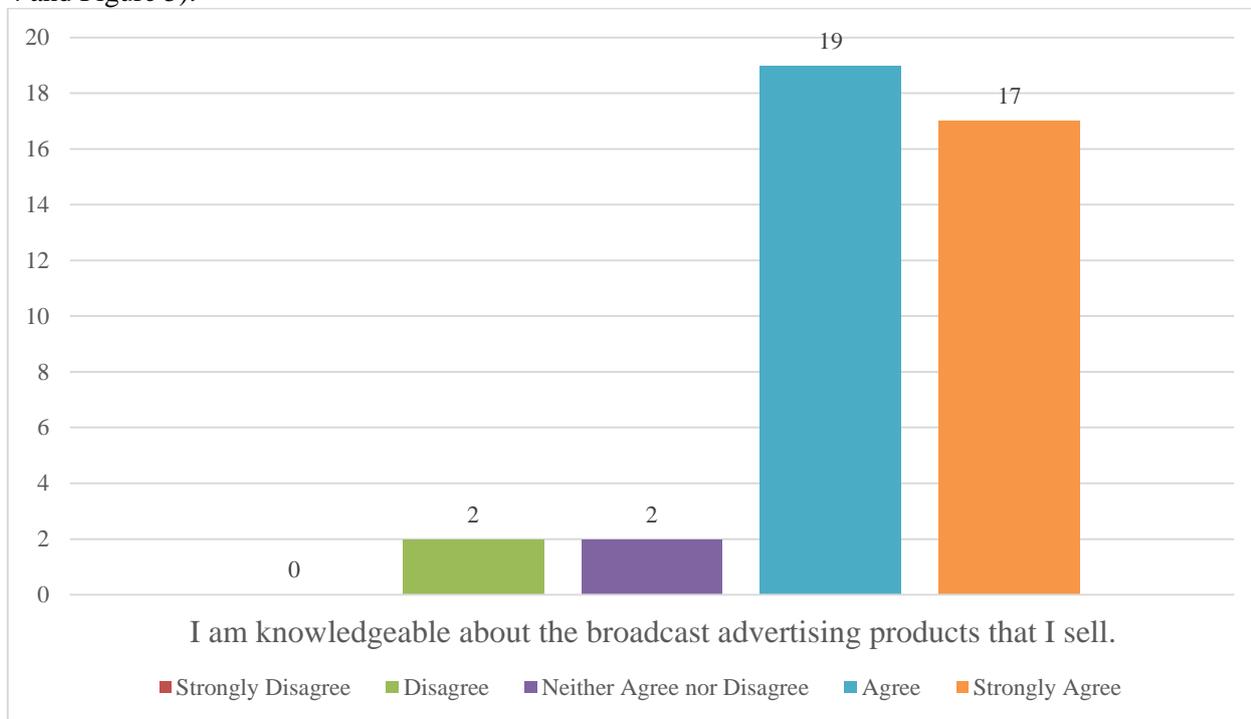


Figure 4. Broadcast knowledge Likert

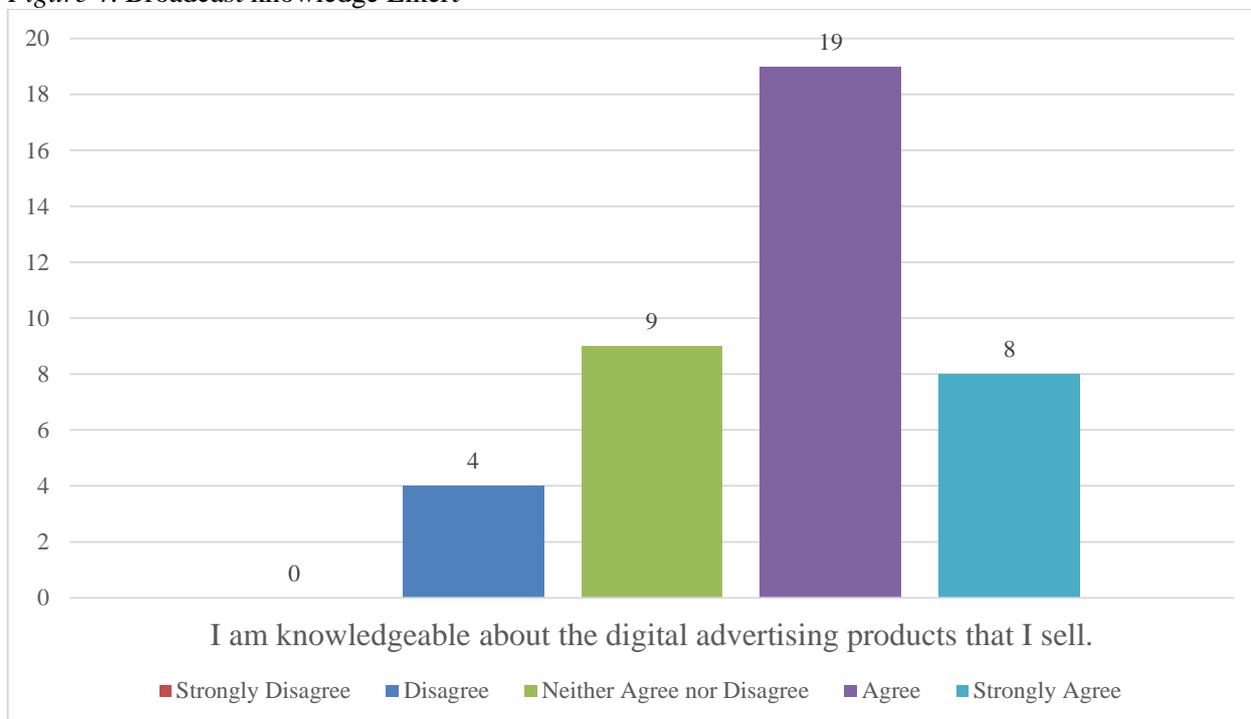


Figure 5. Digital knowledge Likert

Participants were not as confident about the digital advertising products as they were for the overall sales process, which is somewhat contradictory. However, several people answered in this contradictory way; these findings are consistent with Clark and Estes’ (2008) contention that people are not always the best judges of their own knowledge. As the data relate to the specific components of role expectations knowledge,

the area where salespeople indicate that there is a gap is in this digital space. This is also triangulated (Creswell, 2014) in the qualitative data. One responder wrote, “I think I could use more training on digital.” When asked, “what would help you better achieve your sales goals”, a responder wrote, “To have more digital training.” Of the approximately 32 qualitative responders, training is mentioned a total of seven times in the responses. A need for training on digital was mentioned twice, a training need without a specific topic is mentioned twice, a training need is mentioned once as it relates to closing and sales process, and then training is mentioned twice as a complaint about there being too much training.

Digital training appears to be something that the sales force believes it would benefit from, at least more so than any other role-expectations-knowledge-related factor present in the data that were collected, although this need does not seem to affect the participants’ overall perception that they have appropriate role expectations knowledge. Nevertheless, training in digital may have a benefit purely insofar as it could enhance the perception of having role expectations knowledge among some of the salespeople.

Metacognitive knowledge. According to the quantitative data, the majority of the participants believe that they take the time to engage in metacognition: 36 out of 38 respondents either agree or strongly agree that they “take time to think about how I can better achieve my sales goals” (Figure 6). However, the results were slightly less clear-cut when they were asked whether they frequently think about “how my personal success fits in with my organization’s goals” because 9 out of 39 respondents (23%) answered in a neutral way (7) or disagreed (2), as seen in Figure 7.

