

Optimizing the promotion of sales training programs: strategic and tactical approaches for a leading agricultural machinery manufacturer in Europe

Abstract :

Sales training is widely recognized as essential for salesforce performance. How sales training programs are promoted, however, remains largely overlooked. The study investigates how communication and promotional tactics, specifically digital and personalized methods, shape awareness, perception, and enrolment in a global agricultural machinery manufacturer's (GAMM) dealer network. Using a mixed-method design, shortcomings in promotional practices caused by unclear ROI communication, unclear internal responsibilities, and limited role-based personalization are revealed. The study contributes to sales education and marketing literature by reframing sales training as internal B2B service marketing and advertising.

Key words: *B2B, agricultural machinery, digital promotion, sales training, Europe*

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INTRODUCTION

A global survey by McKinsey found that 71-90% of companies report positive impacts of large-scale training on both employee performance and revenue growth (McKinsey.com 2021). Likewise, 86% of HR leaders identify the improvement of learning and development as a priority (Deloitte.com 2019). A study on agricultural sector employees found a strong positive relationship between training and employee performance, confirming that training significantly improves outcomes in agribusiness (Ahmad et al. 2023).

Even though these benefits are unmistakably proven, a recurring challenge lies not in the effectiveness of training programs themselves, but in how these programs are promoted and communicated to potential participants. As services are inherently intangible, their value can be overlooked or poorly understood, making effective marketing more important than ever (Honeycutt Hodge Attia 2015; Wirtz Lovelock 2016). Within larger dealer networks such as a Gamm (global agricultural machinery manufacturer), where multiple internal and external stakeholders, are involved, training communication often competes with other operational and corporate messages.

The study was conducted within the European region of a Gamm that supports approximately 3,000 dealer outlets across 16 countries, employing around 30,000 dealer staff. Sales training is delivered in multiple formats, including web-based training (WBT), instructor-led training (ILT), regional training programs (RTP), and virtual instructor-led training (vILT).

Internal stakeholders include employees such as corporate staff, sales teams, field teams, and those in manufacturing and engineering. The board of directors is responsible for the strategic vision. External stakeholders are a broader network, including dealers (and their sales teams), customers (primarily farmers supported through the company's network), suppliers (providing parts and materials for production), and shareholders (investors directly impacted by the company's financial performance).

Most of the research on sales training has traditionally focused on outcomes and ROI, while the promotion of training has remained underexplored. Cummins et al. (2020), in their review of sales education literature, found that most papers concentrate on practical learning, career development, and assessments, leaving areas such as technology integration, organizational behaviours, and promotion largely unaddressed. This directly reveals a substantial academic gap: little is known about how organizations build and market training programs to their own employees and dealer networks, and how such promotional strategies influence participation.

The primary research problem centres on the current promotional strategies within the Gamm dealer network, which are underperforming in driving enrolments for sales training programs. The study seeks to investigate the direct impact of these strategies on sales training awareness of the dealers.

The research attempts to show how each level of the dealership structure impacts the success of sales training promotions. By acknowledging the collective influence these roles have, the research tries to demonstrate that the promotional tactics take a coordinated, multi-level approach. It also simultaneously addresses the literature gap by expanding the discussion of sales training beyond learning initiatives to its promotion as a marketed service. This study advances research in sales education and training while also linking it to broader discussions of B2B marketing and advertising.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The Gamm strives to improve the participation of dealer and sales managers in its training programs. Although prior studies have examined the effectiveness and ROI of sales training, little is known about how such programs are promoted within B2B dealer networks. The research tackles this through the following question:

Q1: How do communication approaches and promotional tactics, particularly digital and personalized marketing strategies, shape perception, awareness, and enrolment in sales training programs within a Gamm's dealer network?

Sub-questions:

Q1a: Which promotional strategies are most effective in increasing dealer and sales manager participation in training programs?

Q1b: How does the personalization of messages (role-based, ROI-focused) affect stakeholder engagement and motivation to enrol?

