

2/2017

#Sales  
Excellence  
Center

# Journal of Excellence in Sales

Turku Sales  
Competition  
with Projecta



# Contents

- 4 Sini Jokiniemi  
**Editor's Letter**
- 5 Liisa Kairisto-Mertanen  
**Selling Skills Are for Everybody**
- Sales Education in Finland**
- 7 **INFOBOX / Sales Education in Finland**  
7 Sini Jokiniemi  
**Sales Educators' Network in Finland**  
9 Sini Jokiniemi  
**Let's Meet Samuli Myllyharju from Sales and Marketing Professionals (MMA)**
- Sales Excellence Week 2017**
- 11 **INFOBOX / Sales Excellence Week 2017**  
11 Sini Jokiniemi  
**Proudly Presenting Projecta: Partner in Turku Sales Competition**  
13 Timo Holopainen & Mikael Tómasson  
**Sales is also a Technique**  
14 Harri Lappalainen  
**Innovation Competences: Consultative Jargon or Something More?**  
16 Tarja Åberg & Sini Jokiniemi  
**FINCODA: Innovators from Universities to Companies**  
19 Sini Jokiniemi  
**INTENSE – Entering New Markets Successfully**
- Selling Sales**
- 22 **INFOBOX / Selling Sales**  
22 Aino Lindroos  
**Sales Team at TUAS Ready to Make a Deal**  
24 Martti Komulainen  
**Student Group from Singapore Meets TUAS Teaching Methods and Circular Economy**  
26 Piia Harvonen & Timo Holopainen  
**Being International in Turku: Experiences of Tutoring Chinese Students**
- Global Perspectives on Selling**
- 28 **INFOBOX / Global Perspectives on Selling**  
28 Kazuko Deno  
**Building Relationships with Your Customers through Coaching-Based Interaction**  
32 Dylan Van den Bremd  
**Semi-Vertical Integration between Companies**

- 37 Jukka Aminoff  
**How Luxury Entrepreneurs and Businesses Can Go Global**
- 39 Johannes Reiterer  
**Marketing & Sales Education @ the University of Applied Sciences Wiener Neustadt**
- 42 **INFOBOX / Business Cases with Students**  
42 Konsta Pöyhönen & Henrik Ekman  
**Young Adults as Consumers**
- 45 **INFOBOX / Career Experiences**  
45 Aino Lindroos  
**Working with People**  
46 Sirpa Hänti  
**Selling is Everyone's Job**  
47 Aino Korhonen  
**A Story of Being too Excited about Sales**  
48 Tanja Hallenberg  
**SMErec: Ensuring Successful Recruiting**
- 50 **INFOBOX / Why Study Sales?**  
50 Elina Inkinen  
**Sales as a Part of Me**  
52 Miikka Nurmi  
**Be a Sales Pro**  
53 Marvin Mächt  
**The Must-Haves You Need (to Know) When You Visit Finland**  
55 Timo Holopainen  
**ESCA Ready for the European Sales Competition 2018**

# Editor's Letter

**Sini Jokiniemi**

*Principal Lecturer (Sales), Sales Excellence Center at TUAS*

Nothing moves or changes between and within people and organizations unless somebody sells something first. 'Selling' may refer to e.g. telling about an experience, recommending a service, offering an idea, or actually selling something with a price tag on it. Changing the status quo in a way that we can afterwards all say that we are all better off than before.

What's so wonderful about sales is its diversity. It may take place in various contexts, such as internally and externally, locally, domestically, internationally, between businesses, or between an organization and a consumer. Selling takes different forms and demands different competences in different channels (online, face-to-face, by telephone). Selling offers rich content for a learner, teacher and researcher, as selling may be related to the selling of commoditized products or complex services.

And then there is the customer – forever on the customer offers an intriguing challenge for every salesperson who wishes to foresee and understand what could best serve the customer next. Last spring we at Turku University of Applied Sciences (TUAS) organized together with EPSI Rating Finland a student project that aimed to understand young adults as customers. The journey continues as the project brought to light an interesting array of even contradicting views and conceptions related to the usage of various channels and views on customer service. Customers tend to challenge us in surprising ways and, all in

all, that motivates us salespeople to try even harder.

Happy selling to you all!



CEO Tarja Ilvonen (EPSI Rating Finland) and Sini Jokiniemi.  
Photo: Aino Lindroos.