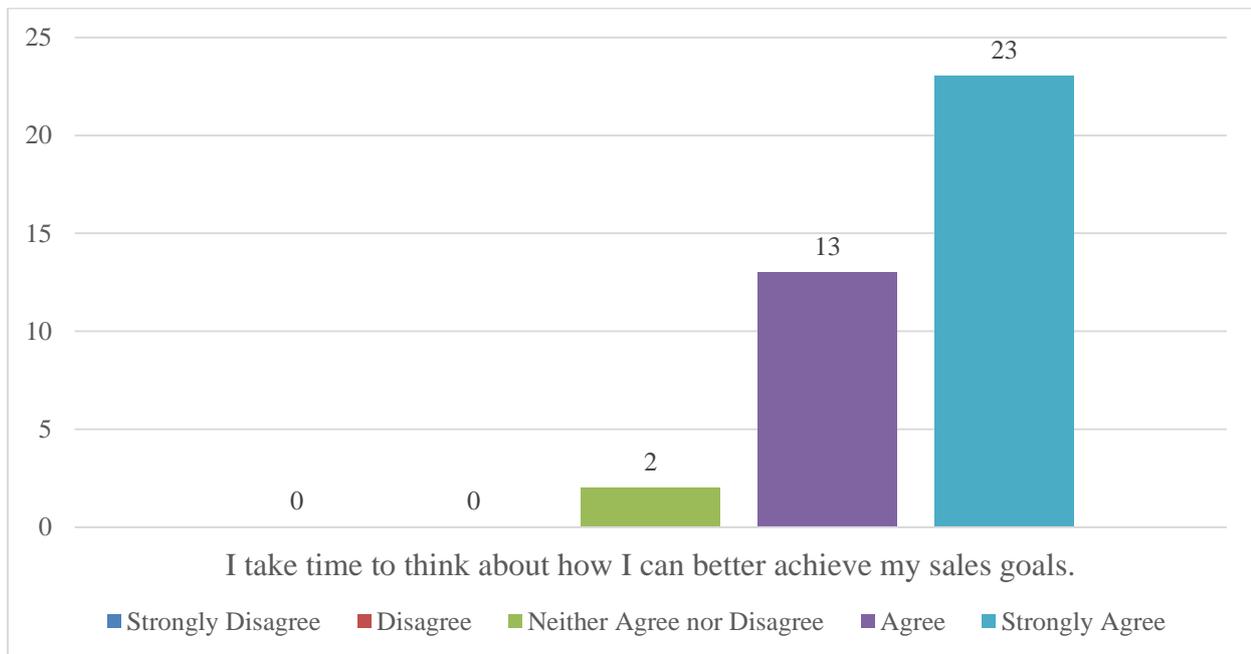


Figure 6. Sales goals reflection Likert

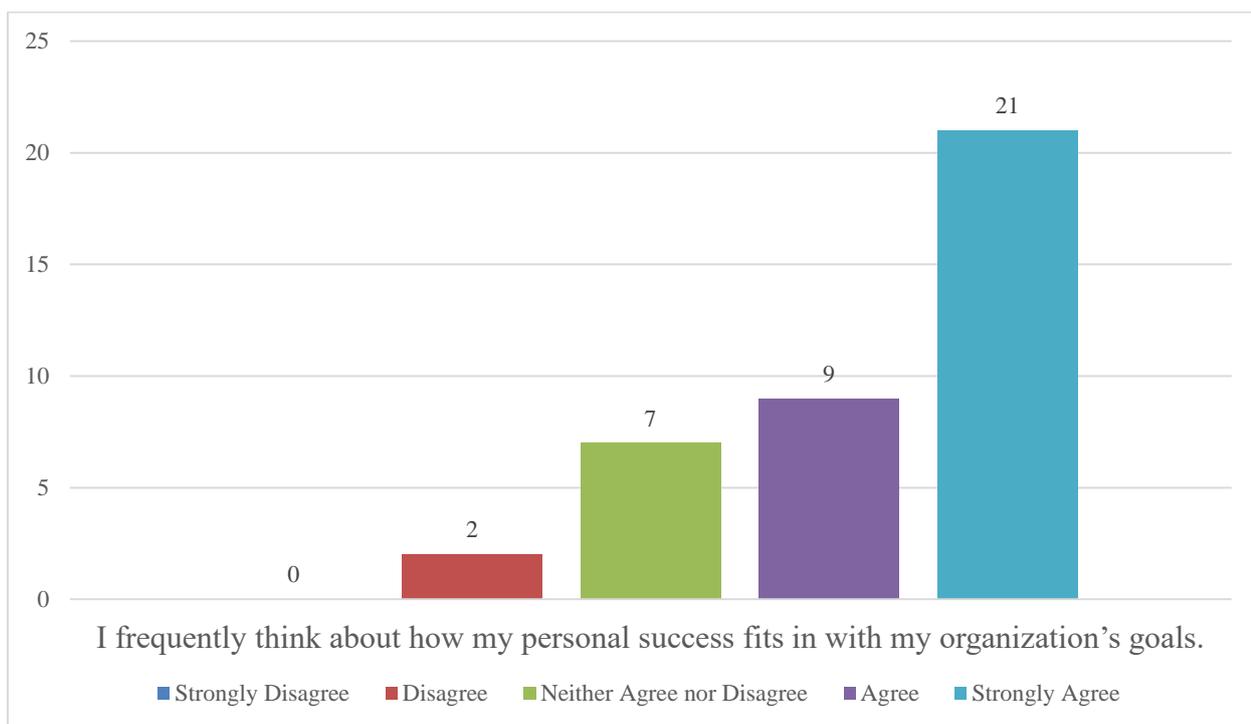


Figure 7. Multi-goal reflection Likert

One respondent wrote, “I think I could use more training on digital and more knowledge on opportunities on other property stations beside my own, so I can increase my sale [sic] opportunities.” This person appears to be engaging in metacognitive behavior related to his or her role expectations knowledge. Another salesperson appears to be engaging in metacognition as it relates to role expectations when he or she wrote, “Looking at past performance and future expectations than [sic] trying to prioritize where I need to spend the most time to achieve both my current billing and the projection for the following year.” Another salesperson wrote, “I want to achieve all of my professional and personal goals. I think goals are not based on past account performance but are arbitrary based on corporate budget.” This person appears to have given some thought to a possible link between his or her goals and the organization’s goals, even if the link between the two sets of goals is not perceived to be present. However, some people appear to be avoiding thinking about their role this way: one salesperson wrote, “I don’t focus on my budget/goals. I honestly don’t know what they are...spot, digital, [other media, redacted to protect anonymity], etc. I focus on keeping my clients successful and finding ways to improve their successes and to find as many new clients as time will allow.” This person is engaging in metacognition, but is avoiding metacognitive thought as it relates to goals. Therefore, there is some evidence that metacognitive knowledge is present, but there may be an opportunity to increase this skill, especially insofar as the behavior of thinking about how one’s own personal goals might fit in with the goals of the organization. When asked what would help respondents better achieve their sales goals, one salesperson simply responded, “I don’t know.”

Motivation Findings

Goal Orientation. There is some evidence present in the survey data that the respondents are fairly performance-oriented. No salesperson answered with a negative response when asked if being considered a top salesperson is very important (Figure 8). No salespeople answered with a negative response when asked if being the best salesperson they can possibly be is important (Figure 9). Anderman (2015) pointed out the possibility of being simultaneously performance-oriented and mastery-oriented: this data set points to the presence of that phenomenon.

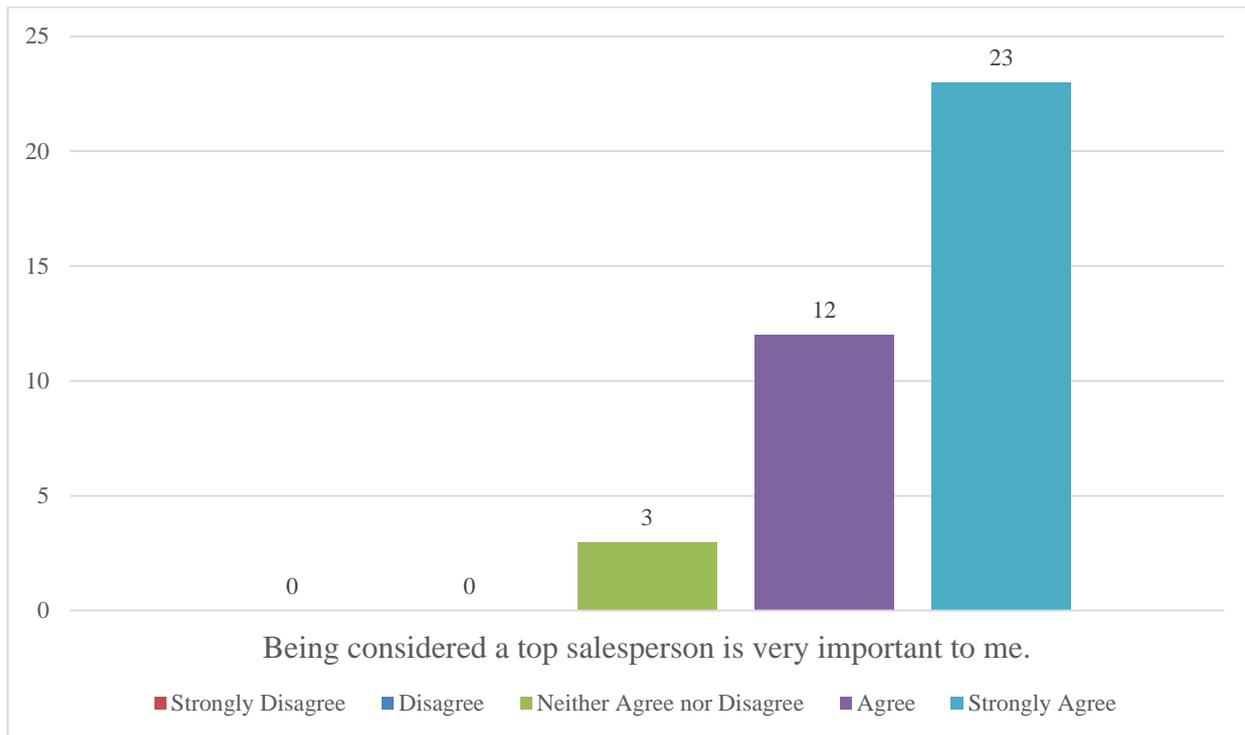


Figure 8. Top Salesperson Likert

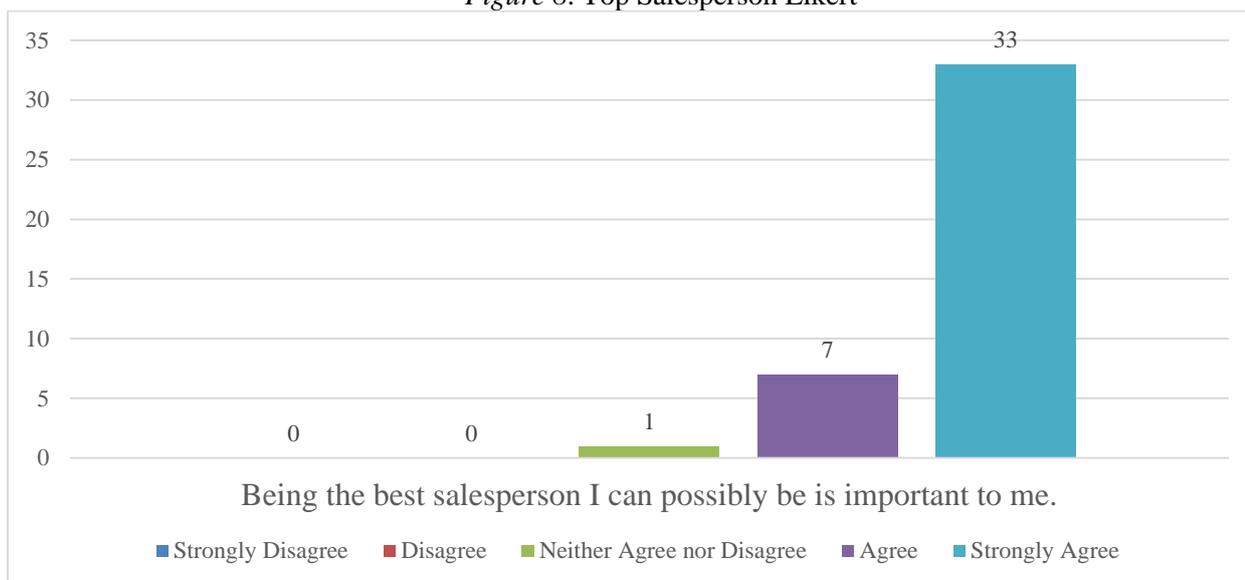


Figure 9. Best Salesperson Likert

These data suggest that there is some desire to be a top salesperson when compared to others (performance) as well as some desire to be the best salesperson that the person can be (mastery). Almost all surveyed salespeople (35 of 38) answered affirmatively when asked if being considered a top salesperson (performance) was very important to them, and an overwhelming majority (40 of 41) answered affirmatively that being the best salesperson (mastery) they can possibly be is important to them, although Clark and Estes (2008) also recommended caution when interpreting results like these because people may give answers simply because they believe certain responses are desired. Therefore, I will moderate my findings in this data set with that caution in mind.

There are some individuals who appear to be motivated extrinsically (i.e., money). This is not a surprise within a sales organization. One salesperson wrote, “I am the sole provider for my family, so they are my motivation to hit my budget and kickers to make the most money I can.” When asked about their approach “to achieving your individual sales goals,” another salesperson wrote, “Continue to do what I know to do in order to make decent money and earn a livable income in this business.” It appears that a majority of the respondents are simultaneously performance-oriented and mastery-oriented; however, there may be a leaning towards mastery orientation because a majority (28 of 41) answered agree or strongly agree when

asked if “Being the best salesperson I can possibly be is more important to me than being a better salesperson than my coworkers” (Figure 10).

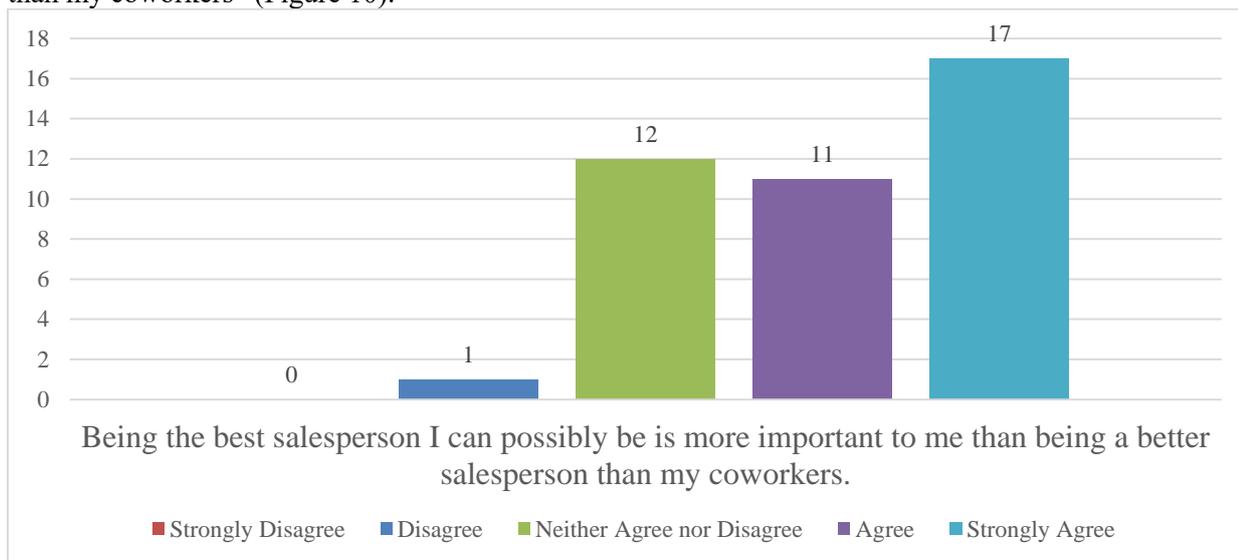


Figure 10. Mastery versus performance orientation Likert

Therefore, it seems to be appropriate to conclude that the organization is overwhelmingly performance-oriented, but a majority of the salespeople simultaneously lean towards mastery orientation.