Q1c: How can the integration of digital tools and corporate communication structures improve the clarity and impact of training promotion?

This results in the following hypothesis:

H1: A restructured approach to personalized marketing, value communication, motivational incentives, and internal engagement is expected to positively influence awareness and enrolment in sales training programs.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Sales training is an educational service aimed at enhancing the performance and skills of salespeople. Within the academic community, it is recognised that the intangible nature of such services presents greater challenges in terms of delivery and quality assessment compared to physical products (Honeycutt Hodge Attia 2015). Nonetheless, the effective training of salespeople is an important factor in a company's success. Complete training programs transform salespeople into high performers (Wiseman et al. 2022). The need to evolve skills and competencies of the sales force is part of the ongoing transformation of the B2B market. Understanding customer needs and sharing knowledge about the products being sold is essential (Corsaro Maggioni 2021).

Research in sales education reinforces this shift. Cardinali et al. (2025) use a competency-based perspective to understand emerging competencies required for B2B selling. Their work contributes to training content effectiveness but assumes that stakeholders are already aware of training initiatives. This is indicative of a larger trend in sales education research to concentrate on what should be taught and how effective it is rather than how such training is promoted.

Recent studies also highlight that the success or failure of an organization largely depends on the training it provides to its employees (Ampadu Varga Bruder 2022). Surveys conducted on private sector sales employees demonstrate a strong correlation between implemented training programs and increased employee performance (Mustafa Ismajli Velijaj 2022).

Beyond the traditional feature-advantage-benefit approach, customers now place greater emphasis on relationship building (Bradford Rutherford Friend 2017). The proactive engagement, using customer feedback to improve offerings and personal relationships, helps the B2B environment thrive (Fauser et al. 2023).

The challenge is that salespeople are reluctant to dedicate time to training, or when Dealer Managers hesitate to allocate budget due to the often-high net amount of such programs. This resistance is common within the sales demographic, as their time is directly tied to sales commissions (Boe 2024). Salespeople may view training as a potential loss of income, while Dealer Managers might be cautious about investing in programs (Serapiglia Gias 2020).

These challenges are not limited to corporate settings. Ballestra et al. (2017) mention in their findings, though through the prism of higher educational spaces, that training value alone is insufficient if the role, relevance, and outcomes of sales education are not clearly communicated.

Sales training assessment also has a role in evaluating how effectively salespeople learn and apply their knowledge in real-world business situations. In some cases, even when salespeople apply what they learned, it does not result in improved performance. This issue often stems from the training's quality, such as focusing on soft skills while neglecting topics like product benefits and technical knowledge (Sager et al. 2014).

To address challenges such as reluctance to enrol in training programs, low retention rates among participants, limited awareness of offerings, etc., companies use a Service Marketing Communication mix to engage their target audience (Wirtz Lovelock 2016). Selecting a fitting design for the Services Marketing Mix is also a big part of the process (Hawari Sudhartio 2020). According to prominent theories of Berry Leonard (1986), the focus should always shift from simply moving services "from producer to consumer" to a more consumer-oriented approach (Tansuhaj Randall McCullough 1988).

Extensive research effort in recent years focused on training promotion has concluded that digital marketing is one of the most effective and cost-efficient promotional methods (Khan Mishra 2021). Going a step further, digital technologies are also consistently being integrated into marketing plans (Crittenden Biel Lovely 2018).

The role of salespeople evolves not only from a socio-economic point but also a digital one. The same is applied to B2B organizations, where companies provide training to other entities (Bongers Schumann Schmitz 2021). Companies that implement the most effective training programs for their employees and networks are more likely to remain competitive (Mustafa Ismajli Velijaj 2022).

After a thorough literature review on sales training, most of these studies are quantitative (57%), utilizing surveys and assessments to evaluate the ROI of sales training. (Singh Manrai Manrai 2015). This is **Training Effectiveness**, which indicates and defines how well a training program improves knowledge, skills, behaviours, and performance ROI.