# Selling Skills Are for Everybody

**Liisa Kairisto-Mertanen**

*Dean of the Faculty of Technology, Environment and Business at TUAS*

Turku University of Applied Sciences, among a couple of other Finnish universities and working life organizations, has for some time been active in promoting the role of selling skills as one of the core competencies of every fresh business and engineering graduate. It seems that the importance of selling has finally been recognized at least somewhat better than earlier in Finland. Recently there has been a lot of talk in public media about its importance, and new universities

of applied sciences have included sales education in their curricula.

When we in Turku started our first sales programme about ten years ago, we made a survey of young people's feelings concerning selling. It turned out at that point that young people had a far more open and enthusiastic idea about selling than what we at TUAS expected. They even found selling as a good career possibility



Dean Liisa Kairisto-Mertanen. Photo: Martti Komulainen.

and understood that selling is very much about helping the customer and assisting in the process of finding the best possible solution. Since then, much has happened and now we educate also sales engineers. They seem to have found their place in the labour market and have found good positions in the companies they are working for after graduation.

In Turku, we like to take the idea of selling even further. The author of the book 'To sell is human', Daniel Pink says that in today's world we're all salespeople. He speaks about non-sales selling, by which he means situations which traditionally have not been considered as selling but actually are selling situations. Examples of these situations include e.g. teachers who sell their students the idea of studying hard or parents who discuss with their children of various ages what they would like to happen and what their children do not appreciate. In fact, when we adopt this way of thinking, it becomes obvious that we're all in selling. In my own family, it happens that I find myself convincing my husband to watch something else than Formula 1 or football in TV or telling him that the grass really needs instant mowing. In families with young children, these kind of 'selling' situations are even more frequent.

All this means that selling is gradually becoming and being understood as a competence needed by everybody. When I entered my first selling job

in the computer business ages ago, I was taught that selling is 'the art of communication for the purpose of influencing'. During the past almost 40 years of my working career, I have kept this slogan in my mind. I have worked in administration for many years where leadership skills have been of crucial importance in order to succeed and have things done. My job as a Dean of a faculty has been a selling job. Many of the things we have done would not have happened without selling. In leadership as well as in selling, you just have to foresee and understand the needs of your customer. Success requires being adaptive and making the customer see the same situation. It is about acting like a helper or guide in the process where mutual win-win is a goal.

We who work with students know how valuable good tutors and coaches are. They can help students find their best sides and reach better results than what they ever could have imagined. There is a lot in common with selling, tutoring, coaching and leading. Actually they all are sales jobs where adaptive selling skills are of utmost importance.

A wide approach to selling means that everybody should learn something about principles of selling. And these principles are about being adaptive, understanding the other parties' position and very much about being entrepreneurial and customer-centric.

## SALES EDUCATION IN FINLAND

In Finland, there are a growing number of universities of applied sciences which include sales in their curricula. These institutions have formed an unofficial Sales Educators' Network to share information and best practices, to innovate joint project ideas, to ensure state-of-the-art learning methods, and to enhance the nationwide recognition of selling as an essential competence. The importance of this cooperation is underlined e.g. by Sales and Marketing Professionals (MMA).

# Sales Educators' Network in Finland

**Sini Jokiniemi**

*Principal Lecturer (Sales) at TUAS, Sales Excellence Center*

Sales forms a part of the curriculum in a number of Finnish universities of applied sciences. The national Best Seller Competition has been the annual highlight of showcasing the talented sales students studying in these sales-related study programmes. The annual Best Seller Competition has been organized by Haaga-Helia (Helsinki) and TUAS (Turku) for a decade already - based on a joined study trip to the United States to gain first-hand information on how sales competitions are organized the American way. The cooperation between Haaga-Helia, TUAS and other universities of applied sciences in Finland has taken many forms in the past.

In January 2016, Senior Lecturer **Pirjo Pitkäpaasi** from Haaga-Helia called a meeting to kick off a more organized form of networking for universities of applied sciences teaching

sales. Long-standing collaboration partners – Sales and Marketing Professionals as well as Technology Industries of Finland – were also welcomed.

The purpose of the unofficial network of the Finnish Sales Educators is to share information and best practices, to innovate joined project ideas and to ensure state-of-the-art learning methods for when students practise sales, and last but not least: to enhance the nationwide recognition of selling as an essential competence.