Goal content. There is somewhat of a conflict present in the data. The quantitative data show that respondents understand all of their goals, and they understand what they need to do to achieve their goals, but they question if their goals are achievable, and they appear to be having some difficulty with prioritization of the goals that they are given. The quantitative data indicate that there is less of a problem with the goal content being understood and more of a problem with the perceived achievability of those goals, and, according to some of the qualitative responses, that perceived lack of achievability could be linked to thrashing. When asked about goals, a salesperson wrote, The goals come from outer space. Not reality. If you have a good quarter, your goals get bumped. Once set, they change once again from outer space. If you lose accounts to other AE’s or national, your goals don’t change. And, if you actually hit your goals, it is incredibly difficult to get actually paid on your achievement, making it unrewarding. It’s obviously not working for the company, as we have 10 different sales contests going on at one time. You have to do all the external work, and, then, you have to do all the internal work to actually get paid.

Several salespeople provided feedback in the open-ended survey questions that their sales goals were not provided in a timely manner: “Our team also has to wait far too long to even receive goals for the next month from our sales manager, sometimes we do not get them until a week before the month begins.” To be given a monthly sales goal a week before a month begins would certainly make it difficult to properly visualize success and understand when the required effort was to be exerted. Another salesperson wrote simply that the goals “Need to be communicated earlier.” Therefore, there appears to be a gap in providing role clarity to the sales staff related to the timing of providing sales goals. Timing of goals came up several times in the qualitative responses. When asked what would help you to better achieve your sales goals, one person wrote, “Better direction and timing! Not last minute [redacted to protect anonymity] given to us a month prior, and then expecting to sell it within 2 weeks.”

According to the data, there is some possible lack of clarity in terms of the salespeople’s understanding of their goals (Figure 11 and Figure 12).



Figure 11. Goal understanding Likert

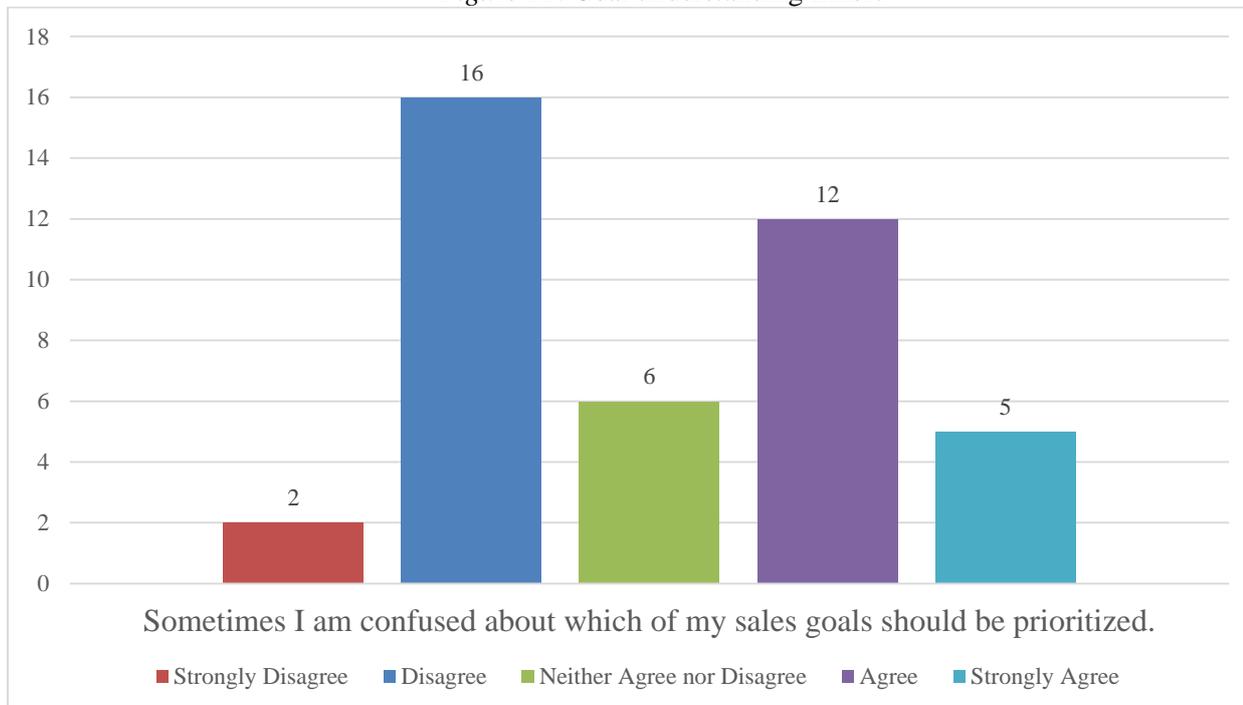


Figure 12. Goal prioritization Likert.

Of the 39 respondents, 11 answered disagree or neutral when asked if they understand the goals that are given to them by their managers. The more telling data come when the salespeople were asked if they are sometimes confused about which of their goals should be prioritized: 41% answered agree or strongly agree. When asked their thoughts, in general, on the individual sales goals, one salesperson answered, “not clearly defined” and another said, “They are not defined.” Individuals need to be able to visualize what success looks like to assess self-efficacy (Bandura, 1977; Tang & Chang, 2012). According to the data in this study, there is a significant number of salespeople within the organization who perceive their goals and/or the prioritization of their goals to be unclear. Interestingly, there is some belief that the required tasks involved with goal achievement (role expectations knowledge) are perceived to be well-understood.

As noted in Figure 14, there also appears to be a very strong belief that the goals are not achievable and/or are not fair.



Figure 13. Achievable goals Likert.

When asked if goals are achievable, a majority of salespeople (23 of 39) answered in a neutral or negative way. Of the 16 salespeople who answered affirmatively, only one answered “strongly agree.” The qualitative data also demonstrate a strong argument for a perceived lack of fairness/achievability of the goals. When asked their thoughts, in general, on the individual sales goals, there were 32 responses. A majority of respondents (17) mentioned something related to the goals being unfair, unachievable, or arbitrary. One salesperson wrote, “A fair goal would be nice.” When asked about goals, another salesperson wrote, “They seem arbitrary and don’t tend to align with the [organizational] goals.” As referenced in Figure 15, although the participants do not perceive their goals to be fair, a majority believe they understand how to achieve them. Although, the largest response group answered agree rather than strongly agree. There is a bit of a contradiction here: the salespeople do not perceive the goals as fair, but they feel that they know how to achieve their goals.

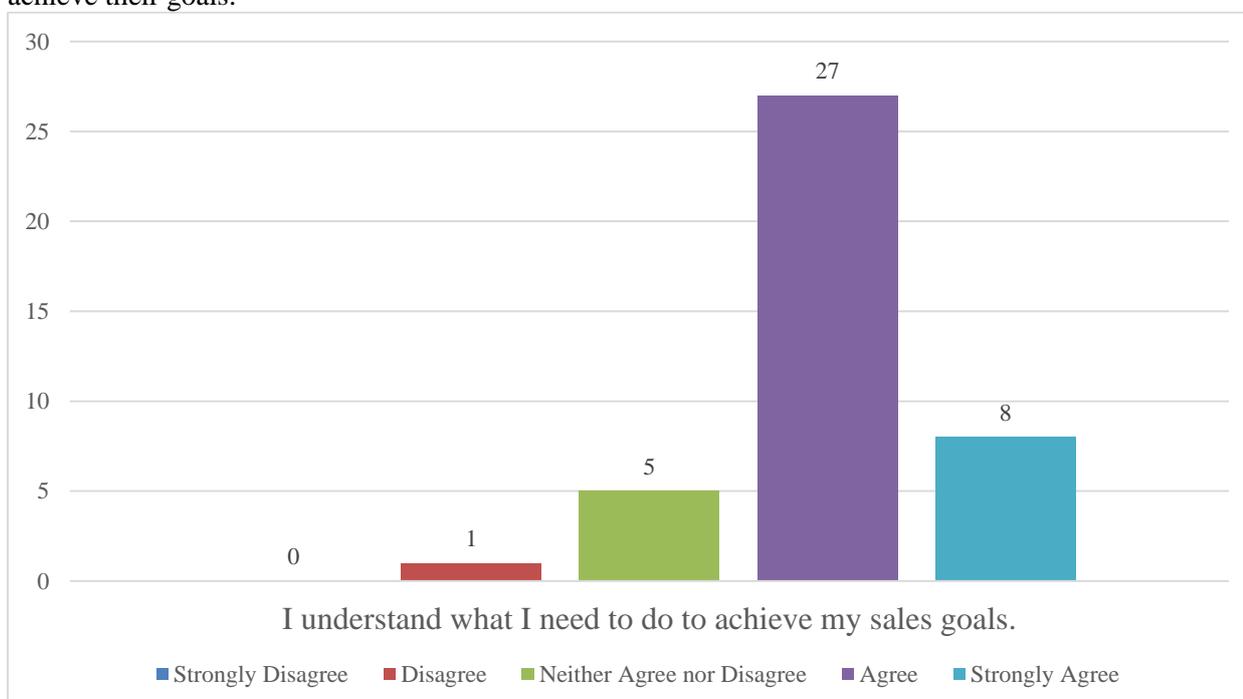


Figure 14. Understand how to achieve goals Likert.

It is possible that the source of this lack of clarity comes from a phenomenon referred to by Clark and Estes (2008) as thrashing. This condition takes place when many layers of goals and goal measurement become overwhelming and inhibit one’s ability to be accountable: sometimes, there are just too many goals to

keep up with for any one of the goals to be effective. In the open-ended component of the survey, one salesperson wrote, “we have 10 different sales contests going on at once.” Another salesperson wrote, “I don’t focus on my budget/goals. I honestly don’t know what they are...spot, digital, [redacted to protect anonymity], etc.” When asked what would help them to achieve their goals, one salesperson wrote, “More meaningful meetings with manager instead of where are we with this client? How many meetings do you have this week?” There is some evidence that the salespeople perceive there to be an inappropriately large volume as it relates to their goals.

These data indicate that, at a minimum, there is a large percentage of respondents who perceive themselves to correctly understand their goals, but a majority do not know how to prioritize them, a majority do not perceive them to be achievable, and at least some are overwhelmed by the volume of the goals. The qualitative and quantitative data both point to issues related to the content of goals that would prevent salespeople from being able to visualize what success looks like. Without this visualization, they cannot evaluate their success (self-efficacy) in achieving their role expectations.

Organizational Findings

Rapidly changing goals with a short-term focus. Perhaps the single most extreme data from this survey is the question related to balancing short-term and long-term goals (Figure 16). The data are clear as it relates to the respondents’ beliefs as they pertain to the organization’s ability to balance short-term and long-term goals (Figure 15).

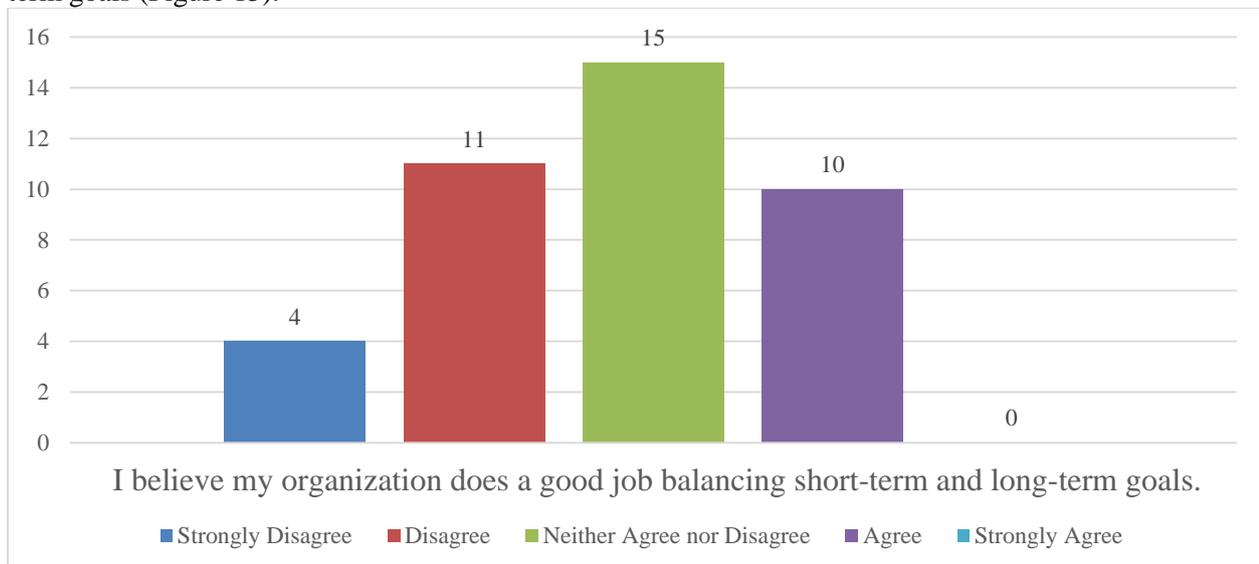


Figure 15. Short/long-term goals Likert

When asked if the organization does a good job of balancing short-term and long-term goals, most respondents (30 of 40) provided negative responses (15 of 40 answered disagree or strongly disagree) or neutral responses (15). No salespeople answered strongly agree to this question. However, there was not much concern as it relates to being able to take risks (Figure 17): 24 of 40 responders answered affirmatively when asked if the organization lets people make innovative choices even if they are sometimes risky.