Cummins et al. (2020) reviewed 30 years of research and noted that most studies focus on practical learning and career development, while overlooking the organizational and promotional dimensions of training. Sales education has clearly historically been under-researched, especially outside classroom contexts. Peltier and Deeter-Schmelz (2020)

further argue that despite the expansion of university sales centres and formalized curricula, the field has “only tapped the surface” and requires broader conceptual and managerial research methods.

In contrast, **Training Promotion Effectiveness** refers to the ability of organisations to communicate and market their training offers. This means that even highly effective trainings cannot generate value if they are poorly promoted to the target audience. Unfortunately, to our knowledge, no dedicated stream of research has examined sales training promotion, whether within sales education or the broader promotion of educational services. The academic literature remains sparse on how organizations promote their training programs internally. Existing work, like Wilson Strutton Farris (2013) on perceptual transfer and Mehta (2019) on sales management training availability, suggests major gaps. This absence is particularly notable given the growing demand for training, especially in industrial sectors such as agricultural machinery.

RESEARCH MODEL

This paper is conceptually anchored in the view of sales training as internal service marketing. Training programs are treated as intangible services that require marketing within the organization and its dealer network. This implies the use of service marketing principles, particularly the expanded Marketing Mix of Services (7Ps). Supporting theories strengthen this view. Organizational Buying Behaviour (OBB) is used to understand the stakeholder decision logic and Servitization Theory explains why training is a strategic service extension in B2B spaces. Meanwhile CRM (Customer Relationship Management) personalization and Digital Marketing function as methods that improve promotion, value communication, and engagement. Together, these lenses specify sales training as a service where its awareness, perceived value, and enrolment depend on coordinated promotional activities, role-based communication, and clearly articulated ROI.

This paper builds on the main theory of services marketing (7Ps), which views employees as customers who need to see the value of what the organization offers. Supporting theories strengthen this view: OBB explains why different internal stakeholders must be addressed; servitization research shows why industrial firms increasingly rely on service-like offerings such as training; and CRM/personalization offers tools for promoting these services. Together, these theories tie together sales training as a form of internal service marketing.

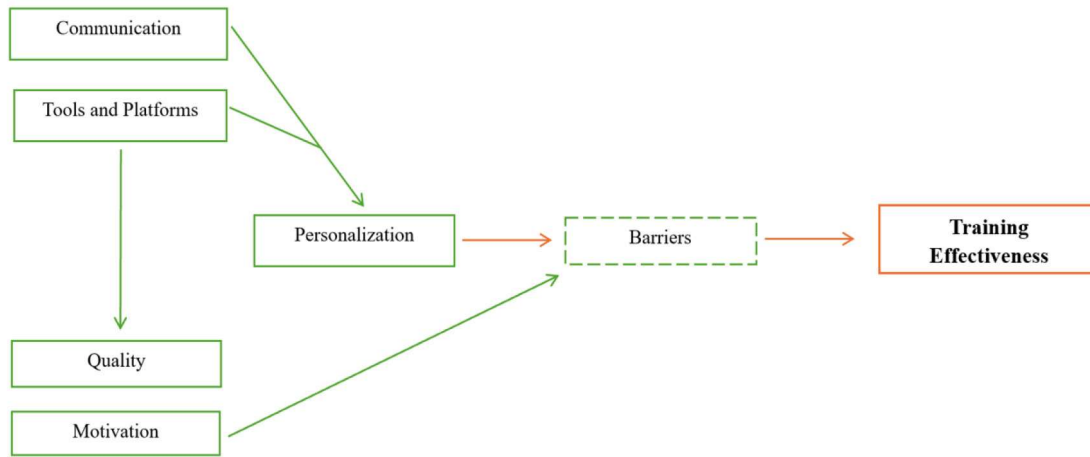
The traditional marketing mix suggested by McCarthy (1964) comprises strictly the 4Ps (product, price, promotion, and place). Despite it becoming one of the most recognized frameworks in marketing theory, it faced heavy criticism from the services marketing perspective. Booms and Bitner (1981) argued that services, due to their unique and dynamic nature, cannot be represented under the 4Ps. To address this, they expanded the mix by adding “people, process, and physical evidence,” transforming it into the 7P model (Akroush 2011). Because of this, service marketing research has been increasingly focused on quality as a pillar of necessary competitive advantage. Fauser (2017) mentions that without service quality, competitive positioning is unimaginable in the current market dynamics.