The latest meeting of the network was held in Espoo in August 2017 and hosted by Laurea University of Applied Sciences. Besides the hosting university, 20 participants represented the following universities: TUAS, Haaga-Helia, Tampere University of Applied Sciences, Centria

University of Applied Sciences (Kokkola), The Levón Institute (an affiliate institution at the University of Vaasa), and Sales and Marketing Professionals. Also South-Eastern Finland University of Applied Sciences (XAMK), JAMK University of Applied Sciences and Lapland University of Applied Sciences regularly participate the meetings.

Two milestones lay ahead for the network. First, in March 2018 the network will gather together

to enhance initial project ideas, such as offering the kind of sales education that supports salespeople in the digitalized world. Second, on 19 April 2018, the national Best Seller Competition will once again underline the versatility of selling skills as well as promote the appreciation of sales as a profession.

#BestSellerComp #2018 #HaagaHelia #Sales



Happy Sales Educators meeting in Laurea Espoo, August 2017. Photo: Sini Jokiniemi.



# Let's Meet Samuli Myllyharju from Sales and Marketing Professionals (MMA)

**Sini Jokiniemi**

*Principal Lecturer (Sales) at TUAS, Sales Excellence Center*

Communications Manager **Samuli Myllyharju** has been an active and enthusiastic participant in a number of discussions integrating the common needs of Sales and Marketing Professionals ('Myynnin ja markkinoinnin ammattilaiset', MMA) and the Finnish universities of applied sciences teaching sales.

The Sales and Marketing Professionals (MMA) is a nationwide professional organization promoting the interests of its members and offering a number of member services. The 122-year-old organization hosts 27 000 members, including 4 000 student memberships.

Myllyharju welcomes the even stronger cooperation with the unofficial Finnish Sales Educators' Network:

- Through its own networks, MMA can offer versatile contacts and competences to universities' project initiatives, match students' bachelor theses with appropriate companies, support mentoring programmes, and offer visiting lecturers and professionals to sales lessons.

Myllyharju continues pointing out that together MMA and universities may promote local and national common causes via MMA's central organization Akava (a trade union confederation of affiliates for highly educated people).



Communications Manager Samuli Myllyharju (Sales and Marketing Professionals).

In Myllyharju's opinion, there are a number of strong Finnish companies operating in the business-to-business sector. These companies naturally need skilled salespeople to prosper. Myllyharju mentions that certain cultural values separate the Finnish companies from other nationalities:

- Trust is one of the Finnish core values.

We keep our promises. Therefore we check and double-check that our offer really does keep the promises we have made. This kind of verifying takes time and combined with a low-key promotion activities may hinder the international breakthroughs of especially Finnish companies.

Myllyharju further challenges every professional to adopt a selling attitude.

– We are talking about a cultural change when trying to implement the ‘everyone sells’ attitude to all professionals, regardless of their job title. Sales as a word should be re-launched with new connotations, related to e.g. words like helping and the idea of a goal-orientated customer meeting, suggests Myllyharju.

Nowadays, sales competences get outdated fast. Especially in small and medium-sized companies there is almost no need for salespeople who knew the tricks-of-the-trade in the good old days. The new forms of entrepreneurship and consultative selling services have evolved to bridge the gap between the old and the new. The traditional selling skills are replaced by an array of new competence requirements:

– Digital skills, marketing with social media, market automation, CRM and ERP systems in predicting customer behaviour, and supporting purchase decisions online have grown in importance, underlines Myllyharju.

– Consumer buying processes in particular start and finish online. This logic is shifting into business-to-business markets, as well. Robotization and various selling configurations in various channels change the old ways of doing B2B buying and selling. A new form of doing business has emerged, Myllyharju concludes.

Based on his experience with the Finnish salesforce, Myllyharju offers a few practical tips:

– Firstly, knowing your customer as a person, as a company and the company’s operating environment should never be forgotten. This is especially important when meeting face-to-face with the B2B customer. Secondly, internal communications is crucial when, for instance, the salesperson ‘hands the project over’ internally to the selling company’s production manager for further actions. Can the customer trust that the salesperson has given all the necessary information to his internal colleague to support the customer?

With the internal communication example Myllyharju comes back to the cultural issues. A cultural change is involved when the internal communication routines are shaken for the better.

Attitudes toward selling are changing in Finland and the official decision-makers have been giving pro-sales statements. Myllyharju mentions the dictum of National Audit Office of Finland (‘Valtiontalouden tarkastusvirasto’) from last spring. The Office called for the development of e-commerce competences as well as the establishment of a national marketing development centre to answer the competence needs of the market.