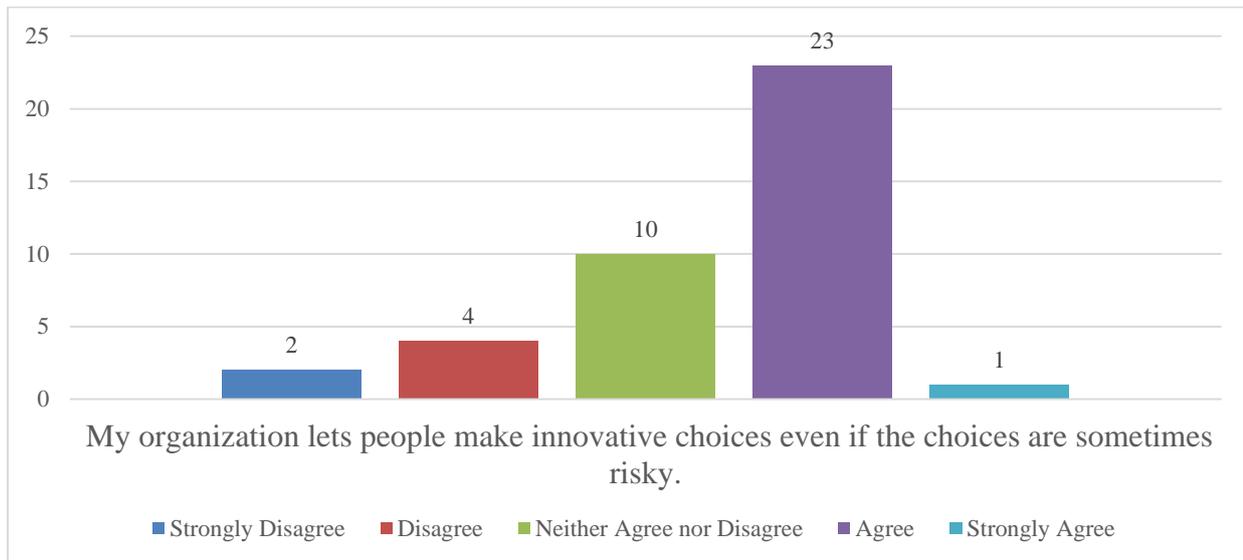


Figure 16. Innovation Likert

Culture of low trust and fear. The data are mixed as it relates to the presence of trust and fear in the organizational environment. A majority of respondents (25 of 40) answered affirmatively when asked if they trust their leaders (Figure 17). However, 8 of 40 answered the question with a neutral response, and 7 of 40 answered with a negative response (Figure 17).

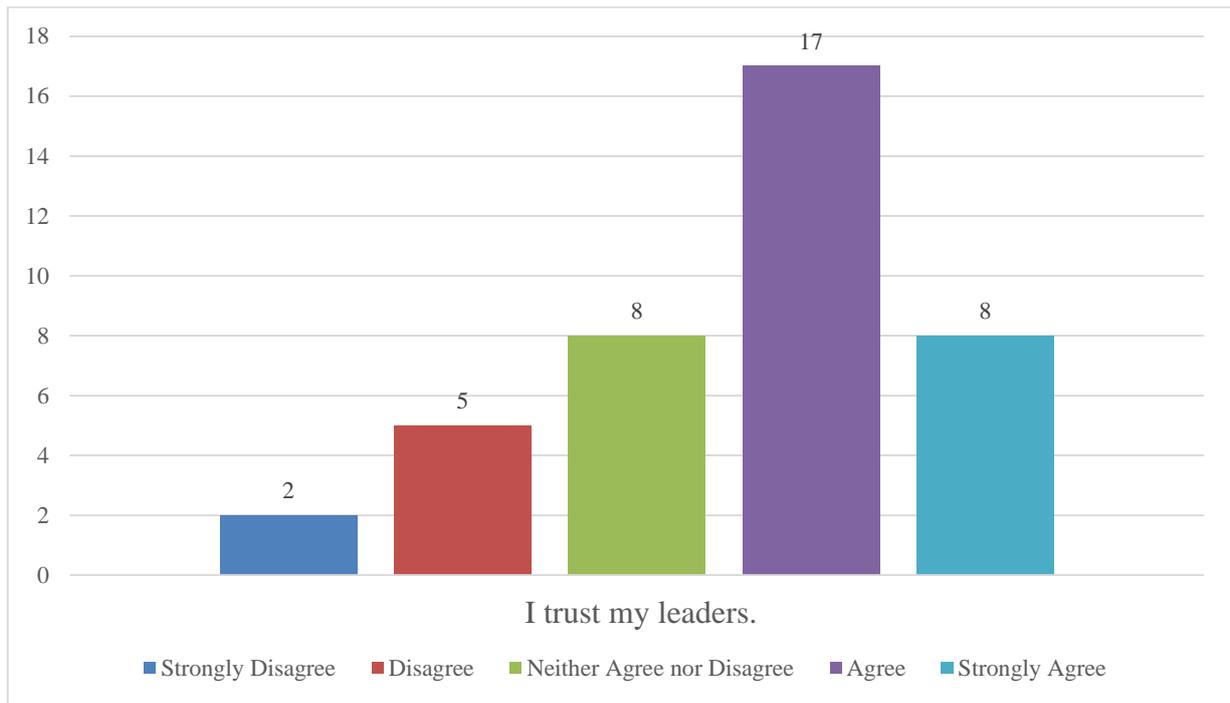


Figure 17. Trust Likert

A majority of the salespeople (23 of 41) feel comfortable sharing differences of opinion without fear of negative consequences. However, 10 of 41 answered with a neutral response, and eight people answered with a negative response when asked about their comfort with sharing differences of opinion (Figure 18).

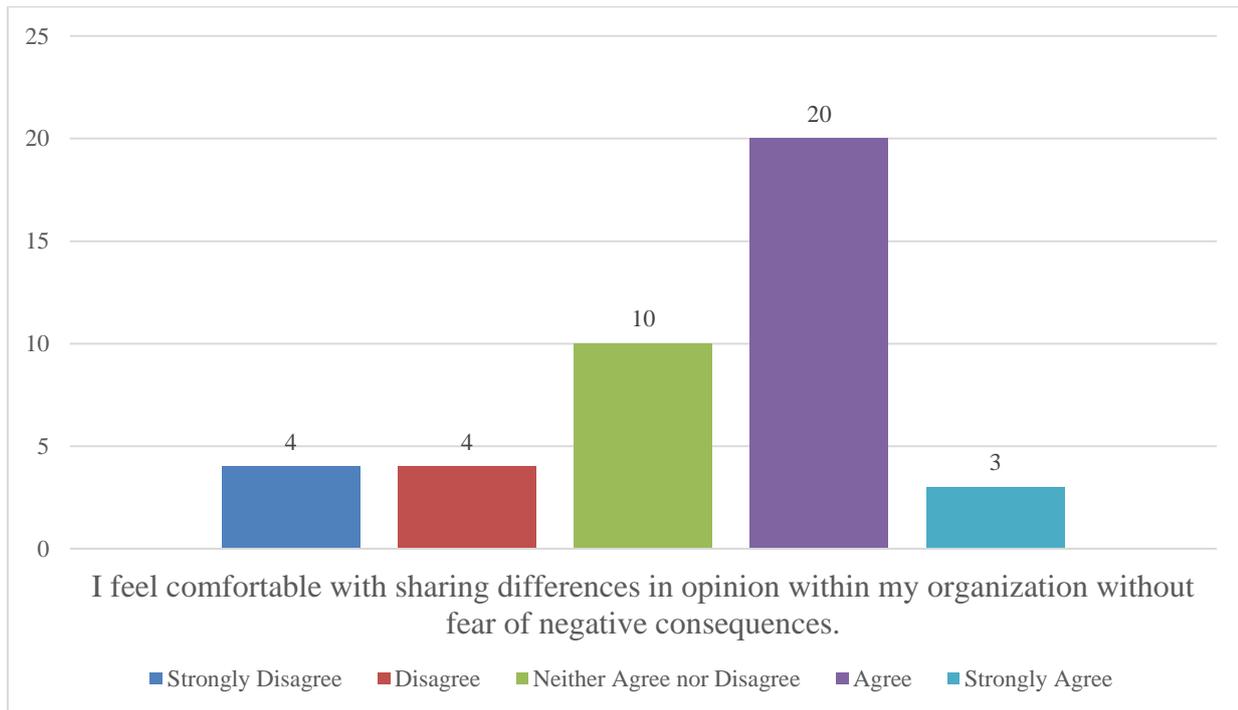


Figure 18. Differences of opinion Likert

One salesperson wrote, “The environment that is bred here in the office is very competitive and insidious. I think if we had more of a team approach and less revolving door of employees, it would breed confidence and security. I think we should take care of the employees that are here and actively pursuing the company’s goals.” Although there is room for improvement, there does not appear to be a significant lack of trust, nor does there appear to be a problem as it relates to fear of taking risks.

There does not appear to be a significant amount of fear present as it relates to losing one’s job due to the rapid industry change. Just under a majority of salespeople (20 of 41) answered with a negative response

when asked if they feared that rapid industry change would cause them to lose their job (Figure 19). Only five people answer this question in the affirmative, and 16 people answered with a neutral response.