In contrast to B2C approaches, B2B marketing involves organizations promoting their products or services to other businesses rather than individual consumers (Hall 2022). A distinguishing factor in B2B is servitization, which builds closer customer relationships and strategic partnerships. In manufacturing, this shift moves companies from a product-centric to a service-centric model (Wirtz Kowalkowski 2023).

Organizational Buying Behaviour (OBB), on the other hand, differs from consumer behaviour as it involves complex decision-making processes with multiple stakeholders (Mohan et al. 2022). Decision-making involves multiple managers, including sales and HR (Lilien 2014). Research highlights a shift towards value over price, with 49% of business consumers preferring personalized service over a generic B2B approach (Corsaro Maggioni 2021; Miller Heiman Group 2019; Salesforce 2016).

Personalized marketing focuses on customer data to deliver tailored services by providing the right service at the right time. In B2B, dealers and sales managers receive customized training communications based on their preferences and past interactions, rather than a one-size-fits-all approach (Chandra et al. 2022). CRM systems are the main drivers of data-based personalization, tracking customer behaviour and predicting future actions (Saura Ribeiro-Soriano Palacios-Marques 2021). Behavioural targeting personalization checks promotions based on past trainings, sales performance, and engagement patterns (Ozcelik Varnali 2019).

Figure 1
Relationships between promotional attributes



METHOD

For this paper, mixed-method research (MMR) was chosen. MMR integrates quantitative (numerical, measurable) and qualitative (descriptive, non-numerical) data, addressing research questions from multiple perspectives (Malina Norreklit Selto 2011). By combining both, MMR improves analysis by offering both statistical validation and explanatory depth (Wasti et al. 2022). Despite its strengths, MMR faces challenges, such as balancing subjectivity and objectivity, differences in sampling methods, and philosophical divides between research paradigms (Bergman 2011).

This study employs a Convergent Parallel Design to analyse promotional strategies' impact on sales training awareness within the GAMM's dealer network. It utilizes two primary quantitative methods. First, a **Survey** was distributed to external stakeholders. The survey, specifically designed for this research, collected primary data over 10 days to identify promotional pain points. The dataset was collected via Netigate. The survey data was exported to Excel, processed using chi-square tests, correlation, and regression analysis, and visualized through charts and tables.

Second, qualitative data was gathered through **1:1 interviews** and a **focus group**, conducted over a period of 30 days (November 11 - December 11, 2024). Transcriptions were initially generated via Microsoft Teams' speech-to-text feature, then manually refined for accuracy. Frequently mentioned topics were used to create coding categories. For analysis, MAXQDA software was used to code, categorize, and visualize themes. Interview transcripts were structured as individual documents, while the focus group transcript was analysed separately.

Participation in this research was voluntary, with verbal and written consent obtained from participants. Data collection followed GDPR regulations and company confidentiality standards. Identifying details were anonymized, and raw data access was restricted.

Several internal organizational documents were used as data sources in this study. To maintain confidentiality, the organization's name has been anonymized and it is referred to as "GAMM" throughout the text and reference list. These documents are cited following academic standards as unpublished internal reports. survey. The survey reached approximately 50 participants from the relevant target group, comprised of dealers, salespeople, and employees directly engaged with dealership operations. Among the sample, a total of 21 participants partially completed the survey. With an engagement rate of 42% and a completion rate of 32%, these results are considered higher than the average observed in other surveys previously distributed within GAMM.