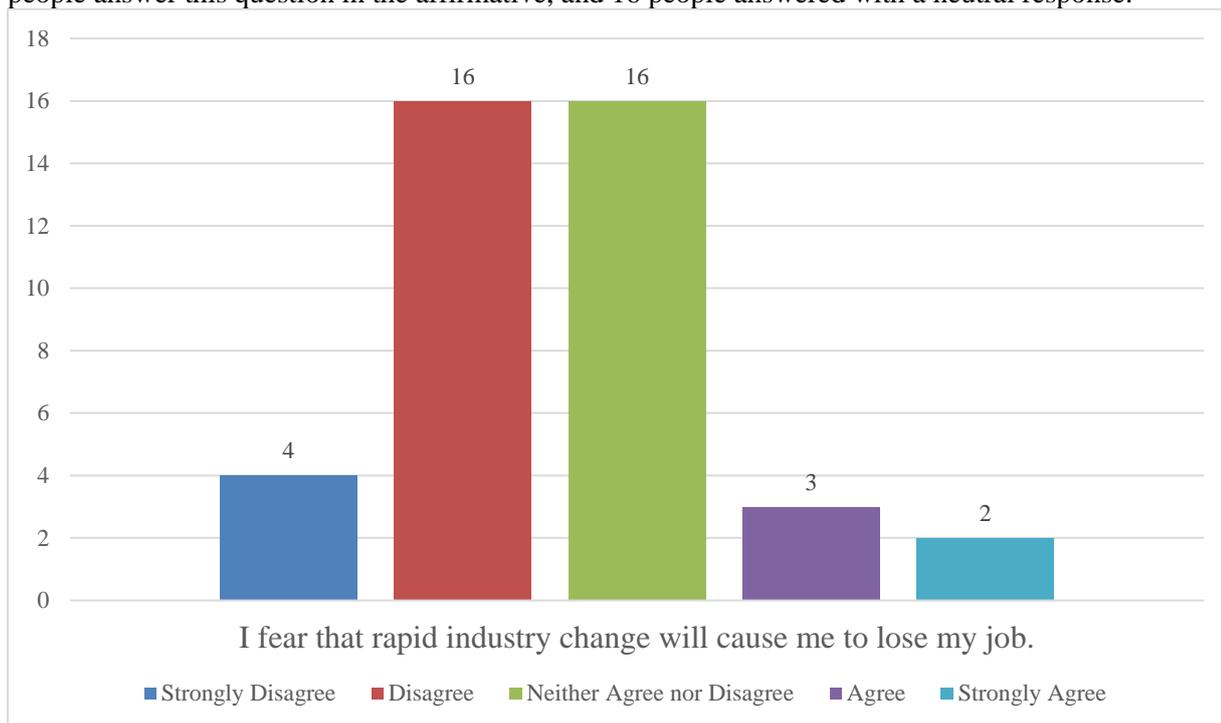


Figure 19. Industry change Likert

There is a tension in the data as it relates to trust and fear. Most of the people trust their leaders, but a majority (17 of 32) of respondents mention that the sales goals set by the leadership are somehow unfair, uncertain, or arbitrary. That implies that blame for these unreasonable goals is not being applied to the leaders, or that if the salespeople do blame the leaders for these unfair goals, it has not reduced trust. It is possible that the salespeople cast blame for this lack of performance on the macroeconomic situation of the industry. When asked for thoughts on the goals, one person wrote, “I believe that while technically they are achievable the reality is that right now not a lot of people are spending on [media] and with the way our economy is, it had become harder and harder for small business owner to be able to invest on [sic] advertising.” Another salesperson wrote, when discussing goals, “I think that they are unrealistic...they do not seem to be based off of local market conditions and realistic industry growth.” The industry challenges seem somewhat well-understood by at least some of salespeople, yet some still take personal responsibility for performance: a salesperson discussed their view on goals when they wrote, “It is my world and my job, no matter the obstacles I may have to overcome such as attrition, the word “no”, or whatever that maybe [sic]. It’s my job to get it done or at least have a plan in place to achieve those goals.”

There appears to be a challenge as it relates to how the goals set by the organization are perceived in terms of balancing short-term and long-term objectives, fairness, volume, timeliness, achievability, and arbitrariness. Again, perhaps it is possible that the salespeople are simply providing responses that they think the organization wants to hear (Clark & Estes, 2008), but there does not appear to be a significant issue related to the presence of fear or a lack of trust for leadership.

Recommendations and Solutions

The data indicate three main areas that need to be addressed. First, although it cannot be modified by enhancing the stakeholder’s (salespeople) knowledge, the organization must address the issues related to goal setting. The respondents do not perceive the goals to be attainable or timely, and this is likely harming their motivation and their role clarity. The salespeople surveyed believe that there is not a good balance between short-term and long-term goals. They also believe that there is a volume of goals that makes it difficult to navigate their roles with confidence. These issues should be addressed first because the solutions for achieving organizational goals cannot be measured appropriately if the goals themselves are perceived as neither timely nor achievable.

Once the goal-setting issues are addressed, two areas of the knowledge influences should be tackled in terms of learning opportunities of the stakeholders (salespeople): digital industry knowledge (a component of role expectations knowledge) and reflection (metacognitive knowledge). In these recommendations, I have chosen not to address several areas of knowledge, motivation and organization that were measured because the data did not demonstrate a significant gap (goal orientation, culture of trust and/or fear). It appears that the stakeholders are highly motivated, but elements of the goals themselves are hampering perceived role clarity. Those motivational issues can perhaps best be addressed in the goal-setting process rather than in learning objectives for the salespeople. However, enhanced metacognition (reflection) may help salespeople cope with these goals that are perceived to be unachievable and untimely: the reflection process may help them understand how best to address the challenge. The issues related to a perceived lack of balance among short-term and long-term goals should be addressed in the goal-setting process. This issue that appeared in the data could also be a result of thrashing, the volume of the goals may be too high for salespeople to understand the links among the goals. Although this issue is best addressed in the goal-setting process, metacognition (reflection) could also help people understand the links among the myriad goals. Although not a full solution in and of itself, metacognition would be a tool to help cope with this challenge.

First Step: Set Goals That Are Achievable, Fair, and Timely

Clark and Estes (2008) argue that organizational resources, policies and procedures, and cultural settings/models may prevent people from achieving goals. The cultural models are often invisible and are a shared mental representation of the organization (the structures, values, practices, and policies) that are present in the work settings (Rueda, 2011). One cultural model identified relates to the need for the organization to set goals that are perceived to be achievable, fair, and timely. According to expectancy value theory, higher expectations for success and perceptions of confidence can positively influence learning and motivation (Eccles, 2009). Clark and Estes argue that persistence is greater when goals are challenging but achievable. Positive feedback should be provided when appropriate, and such feedback should focus on ability and effort (Clark & Estes, 2008). Corrective feedback should be focused on faults in strategy rather than the person that implemented the faulty strategy (Clark & Estes, 2008). Goals need to be achievable and timely to be effective (Clark & Estes, 2008).

Within the ZAP Corporation, a component of motivation can be addressed in the goal-setting process. The survey data show that the respondents do not believe that goals are attainable, and the data show that goals are not perceived as being delivered in a timely manner. Clark and Estes (2008) argued that effective goals are “Concrete,” “Challenging,” and “Current” (p. 26). According to Pajares (2009), goals need to be set so that they are close, concrete and challenging while allowing the learner to experience success at the task. ZAP may need to set goals that allow the salespeople to perceive themselves to be successful. As mentioned previously, setting goals related to sales activity that follows the correct processes and creates client results rather than simply rewarding budget attainment may not only enhance mastery orientation, but also self-efficacy, if those goals also give salespeople an opportunity to perceive themselves as being successful.

Salespeople need goals that are perceived to be timely, achievable, and fair. The organization must support this type of a cultural model. According to Kluger and DeNisi (1996), learning, motivation and performance will be enhanced if participants have clear, current and challenging goals. For feedback to be effective, it should be timely, concrete (task focused), and goal-focused (Kluger & DeNisi, 1996). Moreover, motivation, learning and performance are enhanced when the participant perceives that the anticipated outcome will be positive and fair (Vroom, 1964). According to the qualitative data, many of the salespeople do not perceive the goals to be timely or fair.

Within the context of ZAP, there should be more organizational guidelines set as they relate to providing timely goals to the team and conducting fair and routine performance appraisals. Special attention needs to be focused on getting goals out on time and setting goals that are perceived to be fair. Because the perception of achievability, fairness, and timeliness of goals is the main driver of perceived role clarity, it is important that these elements are communicated in a way that calls attention to the organization’s efforts. Perhaps a consideration of goals that are more easily achievable should be an element of goal-setting in the ZAP Corporation. Moreover, if the salespeople say that they do not receive goals in a timely manner, what timeline would they perceive to be timely? Perhaps simply communicating a standard and adhering to it (one month in advance for goal setting) would be enough to address this perception.

The data also indicate the possible presence of thrashing in the organization. If the cultural model of the organization allows for a volume of goals that is too high for individuals to properly understand, an organizational barrier is present. One possible way of addressing this relates to the organization's cultural model of goal setting. A less prescriptive goal that focuses on the end result rather than all possible paths to that end result may enhance interest and reduce thrashing. As an example, the organization could choose to no longer provide separate monthly revenue goals for broadcast and digital assets. Instead, the organization could provide one revenue goal and allow the salespeople to choose their own path to success.

According to self-efficacy theory, learning and motivation are enhanced when learners have positive expectancies for success (Pajares, 2009). However, the individual needs to be able to visualize what ideal performance looks like to assess self-efficacy (Bandura, 1977; Tang & Chang, 2010). Adaptive self-efficacy and belief of competence is motivating (Rueda, 2011). It is possible to augment self-efficacy by setting close, concrete, and challenging goals that allow the learner to experience success at the task, thereby allowing individuals to see themselves succeed at a task (Pajares, 2009). Therefore, setting some goals that are readily achievable and allow the people to see what success looks like is compatible with the principles espoused by self-efficacy theory. What goals could the organization set for the salespeople who are readily achievable? If a large amount of people achieved these goals, would that enhance perceived fairness?

I recommend that inquiry be made into what changes to goal setting would enhance the perception of fairness, the perception of timeliness, and the perception of achievability. What would make the salespeople believe that the sales goals are fair? What would make the salespeople believe that the goals are achievable? What would make the salespeople believe that the goals are timely? How could short-term and long-term goals be balanced better? It is true that a majority of salespeople do not hit their goals. Would they perceive the goals to be fair if 51% of people hit the goals? Would one month before be considered a timely goal, or would it need to be three months? Because perception is the driver of role clarity, it may be valuable to conduct surveys/interviews to better understand what would enhance perception in the area as a first step. These issues should be addressed before any learning events for the salespeople take place

Second Step: Provide Training

The knowledge influences addressed include role expectations knowledge that covers both the procedural (P - the how) and the conceptual (C - the what), as well as the metacognitive dimension (M - one's own self) of knowledge (Krathwohl, 2002). Salespeople must understand the steps of the sales process to succeed in sales (Jones et al., 2012). According to social cognitive theory, modeling to-be-learned strategies or behaviors improves self-efficacy, learning, and performance (Denler, Wolters, & Benzon, 2009). Moreover, vicarious reinforcement and punishment can increase or decrease behaviors and learning (Mayer, 2011).

Train salespeople on digital industry knowledge (role expectations knowledge). Fortunately, a majority of the salespeople, according to the data, perceive themselves to have clarity on the procedural element of their role expectations knowledge (the steps of the sales process), although, there is a conflict in the data because not feeling comfortable with selling their digital products affects the procedural steps of how to sell. However, because this discomfort with digital is not creating a perception of a lack of clarity in terms of their procedural role expectations knowledge, it is not validated as negatively influencing role clarity. Therefore, addressing the procedural knowledge of the sales process steps is not a high priority because there is a minimal lack of perceived knowledge, and perceived knowledge is the area I am most concerned with for managing role clarity. This lack of perceived role ambiguity should not be misconstrued as a factual lack of correct behavior. The recommendation in this section would still apply in terms of augmenting behavior and enhancing, albeit relatively strong, role clarity.

Factual knowledge about what product is appropriate to sell (C). The salespeople need to have some level of conceptual knowledge related to their products in order for them to sell those products (Jones et al., 2012). To develop mastery, individuals must acquire component skills, practice integrating them, and know when to apply what they have learned (Schraw & McCrudden, 2013). There is some evidence in the survey data that this is, indeed, an issue as it relates to digital products; there is a vast amount of necessary knowledge to be able to sell the full suite of digital products. According to information processing theory, it may be beneficial to help individuals identify and understand important points (Schraw & McCrudden, 2013)

and provide experiences that help people make sense of the material rather than just focus on memorization (Schraw & McCrudden, 2013). An approach that helps salespeople understand the component skill of digital advertising product knowledge, rather than simply memorizing the features and benefits of the products that ZAP sells, may help them more deeply understand the features and benefits of the products so that they can choose the best solution based on the client's need. Education-based training on digital industry knowledge may also be necessary because job aids are not able to stay up to date due to the scale of information and because the marketing challenges are frequently novel (Clark & Estes, 2008). Case studies that discuss specific digital industry experiences may help make sense of the material and result in deeper processing of information rather than just focusing on memorization (Schraw & McCrudden, 2013). This type of training would enhance role expectations knowledge as it relates to digital products (what to sell). Therefore, it appears that education related to digital media as an industry is the best prescription for this issue.

Self-efficacy and product knowledge. The data from this study show that there is a possible digital knowledge gap. It is possible that the salespeople have related experience in traditional media, but not enough experience in digital media. However, there is a confounder to consider: the source of the problem is not identified in the survey data, and it is possible that there is a self-efficacy issue at work as much as an information-processing problem. The salespeople may have enough knowledge to sell their own specific digital products, but they could feel overwhelmed by their lack of digital industry knowledge to the extent that they are less confident overall. If the people are simply not confident in their knowledge, education-based digital industry knowledge may be necessary to help them understand that they do have a good grasp of the landscape (Clark & Estes, 2008). In this situation, it is also possible that job aids would not be able to address the scale of the information effectively, and it may be difficult to keep job aids up to date due to the client marketing challenges frequently being novel. Therefore, it appears that education related to digital media as an industry is the best prescription for this issue if either an information processing and/or a self-efficacy issue is at play (Clark & Estes, 2008). The problem here is either an actual knowledge gap, or merely a perceived knowledge gap. Either way, the prescription is the same. However, it must be understood that, if addressing the perceived knowledge gap with industry training does not abate the perceived knowledge gap, there could be a more complex motivational issue at work.

Train Salespeople on Metacognitive Knowledge (Reflection Practices). According to information processing theory, the use of metacognitive strategies facilitates learning (Baker, 2006). There is strong evidence that metacognition/reflection is linked with enhanced organizational outcomes (Clark & Estes, 2008). Novel approaches will likely be required for the ZAP organization to be successful given the dramatic industry disruption (Truong et al., 2010). The goals of the organization are more likely to be achieved if the individuals understand how their own goals support the organization's goals: the links help in achievement (Clark & Estes, 2008). The data suggests that there may be an opportunity to increase reflective thought in the sales organization. Because there is minimal experience or related expertise, but the activity is routine, training on reflection and metacognition is suggested (Clark & Estes, 2008).

This training on reflection could have a number of benefits for the organization. Reflection could help salespeople more deeply understand why they should avoid sales-oriented behavior in favor of following the correct sales process. Reflection on digital media information could help people more deeply understand the fundamental industry changes taking place. That new knowledge could benefit them in terms of their ability to choose appropriate digital products to recommend for their clients, and this could simultaneously enhance self-efficacy. Reflection could help people understand their role more thoroughly: they might resolve the dissonance of answering that they understand their role while simultaneously answering that they do not know enough about digital, simply by thinking through it. It is also possible that reflection could have a positive impact on some of the goal content issues. If people think through how their goals reciprocally support the organization's goals, it may help them have more clarity in terms of prioritization while reducing the feeling of thrashing as the links among the various goals could become clearer. Reflecting on the links among all goals might help them to feel less overwhelmed and abate the thrashing phenomena that appears to be present.

It is important to highlight that this reflection training is not offered as the best way to address the goal-setting issues that are present in the organization. However, the ability to reflect may be a coping tool that can minimize the motivational effect of the goal problem. Moreover, reflection has benefits beyond coping with goal-setting problems. Therefore, the reflection training prescription is valid for multiple reasons.

When constructing the training, I should consider the literature as it relates to information processing theory and behavioral theories of learning. According to Baker (2006), modeling your own metacognitive process by talking out loud and assessing strengths and weaknesses may be an effective tactic for encouraging reflection. This would need to be modeled as it relates to the previously mentioned knowledge factors as well as other possible gaps that are observed in the survey data. According to behavioral theories of learning, modeled behavior is more likely to be adopted if the model is credible, similar (e.g., gender, culturally appropriate), and the behavior has functional value (Denler et al., 2009). Therefore, a series of trainings on reflection where a peer that is credible and similar to the salespeople models the desired behavior would be a cogent strategy for addressing this gap. Reflection could be a powerful tool that addresses each gap highlighted in the survey data. More specific recommendations related to the execution of these training events are included in the appendices.

Limitations and Delimitations

Speed of data collection was an important variable to consider (Fink, 2012), and the requirements related to that speed were a limitation. There was a large change that took place just after the survey was completed. More information related to this change cannot be provided as it might identify the organization. Because these changes could have represented a confounding variable as it pertains to role clarity, there was a concern related to the speed of the data collection. A large sample is desirable because it can help reduce sampling error (Fink, 2012). However, I had to strike a balance between the desire to achieve a large and anonymous sample with the need for a speedy assessment. This survey is also limited based on the number of participants who voluntarily chose to answer the questions. The survey approach also lent itself to a relatively fast execution. However, the need for a speedy study did threaten my ability to create external validity because the sample only included a fraction of the many offices in the firm (Salkind, 2017). I could have attempted to gain permission to survey all offices, but that approval process would have taken additional time.

Delimitations include potential sampling error related to the lack of full participation of the salespeople in the organization (the entire organization was not surveyed). Because the sample was conducted within one large media company, this study cannot be generalized to other media companies. It was not feasible to sample other companies due to challenges related to access. In addition, this study focused on the areas identified in the literature review as contributing to role clarity. A delimitation of the study is present as it relates to other possible factors that contribute to a lack of performance. However, given the scale of possible factors, role clarity was concentrated on to ensure an in-depth inquiry.

Recommendations for Future Research

The survey data in this study highlights a strong belief among the salespeople that the goals they are assigned are not perceived as achievable or fair. The salespeople do not believe that long-term and short-term goals are balanced properly. Moreover, there appears to be an issue with when the goals are provided. More inquiry should be undertaken to understand the specific reasons that these goals are not perceived to be fair or achievable. Is it simply that the goals are too high? Is the problem related to the previous lack of performance that simply makes people lose faith that they can achieve goals (self-efficacy)? Do the salespeople simply want to be more involved in the goal-setting process? Would they prefer one revenue goal rather than layers or prescriptive revenue goals (thrashing) that add up to the total revenue goal? In terms of timeliness, how early do they want their goals? Is a month early enough, two months, three months? These specific areas of inquiry would help the organization to better handle its goal setting.

If addressing the perceived digital knowledge gap with industry training does not abate the perceived knowledge gap, there could be a more complex motivational issue at work. If the problem is confidence-based (self-efficacy) rather than knowledge-based, the training should still help. However, if the education-based industry training does not help, future inquiry should be conducted in this area to better understand the issue. This survey did not look at the possible source of the perceived knowledge gap; it is therefore possible that there is a different issue at play here. There is strong enough evidence in the data to recommend conducting this digital industry training as the first step, but future inquiry should not be ruled out at this point.

Conclusion

When I designed the study, I hoped to uncover some areas of possible perceived role ambiguity that the organization could address. During this inquiry, the organization was experiencing significant internal change, as well as significant external change due to the digital disruption of the industry. Because role clarity is linked with successful organizational change (Hall, 2008), role clarity is important to help in the success of these multiple changes that the ZAP Corporation is experiencing. My hope is that addressing these role clarity issues will enable the organization to be more successful in achieving its overall goal of achieving consistent and sustainable revenue growth. Fortunately, the organization benefits from several key assets. Generally, the salespeople surveyed perceive themselves to understand the expectations of their role. Moreover, the group appears to be highly motivated. A large portion of the salespeople are simultaneously performance-oriented and mastery-oriented. The salespeople also appear to have a relatively high amount of trust in their leadership, and the salespeople feel fairly comfortable in taking necessary risks within the organization without fear of negative consequences. The main issue needing to be addressed appears to be goal setting. It is possible that providing a stronger set of goals would greatly enhance role clarity. Once the goal setting concern has been tackled, a series of trainings related to broad digital industry knowledge and reflection/metacognition will likely further enhance salespeople's role clarity.

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APPENDIX

Survey Data

Q1. I understand how to create custom marketing programs for my clients.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total	Weighted Average
1	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	2.50%	1	30.00%
						12	67.50%
						27	40
							4.65
						Answered	40
						Skipped	1

Q2. I take time to consider how I could have improved after I have a client meeting.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total	Weighted Average
1	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	9.76%	4	24.39%
						10	65.85%
						27	41
							4.56
						Answered	41
						Skipped	0

Q3. I take time to think about how I can better achieve my sales goals.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total	Weighted Average
1	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	5.26%	2	34.21%
						13	60.53%
						23	38
							4.55
						Answered	38
						Skipped	3

Q4. I understand how to cold-call new business prospects.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total	Weighted Average
1	0.00%	0	2.50%	1	5.00%	2	27.50%
						11	65.00%
						26	40
							4.55
						Answered	40
						Skipped	1

Q5. I am comfortable with each part of the sales process (client needs analysis, proposal, closing, etc.).

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total	Weighted Average
1	0.00%	0	2.44%	1	2.44%	1	41.46%
						17	53.66%
						22	41
							4.46
						Answered	41
						Skipped	0

Q6. I am knowledgeable about the broadcast advertising products that I sell.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total	Weighted Average
1	0.00%	0	5.00%	2	5.00%	2	47.50%
						19	42.50%
						17	40
							4.28
						Answered	40
						Skipped	1

Q7. I am knowledgeable about the digital advertising products that I sell.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total	Weighted Average
1	0.00%	0	10.00%	4	22.50%	9	47.50%
						19	20.00%
						8	40
							3.78
						Answered	40
						Skipped	1

Q8. I frequently think about how my personal success fits in with my organization's goals.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total	Weighted Average
1	0.00%	0	5.13%	2	17.95%	7	23.08%
						9	53.85%
						21	39
							4.26
						Answered	39
						Skipped	2

Q9. I understand the goals of my organization.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total	Weighted Average
1	2.44%	1	2.44%	1	19.51%	8	39.02%
						16	36.59%
						15	41
							4.05
						Answered	41
						Skipped	0

Q10. I understand all of the goals that my sales manager provides to me.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total	Weighted Average
1	0.00%	0	10.26%	4	17.95%	7	35.90%
						14	35.90%
						14	39
							3.97
						Answered	39
						Skipped	2

Q11. Sometimes I am confused about which of my sales goals should be prioritized.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total	Weighted Average
1	4.88%	2	39.02%	16	14.63%	6	29.27%
						12	12.20%
						5	41
							3.05
						Answered	41
						Skipped	0

Q12. Being considered a top salesperson is very important to me.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total	Weighted Average
1	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	7.89%	3	31.58%
						12	60.53%
						23	38
							4.53
						Answered	38
						Skipped	3

Q13. Being the best salesperson I can possibly be is important to me.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total	Weighted Average
1	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	2.44%	1	17.07%
						7	80.49%
						33	41
							4.78
						Answered	41
						Skipped	0

Q14. Being the best salesperson I can possibly be is more important to me than being a better salesperson than my coworkers.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total	Weighted Average
1	0.00%	0	2.44%	1	29.27%	12	26.83%
						11	41.46%
						17	41
							4.07
						Answered	41
						Skipped	0

Q15. I believe that my sales goals given to me by my manager are achievable.												
1	Strongly Disagree	3	Disagree	6	Neither Agree nor Disagree	14	Agree	15	Strongly Agree	1	Total	Weighted Average
	7.69%		15.38%		35.90%		38.46%		2.56%		39	3.13
											Answered	39
											Skipped	2
Q16. I understand what I need to do to achieve my sales goals.												
1	Strongly Disagree	0	Disagree	1	Neither Agree nor Disagree	5	Agree	27	Strongly Agree	8	Total	Weighted Average
	0.00%		2.44%		12.20%		65.85%		19.51%		41	4.02
											Answered	41
											Skipped	0
Q17. I fear that rapid industry change will cause me to lose my job.												
1	Strongly Disagree	4	Disagree	16	Neither Agree nor Disagree	16	Agree	3	Strongly Agree	2	Total	Weighted Average
	9.76%		39.02%		39.02%		7.32%		4.88%		41	2.59
											Answered	41
											Skipped	0
Q18. I believe my organization does a good job balancing short-term and long-term goals.												
1	Strongly Disagree	4	Disagree	11	Neither Agree nor Disagree	15	Agree	10	Strongly Agree	0	Total	Weighted Average
	10.00%		27.50%		37.50%		25.00%		0.00%		40	2.78
											Answered	40
											Skipped	1
Q19. I trust my leaders.												
1	Strongly Disagree	2	Disagree	5	Neither Agree nor Disagree	8	Agree	17	Strongly Agree	8	Total	Weighted Average
	5.00%		12.50%		20.00%		42.50%		20.00%		40	3.6
											Answered	40
											Skipped	1
Q20. My organization lets people make innovative choices even if the choices are sometimes risky.												
1	Strongly Disagree	2	Disagree	4	Neither Agree nor Disagree	10	Agree	23	Strongly Agree	1	Total	Weighted Average
	5.00%		10.00%		25.00%		57.50%		2.50%		40	3.43
											Answered	40
											Skipped	1
Q21. I feel comfortable with sharing differences in opinion within my organization without fear of negative consequences.												
1	Strongly Disagree	4	Disagree	4	Neither Agree nor Disagree	10	Agree	20	Strongly Agree	3	Total	Weighted Average
	9.76%		9.76%		24.39%		48.78%		7.32%		41	3.34
											Answered	41
											Skipped	0