Table 1
Survey initial data screening

Data Collected	% Results
Product Specialists and Dealer Instructors	42.86%
Over 7 years of work experience	61.90%
Have enough and good materials for promotions	61.11%
Believe promotional strategies to be effective	55.56%
Lack clarity of information in promotions	66.67%
No other major issues identified	68.78%
Recognize importance of personalized marketing	56.25%
Job-relevant emails as preferred method of comms.	68.75%
Motivation: Job performance and Sales	87.50%
Best training = relevant to job	56.25%
Aware of all training programs upon release	81.25%
Acknowledge the value of training	56.25%
Best communication method: Emails	75%
Communication tools are well balanced	43.75%
Communication tools are insufficient or irregular	31.25%

1:1 interviews. The interviews were conducted with 12 participants - nine males and three females – who represented a range of roles. Some were directly involved in dealer training and fieldwork, while others operated within the corporate environment, focusing on organizational and strategic decisions.

focus group discussion (FGD). The focus group interview was conducted with eight participants - five males and three females – who represented various roles. All participants had connections to the training department and worked within a corporate office setting. The FGD was planned to last around 60 minutes.

FINDINGS

survey. Survey data underwent regression analysis, correlation analysis, and chi-square tests to examine the impact of promotional strategies, personalized marketing, and enrolment motivations. Due to Netigate's anonymization protocols, individual responses could not be tracked, making job role and experience data primarily descriptive.

Table 2
Descriptive statistic for survey

Analysis Type	Variables Analysed	Statistical Test/Measure	Results	Significance (p-value)
Chi-square Test	Perceived promotional strategy effectiveness vs. Availability of marketing materials	$\chi^2 = 7.61$	Statistically significant relationship	p = 0.0058
Regression Analysis	Promotional strategy improvements (clarity, personalization)	Multiple R = 0.884	Strong positive correlation	p < 0.05
Correlation Analysis	Personalized messages vs. Enrolment rates	r = 0.87	Strong positive correlation	-
Descriptive Statistic	Influence of job-relevant emails on enrolment	Weighted average	35.09	-
Correlation Analysis	Career motivation factors vs. Enrolment	R = 0.696	Moderate correlation	p = 0.001
Correlation Analysis	Awareness of training programs vs. Enrolment motivations	R = 0.771, F = 0.1374	No significant correlation	p > 0.05
Correlation Analysis	Understanding of training benefits vs. Motivational factors	-	No significant correlation	p = 0.835
Chi-square Test	Communication timing/frequency vs. Training quality	χ^2	No meaningful association	p = 1.60 (non-significant)

1:1 interviews. effectiveness of promotional strategies and preferred channels. The Training Catalogue was consistently viewed as the most effective promotional tool and a clear reference point for available training paths. "The catalogue works well because it helps them track their progress through the training path" (P3). In contrast, other tools were seen as outdated. The sales-enabling IT tools DealerPath and HighSpot were underutilized for training promotion, and awareness of their content was inconsistent across dealerships and the corporate offices.

impact of personalized marketing. Personalized communication was limited and not systematically implemented. Interviewees reported that most tailored messaging relied on field teams rather than structured processes, indicating low integration of personalization into standard promotional strategies.

engagement with training programs and perceptions of training. Dealers struggled with enrolment processes, prerequisites, and financial constraints, which reduced engagement despite generally positive perceptions of training quality. Unclear ROI made dealers hesitant to invest, particularly when additional costs were involved and not very well justified. "Dealers don't clearly see the return on investment for doing a good training" (P7). At the same time, interviewees mentioned that dealers value career relevance, hands-on and in-field training, and expect clear evidence of value before committing.

Table 3

The 5 themes and 16 sub-themes from interview analysis

1. Promotions	(154 citations)
1.1 Communication Tools	58
1.2 Personalized Communication	29
1.3 Effectiveness of Current Strategies	49
1.4 Frequency of Communication	18
2. Challenges	(124 citations)
2.1 Prerequisite troubles	33
2.2 Financial Constraints	20
2.3 Dealer Hesitancies	17
2.4 Internal Communication Gaps	54
3. Push Factors	(72 citations)
3.1 Financial Incentives	17
3.2 Relevance to career or job	25
3.3 Career Development	10
3.4 Hands-on training	20
4. Program Features	(33 citations)
4.1 Curriculums	19
4.2 Training Quality	14
5. Recommendations	(124 citations)
5.1 Dealer Needs vs Trainings	19
5.2 Tools improvement	25
5.3 Communication improvement	50
5.4 Personalization improvement	30

focus group. communication quality. Focus group participants stressed that training promotion must be clear, relevant, and explicitly linked to business objectives and ROI to demonstrate tangible value. “We need to speak the language they understand - business language” (P1). Role-based personalization and proactive communication were identified as most needed for engagement improvement.

centralized communication platform. GAMM's University was identified as the central system for training management, while DealerPath, HighSpot, and Teams were seen as supporting tools. However, participants showed a strong need for a centralized communication hub to improve visibility of training offerings.

financial incentives. Participation was described as strongly influenced by career relevance, skill development, and financial incentives, while budget constraints and unclear benefits remained as direct and considerable barriers to enrolment.

defined roles and responsibilities. Task ownership was viewed as unclear between technology business managers (TBM), design to cost managers (DTC), and certified dealer instructor managers (CDI). In particular, the DTC role was described as lacking sufficient authority to effectively influence dealer participation and coordinate promotional efforts.

Table 4

The 5 themes and 10 sub-themes from FGD analysis

1. Sales Training	(28 citations)
1.1 Impact and Behaviour	10
1.2 Value and Engagement	18
2. Communication Strategies	(33 citations)
2.1 Challenges	15
2.2 Personalized Messages	18
3. Dealer Engagement	(17 citations)
3.1 Barriers	10
3.2 Motivations	7
4. Tools and Platforms	(33 citations)
4.1 Centralized Hub	17
4.2 Existing Tools	16
5. Roles and Responsibilities	(18 citations)
5.1 Improvements for TBMs, DTCs and CDIs	10
5.2 Existing Attributes	8

DISCUSSION

The study identified inefficiencies in current promotional strategies for sales training programs, emphasizing the need for optimization and personalization. The main barriers included poor targeting, unclear ROI, logistical issues, and misaligned developmental goals, all of which contributed to low enrolment rates. Each promotional attribute influenced others, with communication directly affecting personalization, motivation, and the emergence or removal of barriers (as seen in Figure 1. “Relationships between promotional attributes”).

Given the limited survey sample size, the quantitative analyses should be interpreted as exploratory rather than confirmatory. Regression, correlation, and chi-square analyses indicate patterns that suggest the importance of communication clarity, personalization, and the availability of marketing materials in promotional effectiveness. On the other hand, they do not allow for strong statistical inference.

Role-specific emails emerged as the most preferred format for personalized outreach, especially among dealers motivated by career development. Qualitative findings reinforce these patterns by mentioning outdated tools (HighSpot, DealerPath, DBS), inconsistent personalization, and underused face-to-face contact by the field teams. Financial concerns, unclear ROI, and internal role overlap are further seen as recurring barriers that diminish the promotional strength. Anchored in the perspective of sales training as internal service marketing, the results demonstrate that training must be treated as a service that requires targeted promotion. Communication is not merely informational but strategic, shaping motivation, personalization, and the removal of participation barriers. Much like service marketing models emphasize functional, emotional, and cultural value (Fauser Agola 2021), sales training promotion must highlight both the tangible ROI and the intangible benefits of participation.

From an academic standpoint, this research contributes to sales training and sales education literature by filling a neglected gap. Whereas prior studies have focused on training design, effectiveness, or ROI measurement (Bolander Bonney Saturnino 2014; Lassk et al. 2012; Singh Manrai Manrai 2015), no dedicated body of research has examined the promotion of sales training within organizations (Cummins et al., 2020). By conceptualizing sales training as internal

service marketing, this study extends services marketing theory (Berry 1986; Booms Bitner 1981) into a new organizational domain, combining insights from OBB and personalization research. This reframes training as more than an educational measure, positioning it as a marketed service whose success, awareness, enrolment, and ROI rely on effective internal communication.