Q22. In general, what are your thoughts on your individual sales goals?	
Respondents	Responses
1	I think that they should be evaluated based on where I finish this year not where I was projected to finish considering the market down 20%, plus [redacted to protect anonymity] and the [redacted to protect anonymity]
2	Hopeful for a great 2018!
3	I welcome advances in the product in order to help achieve my goals and the clients' goals
4	They are achievable at times, but as 100% commission sales people i do not believe we should be docked a percentage point for coming up slightly short of our budget.
5	I think I could use more training on digital and more knowledge on [redacted to protect anonymity] opportunities on other property stations beside my own, so I can increase my sale opportunities
6	I believe that while technically they are achievable the reality is that right now not a lot of people are spending on [broadcst advertising] and with the way our economy is, it had become harder and harder for small business owner to be able to invest on advertising while all the big hitter are either taken by another AE or agency.
7	My [broadcst advertising] and digital are reasonable. my [redacted to protect anonymity] goal is incredibly high.
8	Sales goals are given without any input from sales person. Our team also has to wait far too long to even receive goals for the next month from our sales manager, sometimes we do not get them until a week before the month begins. To be given a sales goal that is only based off of last year's numbers is troubling. These goals do not take into consideration factors such as changing ratings, lost accounts, numerous talent changes, accounts that have to be given to *****[name redacted to protect privacy], accounts that change agencies, etc.
9	Considering the ratings, I think they should be adjusted. Now that we get penalized for not making the budget, there should be consideration for adjusting due to the ratings.
10	Need to be communicated earlier.
11	I feel that building a book of business from scratch is very difficult and takes more than 6 months to achieve a consistent client base. The goals are sometimes big long shots for such new AE's.
12	If I work hard and smart I will achieve my goals
13	I want to achieve all of my professional and personal goals. I think goals are not based on past account performance but are arbitrary based on corporate budget.
14	It varies throughout the year. Depending on what your manager gives you each month- There is not a strong [redacted to protect anonymity] every single month, so the demand is not there. In those months it is harder to hit your budget.
15	there is no rhyme or reason to them. They are just averaged out to the amount of salespeople on the staff. More often to high to make up for deficiencies within the sales team.
16	They are not 'individual' sales goals. They are a number allocated to sales reps in order to achieve [local goals]. Have very little to do with specific individuals or the clients they manage.
17	not clearly defined
18	Do whatever it takes to hit.
19	Very difficult to achieve, and demotivating.
20	It is my world and my job, no matter the obstacles I may have to overcome such as attrition, the word "no", or whatever that maybe. It's my job to get it done or at least have a plan in place to achieve those goals.
21	I think that they are unrealistic...they do not seem to be based off of local market conditions and realistic industry growth.
22	HIT MY PERONAL BUDGET , NOT MY MANAGERS BUDGETS !
23	Budgets are not achievable
24	Year over year my goals are much higher due to a great 2016. With market changes, attrition and other circumstances my goals have been harder to reach in 2017
25	Not enough incentives or bonus in hitting budgets
26	They seem arbitrary and don't tend to align with the [redacted to protect anonymity] goals. Especially programming. Success is not celebrated--rather expected and used as a long-term negative
27	They are not defined
28	They're a mathematical equation - not much is left up to me in the creation of that budget -
29	The goals come from outer space. Not reality. If you have a good quarter your goals get bumped. Once set they
30	they are too high
31	I'm never involved. They are given to me.
32	I have not yet been given a budget or sales goal because I have only recently completed 90 days here.

Q23. What is your approach to achieving your individual sales goals?	
Respondents	Responses
1	Looking at past performance and future expectations than trying to prioritize where I need to spend the most time to achieve both my current billing and the projection for the following year
2	increase share of agency business and increase direct and digital business
3	relationship building, digging deeper, bringing more viable solutions
4	I am the sole provider for my family, so they are my motivation to hit my budget and kickers to make the most money i can.
5	Push more digital and [redacted to protect anonymity] and sale other [redacted to protect anonymity] beside my own.
6	Work on accounts that start at \$3000 a month minimum, with the suggestion of them starting at \$5000. It is not only about achieving my sales goals but giving the client a budget that will actually deliver a good campaign
7	Looking at my goal, creating a plan on how many calls I need to make, to make the goal.
8	Setting as many CNA's as possible.
9	Prospecting new clients and reviewing current client list and coming up with ideas that fit their marketing objectives.
10	It's all a numbers game and I try to find new prospects daily.
11	Work in more new business
12	Work smart and show up.
13	Always working ahead, and figuring out what I need to bill to achieve the goals.
14	creating a plan each month to achieve the goals based on client Needs analysis and our in house marketing tools.
15	Continue to do what I know to do in order to make decent money and earn a livable income in this business.
16	continuing prospecting, monitor competition, excellent service to existing clients, being the resource they want even if it does not mean immediate biz
17	Planning and relentless hard work
18	I do the best I can.
19	Making weekly lists as reminders of tasks that need to get done. It's follow up with current clients, making new sales calls and growing my sales funnel and being better than every single media sales person in this market place. I tell my kids every day as they go to school "to do your job and do it well." I live by those words as well.
20	RESEARCH AND COLD CALLING
21	Keep on keeping on
22	My approach is lots of prospecting, cold calling and taking the time to give each client the time they need as well as building thoughtful marketing campaigns rather than throwing together a schedule that may or may not work for that client.
23	volume
24	I focus on being as productive as I can be using our tools to best serve our clients
25	Focus on income & how those goals can be achieved by hitting sales goals.
26	My budget doesn't change how I approach my business.
27	week by week
28	I don't focus on my budget/goals. I honestly don't know what they are...spot, digital, ntr, etc. I focus on keeping my clients successful and finding ways to improve their successes and to find as many new clients as time will allow.
29	I understand that consistency in revenue driving activities each and every day is key. I focus on new opportunities to connect with prospects and lapsed prospects at every chance.

Q24. What would help you better achieve your sales goals?	
Respondents	Responses
1	Not to have to sit at my desk and work on preempts and putting out fires that our very capable assistants could likely solve, so I am able to get out in front of new and current partners, and can expand my client base while look for other buckets of money. I think assistants should be an even BIGGER priority & resource for sales, which means they share responsibilities and support each other when one assistant has 5 sales people and one has 10 and now with wide orbit, the new collections center it's become very very desk work consuming! I'm not willing to work hard I just think that we could evaluate how to help sales people get out from behind the desk rather than bog them down more I think we should work to sales people strengths, digital dept strengths, creative people strengths, rather than trying to be all things to all people and not getting out of the building to do what we do best!
2	an assistant
3	Better training. Processes that are less time consuming so we can focus on selling
4	Product enhancements, travel budget
5	To have more digital training, and have updated information and understanding on other stations.
6	To have more structure. I understand what sets us apart from our competitors is that we are able to customize campaigns based on their marketing objectives however it is hard for clients to picture what that looks like when it comes to the investment. If we had packages or a minimum base to start off of and customize it from there I think that would be very helpful specially to the newer people coming onto the team
7	I don't know
8	A fair goal would be nice. Furthermore, to have a commission plan that punishes sales people who are 100% commission is ridiculous. If one rep has a goal of 100,000 and bills 94k, she is paid at a lower percentage than a salesperson who has a goal of 50k and bills 52k. Does not make sense, which is why many of our colleagues have left.
9	Less internal meetings. We have way too many trainings and meetings. I think if you have been at [ZAP] for over 5 years, you should not have to do [redacted to protect anonymity] training....and [redacted to protect anonymity] was a waste of time.
10	The environment that is bred here in the office is very competitive and insidious. I think if we had more of a team approach and less revolving door of employees, it would breed confidence and security. I think we should take care of the employees that are here and actively pursuing the company's goals.
11	research
12	Quicker approval and turn around time from management in various departments.
13	Better direction and timing! Not last minute [redacted to protect anonymity] given to us a month prior, and then expecting to sell it within 2 weeks. It takes time for clients to decide if they want to do it, what they have budgeted for, and all the assets that come with it.
14	a new commission structure that doesn't punish you for not hitting a specific [redacted to protect anonymity] budget. We are commission only. We don't need to be punished. We cant help if a client's needs analysis changes away from our home station. Its absolute BS.
15	With a more reasonable goal - I could better achieve it.
16	Lower sales goals
17	Reasonable goals.
18	More sales support. I used to have a dedicated person assigned to me and it led to hitting my sales goal each quarter and the entire year. It just allows me to go out and do what I do best as opposed to doing the "desk work."
19	If the goals were more realistic, and not some pie in the sky number based on unrealistic growth
20	QUALIFY LEADS FROM OUR MANAGERS
21	Lower goals
22	More idea generation and one on one time with managers. More meaningful meetings with manager instead of where are we with this client? How many meetings do you have this week? I understand it's a numbers game but at the end of the day we have to come up with cool, custom ideas to get to those number for our clients. Without that we're just another [redacted to protect anonymity] station in the mix.
23	more training
24	better technology, more training in closing/sales process management, better time management systems
25	Advance planning on what is best for the client with more focus on total \$ booked than filling specific buckets
26	A NEW System designed to let sales people SELL & Work with clients vs paperwork, collections, forms, reports, meetings. More sales support, better systems, allows us more time in front of clients--thus more opportunity to generate dollars. Company seems fixated on dumping all on sales people & cant understand why we don't sell --- we don't have enough FACE TO FACE client time
27	Not to take stupid tests like this. You want real feedback - ask us and let us have a conversation
28	more support internally- copy writers and more female talent options
29	More time from having to do the admin activities that have been placed on my plate. I'm paid to bring in revenue for the company but I spend just as much time doing no revenue generating tasks.
30	I would like to submit a suggestion here that a faster and more fluid CNA to Proposal process is not a hindrance to a good relationship with a client or agency. On the contrary, it engenders a sense that their time and yours is valuable and a quick turn-time on key proposals is essential.

APPENDIX

B

Ethics

As I engaged in this inquiry, I made every effort to fully achieve informed consent for all participants, voluntary participation, data confidentiality, participation confidentiality, and secure storage of the collected data. As required by the institutional review board (IRB), I asked survey participants to agree to a confidential statement of informed consent as a part of the inquiry process (Krueger & Casey, 2009; Rubin & Rubin, 2012). I made it clear that participation was completely voluntary. To gain accurate and ethically derived data, it is also important that the participants do not feel pressured to participate (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). As a measure to reduce perceived pressure to participate, I asked a member of the human resources department to volunteer to email participants. My goals were related to achieving role clarity for the organization. Evidence of a lack of role clarity reflects poorly on the organization and the executive leaders. I paid special attention to the wording of my questions (Patton, 2015) so that I could make it clear that such faults are not with the individuals being surveyed. I did not want the participants to fear that these types of answer would pose them any risk of harm (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). I made it clear that I was looking for evidence of a lack of role clarity to help the organization without biasing their answers in such a way that they would simply tell me what they thought I wanted to hear. To conform to IRB standards, I made it clear to the survey participants that all data related to their identities would be masked (Rubin & Rubin, 2012).

I also had certain biases that were considered. As stated previously, the inquiry related to role clarity implies that I believed that there was a problem. I attempted to avoid engaging in confirmation bias as I engaged in this inquiry. Furthermore, the evaluation of role clarity in and of itself may have created a bias in the mind of the participant that is agnostic of their desire to respond in a way that is compatible with supporting my hypotheses. The wording of my questions was critical, as I sought to avoid creating these biases while maintaining questions that elicited rich responses (Patton, 2015). I paid special attention to these biases when I constructed my questions (Rubin & Rubin, 2012).