These findings support the research hypothesis, indicating that a restructured approach to personalized marketing, value communication, and internal stakeholder coordination can improve awareness and enrolment rates for sales training programs.

Previous trends in the direct selling industry (Klein Rouziou 2024), personalization, relationship-building, and human-centred communication remain relevant in the B2B sector. Just as direct selling thrives on customized advice, trust-building, and up-to-date digital tools, so too must internal promotions use segmentation, role-based targeting, and engagement on all corporate levels to overcome participation barriers.

Moreover, like luxury sales staff, whose success depends on emotional engagement and knowledge personalization (Chandon Maalej Poujol 2021), sales training promotions must move beyond simplistic emails to emotionally pull and affect communication flows. In both sectors, the value of services must be made tangible through trust, relevance, and results. This reveals quite evidently that service marketing can bridge perception gaps and transform awareness into sales.

To effectively promote sales training services, companies must treat training as a strategic marketing product rather than an internal offering. This study introduces a structured approach centred around the Dealer Behaviour Cycle (DBC) as an emergent managerial tool similar than the Customer Behavior Cycle. The DBC is derived from the findings, which link promotional tactics to the needs and motivations of salespeople at different stages of their decision-making process.

Personalized communication, supported by CRM data, role-specific messaging, and ROI evidence, has been found to be the most impactful. Using the efforts of TBMs, DTCs, and CDIs, backed by standardized toolkits and KPI-based assessment frameworks, will provide message clarity and ease participation barriers.

This research addresses both a practical need for improved training promotion in dealer networks and contributes to academic debates by offering a new conceptual anchor. Sales training, when treated as internal service marketing, becomes not only a tool for skill development but also a case for understanding how internal services can be promoted, personalized, and measured within B2B environments.

CONCLUSIONS

This paper examined how sales training programs are promoted within GAMM's B2B dealer network. The research found and pointed to the literature gap in sales education that overlooks training promotion in favour of training effectiveness and ROI measurements. While prior research has extensively explored what salespeople should be taught and how training improves performance, very little attention has been given to how training services are communicated and advertised to the dealer network. Anchored in the perspective of service marketing, the findings establish that low enrolment is caused less by training quality and more by promotional inefficiencies. Lack of targeting and personalization, unclear ROI and overlapping internal responsibilities collectively weaken awareness, reduce perceived value, and discourage participation.

Quantitative analysis indicated that communication clarity, the availability of marketing assets, and role-based personalization are the main drivers of awareness and perception. Personalized, role-specific emails were identified as the most effective, particularly for dealers motivated by career development. Qualitative findings reinforce these results by showcasing inconsistent personalization practices, outdated tools, unclear ROI messaging, and internal role overlap. From a theoretical standpoint, the study supports the application of service marketing theory (7Ps) in internal B2B environments, where training functions as an intangible service. The findings also connect with Organizational Buying Behaviour. It shows that training decisions involve multiple corporate levels with distinct roles and informational needs. This also connects well with servitization theory. CRM-supported personalization and digital marketing emerge as supporting mechanisms.

To integrate these findings, the paper proposes the Dealer Behaviour Cycle (DBC). The DBC focuses on the dynamic dealer engagement at various stages for promotional effectiveness. This reinforces the need for coordinated internal roles, standardized promotional tools, and clearly communicated ROI for better enrolments.

Overall, this research contributes to sales education and B2B marketing literature by shifting attention from training performance to the mechanisms through which training services are promoted, perceived, and adopted. The study advances understanding of how internal services can be effectively marketed within a GAMM dealer network. From this point of view, training promotion becomes strategic and not just an administrative activity.

LIMITATIONS

This study focuses on organizational-level variables that are fully within the control and compliance of the organization itself. Due to the scarcity of literature specifically addressing sales training promotion, as most existing studies focus on its effectiveness and ROI assessment, this research takes an exploratory approach. Survey sample size was limited, affecting the accuracy of regression and correlation analyses, particularly due to the lack of cross-tabulation data and anonymization protocols under GDPR compliance. As the research was conducted within a single company and not across the agricultural sector, the findings may reflect certain biases, limiting the generalizability of the results.

FURTHER RESEARCH

The sales training promotion topic is quite specific and has not been widely studied, as most of the attention has been on value and ROI assessments (Cummins et al. 2020; Singh Manrai Manrai 2015). This study provided a stronger theoretical foundation for future research, such as connecting ROI more directly with promotional activities and integrating service theories into training assessment frameworks.

One area worth exploring is whether there are other inefficiencies within the corporate structure, such as overlapping roles in HR or among specialists, and how these might be affecting training program promotions. Another focus could be research into CRM systems, including how they can be integrated smoothly into existing platforms and used for promotion (investigating how to enable preferences across demographics). More research could also be done on optimizing hybrid learning methods and their impact on training quality. It could dive deeper to fix current gaps, improve satisfaction levels, and the overall training experience.

Finally, with the evolving use of Artificial Intelligence (AI), future studies could investigate deeper into AI dashboards and analytical tools that generate real-time recommendations, personalize training promotions, and enhance managerial decisions by helping identify participation patterns and barriers.

MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

Sales training promotion carries high managerial risk due to the intangible nature of the offering and the financial investment demanded from dealerships. Because training quality cannot be evaluated when it is promoted, correct targeting of the dealer network is quite important for the overall success in enrolment.

The findings clearly indicate that dealers are frequently treated as static participants in the information rounds, despite exhibiting cyclical behaviours and changing needs. Therefore, managers should consider promotional activities within the Dealer Behaviour Cycle (DBC) concept. Different stages of the cycle require different communication: early stages benefit from problem recognition, later stages require clear proof of value through ROI and KPIs, while post-training stages depend on assessment and follow-up. Generic, untimed communication limits promotional effectiveness.

To make training value tangible, managers should implement structured assessments before and after training, linking learning results to behavioural change, operational KPIs, and ROI. Digitizing these results and storing them at the dealership level can help personalize the follow-ups and encourage enrolment decisions.

The study also shows that adding more platforms does not improve awareness. Instead, managers should consolidate existing tools, remove outdated materials, and maintain a clear central hub for training information. Managers need to continue investing in hybrid learning formats and track communication effectiveness using tools like CRM platforms. This would minimize redundant communication platforms and prioritize only the most popular digital touchpoints.

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APPENDIX. INTERVIEW AND FOCUS GROUP DATA

TABLE A.1

interview data and general demographics

Number	Date / Duration	Gender	Role
P1	11.11.2024 / 15:10 min.	Male	Instructor & Promotion Specialist
P2	11.11.2024 / 18:20 min.	Male	Instructor & Promotion Specialist
P3	13.11.2024 / 21:50 min.	Male	Manager Tactical Marketing
P4	13.11.2024 / 32:25 min.	Male	Training Centre Manager
P5	18.11.2024 / 40:30 min.	Male	Future Training Strategy Manager
P6	19.11.2024 / 17:25 min.	Male	Manager Tactical Marketing
P7	21.11.2024 / 24:50 min.	Male	Precision Ag Specialist
P8	21.11.2024 / 27:30 min.	Male	Marketing Representative
P9	22.11.2024 / 28:10 min.	Male	Sales Services Manager
P10	26.11.2024 / 14:44 min.	Female	Product Sales Specialist
P11	28.11.2024 / 25:45 min.	Female	Training and Support Manager
P12	28.11.2024 / 15:17 min.	Female	Training Centre Manager

TABLE A.2

focus group data and general demographics

Participant	Date / Duration	Gender	Role
P1	11.12.2024 ----- 69 minutes	Male	Sales Services Manager
P2		Male	Curriculum Architect
P3		Male	Tactical Marketing Manager
P4		Female	Training Centre Manager
P5		Male	Training Manager
P6		Male	Training Developer
P7		Female	Training Coordinator
P8		Female	Training Project Lead