APPENDIX

C

Implementation and Evaluation Plan

Implementation and Evaluation Framework

For this implementation and evaluation plan, I will utilize the New World Kirkpatrick Model (Kirkpatrick & Kirkpatrick, 2016). Kirkpatrick and Kirkpatrick (2016) put forward four levels of training and evaluation (Level 4 - Results, Level 3 - Behavior, Level 2 - Learning, and Level 1 - Reaction). Level 4 looks at results by measuring leading indicators (Kirkpatrick & Kirkpatrick, 2016). Level 3 measures how much the individual transfers the information back into their specific work setting by looking at critical behaviors, required drivers, and on-the-job learning (Kirkpatrick & Kirkpatrick, 2016). Level 2 evaluates learning by looking at the knowledge, skills, attitude, confidence, and commitment that occurred through instruction. Level 1 measures the reaction of the participants in the training in terms of satisfaction, engagement, and relevance (Kirkpatrick & Kirkpatrick, 2016).

Organizational Purpose, Need and Expectations

ZAP's organizational goal is to achieve a sustainable and consistent three percent annual growth in sales each year starting in 2020. For the purposes of this inquiry, I have focused on the salespeople as my stakeholders of focus. Salespeople are responsible for the advertising revenue generation. Because I am focused on role clarity for this inquiry, the stakeholder goal is to achieve 100% perceived role clarity among the salespeople based on survey data by the end of 2019.

Level 4: Results and Leading Indicators

Kirkpatrick and Kirkpatrick (2016) recommended the use of leading indicators to measure accomplishments and desirable outcomes by tracking the behaviors that affect the outcomes that are desired. The following provides external and internal outcomes, metrics, and methods that would demonstrate that role clarity is being achieved. The stock price would be the single most valuable external indicator of success. This would signal that the media and advertising industry, and the larger business community, have recognized that the organization has achieved an amount of role clarity for its employees that will put it on track to achieve revenue growth. Monthly, quarterly, and annual revenue growth versus the previous year

would also be a strong external leading indicator of success. Although achieving stock growth and/or revenue growth does not necessarily guarantee perceived role clarity, it is an external indicator.

An internal indicator would be perceived clarity on goal content (achievability and timeliness). This can be measured via survey. Another possible internal result that would be an indicator of success would be a survey that demonstrates 100% perceived role clarity among the salespeople. Perceived digital product knowledge is an area that the data show is lacking, and this knowledge is required for proper role clarity. Digital training that includes a broader, industry-wide education may ease this perceived lack of knowledge. A survey should also measure for digital knowledge specifically to measure for success against this metric. Unprompted metacognition would also indicate that clarity issues are being considered and tackled.

Table 2 *Outcomes, Metrics, and Methods for External and Internal Outcomes*

Outcome	Metric(s) (How will the outside world know that ZAP salespeople have role clarity?)	Method(s)
External Outcomes		
(1) Sales Growth	Monthly revenue this month versus monthly revenue the same month in the previous year	Financial Records
(2) Stock Price	Increase in stock price	Public Exchange Listings
Internal Outcomes		
(3) Unprompted metacognitive behavior related to one's role	Salespeople engage in reflection (metacognition) related to their role and achieving the goals of their role	Observation
(4) Perceived Digital Product Knowledge	Salespeople report that they feel comfortable in their knowledge of digital products	Survey Data
(5) Perceive goal content to be attainable and timely	Salespeople report that they feel that their goals are attainable and timely	Survey Data

Level 3: Behavior

One possible beneficial behavior would be an increase in metacognition and reflection. An example would be verbal discussion of how one's personal revenue goals could better be achieved. An ability to accurately articulate the prioritization of one's goals would also be a positive behavior. Metacognition may help the salespeople to prioritize their goals and cope with thrashing. Articulation of goal content that is perceived to be attainable and timely would also be an asset in terms of behavior.

Table 3 *Critical Behaviors, Metrics, Methods, and Timing for Evaluation*

Critical Behavior	Metric(s)	Method(s)	Timing
(1) Metacognition	Number of recurrences of unprompted metacognitive behavior that relates to one's role and one's goal content	Observation	Approximately 3 months after training

(2) Articulate Role Expectations Knowledge	Percentage of salespeople who perceive themselves to be knowledgeable of the digital media industry and how that fits in with their role expectations	Survey	Approximately 3 months after training
(3) Articulate Goal Content Knowledge in a way that is perceived to be timely and attainable	Percentage of Salespeople who perceive their goals to be attainable and timely	Survey	Approximately 3 months after training

Required drivers. To support these recommendations, training is recommended related to metacognition and the digital advertising industry. Recognition of peer success in the areas of goal achievement that also models the metacognitive process and utilization of digital advertising is also recommended. Finally, it is recommended to enact a pay plan that does not penalize/reward for selling specific products (digital), but, instead, allows the salesperson to determine their own path to budget achievement. Quarterly surveys can measure the success on these tactics in enhancing perceived role clarity.

Table 4 *Recommended Training*

Method(s)	Timing	Critical Behaviors Supported 1, 2, 3 Etc.
Reinforcing		
Provide training on metacognition and reflective practices	Weekly for 3 months	1,2,3
Provide training on digital industry knowledge	Weekly for 3 months	2,3
Encouraging		
Recognition of peer sales success (goal achievement) that includes modeling of metacognition, and digital advertising revenue	Ongoing	1,2,3
Rewarding		
Compensation plan that does not prescribe the specific mechanisms for budget attainment so that salespeople may determine their own path to success (no reduction in commission for not hitting digital revenue as an example)	Immediately	1,2,3
Monitoring		
Surveys to measure elements of role clarity	quarterly, to begin approximately 3 months after training events	1,2,3

Organizational support. Changing goal-setting practices so that said goals are perceived to be both achievable and timely is recommended. Even if the goals are clear, there will be an implicit lack of clarity if the goals are not perceived to be achievable and timely. Further inquiry is recommended to understand what changes in goal setting would make these goals be perceived as attainable and timely. How much time in advance to goals need to be communicated to be timely? What would make the goals be perceived to be more attainable?

Level 2: Learning

After the implementation, the salespeople will be able to do following:

1. Identify how digital advertising fits in with their own individual perception of their role expectations.
2. Apply digital advertising knowledge in their role.
3. Recognize how metacognition can help contribute to their own success, the success of the organization, and their own role clarity.
4. Apply metacognition (reflection) to more deeply find coherence with the links among the salesperson’s role, digital advertising information, and the goals of both the individual and the organization.

Program. A series of training events will take place that focus on digital industry knowledge and reflective practices. These trainings will take place weekly for 3 months. The training events will focus on digital industry knowledge rather than specific product knowledge. Reflection will be heavily utilized during these trainings. The instructors (who has yet to be chosen but should be a person viewed as credible and similar to the population) will model reflection throughout the training by talking through how the delivered information applies to his/her own role as well as his/her own goals and how that role and those goals fit in with the organization's goals. The trainer will also ask the participants to reflect and verbally share how the new digital industry information applies to their success. These behaviors will also be monitored and encouraged in the sales manager one-on-one meeting each week. Approximately 3 months after these training events, quarterly surveys will be utilized to measure the effect on role clarity. The timing and content of these surveys will be based partially on feedback from the managers given that they may have a unique understanding of salespeople's progress and/or need for more learning support, as well as feedback from the two surveys that will measure for the effectiveness of the learning events themselves.

Table 5 *Components of Learning for the Program.*

Method(s) or Activity(ies)	Timing
Declarative Knowledge "I know it."	
Knowledge checks on role expectations knowledge (including digital) and metacognition in sales manager 1 on 1 meetings	Weekly
Observation of behavior before, during, and after sales calls via sales manager ride-along days	Monthly
Procedural Skills "I can do it right now."	
Knowledge checks on role expectations knowledge (including digital) and metacognition in sales manager 1 on 1 meetings	Weekly
Observation of behavior before, during, and after sales calls via sales manager ride-along days	Monthly
Attitude "I believe this is worthwhile."	
Survey on learning goals	1 week and 6 weeks after learning events are completed
Knowledge checks on role expectations knowledge (including digital) and metacognition in sales manager 1 on 1 meetings	Weekly
Confidence "I think I can do it on the job."	
Knowledge checks on role expectations knowledge (including digital) and metacognition in sales manager 1 on 1 meetings	Weekly
Survey on learning goals	1 week and 6 weeks after learning events are completed
Commitment "I will do it on the job."	
Knowledge checks on role expectations knowledge (including digital) and metacognition in sales manager 1 on 1 meetings	Weekly
Ask the attendees to write down and share how they will implement what they have learned on the job	After the learning event
Observation of behavior before, during, and after sales calls via sales manager ride-along days	Monthly
Survey on learning goals	1 week and 6 weeks after learning events are completed

Level 1: Reaction

The table below outlines the reaction components of the evaluation. Surveys and manager one-on-one meetings will be utilized to measure these reactions. Sales managers will also be present during the training events to observe engagement and provide feedback to the instructors.

Table 6 *Components to Measure Reactions to the Program.*

Method(s) or Tool(s)	Timing
Engagement	
Observation completed by sales managers at the learning event	During the learning event events
Training Evaluation Surveys	1 week and 6 weeks after learning events are

	completed
Relevance	
Sales manager 1 on 1 meetings	Weekly after training event
Training Evaluation Surveys	1 week and 6 weeks after learning events are completed
Customer Satisfaction	
Sales manager 1 on 1 meetings	Weekly after training event
Training Evaluation Surveys	1 week and 6 weeks after learning events are completed

Two instruments are provided in the appendices for evaluation of the learning events. One survey will be sent within one week of the completion of the events, and one survey will be sent six weeks after the completion of the events. The instrument consists of five-point Likert questions and one open-ended question. The questions are designed to evaluate each level of desired learning. The survey will be administered via email.

Summary

The New World Kirkpatrick Model (Kirkpatrick & Kirkpatrick, 2016) frames this implementation plan. I have used the recommendations put forward in the model to design the implement and evaluation of the achievement of the stakeholder goal of achieving 100% role clarity. This intervention will better equip ZAP Corporation in its goal to grow revenue in a sustainable way.

APPENDIX D

Survey Items

(Bolded text will not be included in the instrument)

This is a brief survey about the trainings that you have attended over the last several months. This survey is anonymous. We want to understand how we can improve these types of training in the future. Your response will help us in the effort.

A five-point Likert scale from strongly disagree to strongly agree will be used for questions 1-10 and question 11 will be open-ended.

Level 1: Engagement

1. The trainings increased my understanding of the digital advertising industry.
2. The courses increased my understanding of metacognition and reflective practices.

Level 1: Relevance

3. I will be able to use the information that I learned to help me with my job.
4. The information provided in these trainings was relevant to my ability to succeed in my job.

Level 1: Customer Satisfaction

5. The trainings were a good use of my time.
6. The instructors were effective in teaching the material.

Level 2: Learning

7. After the training, I can better identify how digital advertising fits in with my job expectations.
8. After the training, I recognize how metacognition can help contribute to my own success in my job.
9. After the training, I recognize how metacognition can help contribute to the success of the organization.
10. After the training, I have reflected on how my own personal goals fit in with the goals of the overall organization.
11. How will you use what you learned to better understand how to be successful in your job?

A five-point Likert scale from strongly disagree to strongly agree will be used for questions 1-9 and question 10 will be open-ended.

This is the second, brief, survey related to the trainings you completed six weeks ago. Now that you have had some time to think about the materials, we would like to understand more about your satisfaction with the course. The information learned from this anonymous survey will be used to improve future training.

Level 1: Reactions

1. I enjoyed the training classes
2. I found the training classes to be useful

Level 2: Learning

3. My learning about the digital advertising industry was enhanced from attending the trainings.
4. My learning about reflection and metacognition was enhanced from attending the trainings.

Level 3: Behavior

5. My use of digital advertising assets in my client's marketing plans has increased since attending the trainings.

6. My use of reflection and metacognition has increased since attending the trainings.

7. My ability to think through the multiple steps required to be successful in my job has increased since the trainings.

8. I better understand how digital advertising fits in with my success in my role.

9. I better understand how my own personal goal contribute to the organization's goals.

Open-Ended Response:

10. How could the trainings be improved?