## SALES EXCELLENCE WEEK

The sales week programme starts with Turku Sales Competition showcasing students – covering over 10 nationalities – at their best as they represent Projecta and its solutions in a simulated B2B business discussion. During the week, both FINCODA and INTENSE projects are discussed in various workshops. Both of the projects are based on innovation pedagogy; a pedagogical approach created and applied at TUAS and also recognized in a recent Staff Working Document by the European Commission's and its renewed EU Agenda for Higher Education.



# Proudly Presenting Projecta: Partner in Turku Sales Competition

***Sini Jokiniemi***

*Principal Lecturer (Sales) at TUAS, Sales Excellence Center*

The intensive cooperation between Projecta and Sales Excellence Center (SEC) began in March 2017. After participating in and being impressed by Best Seller Competition (in Finnish) in May 2017, Projecta has now offered their service product for Turku Sales Competition (in English), taking place on 21 November 2017. Sales students at TUAS and a visiting group from Austria will start practising how to sell one of Projecta's service products, and their talents are showcased in the competition. In addition, Projecta has given two assignments to student project groups, while SEC has prepared a forthcoming sales training day for Projecta's sales and service personnel.

Projecta is a supplier of industrial machines and components. It promises to 'power your production' and offers solutions that enhance the customer's business. Projecta represents international premium suppliers and holds a reputation of being an expert in innovative technology. Projecta is a family-owned company employing 45 top professionals with offices in Turku, Finland and Tallinn, Estonia. The annual turnover was approximately 20 million euros in 2016.

**Sebastian Tamminen** works at Projecta as a sales director in charge of industrial components and investment products in Finland. He has noticed



Sales Director Sebastian Tamminen.

certain trends in the industry:

- These days the Internet of Things (IoT) and the Industrial Internet 4.0 are underlined in technical sales. In addition, there is a transformation going on related to business-to-business decision-makers. In Finland, the older and dominating generation is retiring and a younger generation of decision-makers are taking power in companies.

Tamminen continues:

- Although the level of automation is increasing in production and other functions, now and in future it will still be the human being who makes the buying decisions in technical sales. Tamminen highlights empathy, the ability to listen to the customer and be genuinely interested in the customer's pain points as crucial competences of a salesperson. If the salesperson possesses these competences, it

brings about a trustworthy atmosphere in a customer relationship.

According to Tamminen, sales is one of the hardest professions in the world. In Finland, however, selling as a profession is one the most undervalued jobs. This a very perplexing mind-set, as the problems and challenges of any organization and its operations tend to diminish if the company's sales are doing well. Hopefully, persistent sales education among other factors will eventually make a difference to this. Tamminen continues:

- I'm personally very satisfied with the input TUAS makes when educating future sales professionals. At international trade fairs I have met for example sales representatives from listed companies and I have often noticed behaviour that should be developed. TUAS sales education offers students the kind of basic elements that can be used even in export sales.

In Tamminen's view, sales is about performing and showing results, like sports. Every top athlete trains hard every day. However, in everyday working life there is not that much time for a salesperson to train selling.

Projecta's experienced salespeople will participate Turku Sales Competition in the roles of judges in the semi-finals and finals. This will offer them an opportunity to see, experience and even learn from the sales talents of the future. Turku Sales Competition is the kind of an event where every participant actually is a winner.

- If it does not kill you, it will only make you stronger! Just kidding, a performance during a competition is 100 times more stressful than real life business negotiations, clarifies Tamminen.





# Sales is also a Technique

**Timo Holopainen**

*Leader (Business Development), Principal Lecturer (Sales), TUAS*

**Mikael Tómasson**

*Former Project Coordinator at Sales Excellence Center, TUAS*

Combining the engineering know-how with sales skills and business knowledge will match the needs of the industry and strengthen the European economy in the long run. There is always work available for technical sales experts, which is why Turku University of Applied Science (TUAS) has increased the amount of sales training in its engineering degrees.

Sales skills are essential for everyone, even when not employed in sales. Selling is, in essence, part of everyone's daily life: we sell day after day our ideas, thoughts and opinions. In business life, sales skills are utilized everywhere, from recruitment to communications. For the future professionals, in addition to actual sales positions, the best way to train sales skills is participating in sales competitions.

The preparation for sales competitions is sales coaching, in which the theories of sales are put into practice through various role play and training scenarios. This is to strengthen the presentation, sales and negotiation skills, which then will be applied in the competition. When training for a sales meeting, the trainees will experience in reality what selling is and what it entails.

The common assumption that sales does not concern engineers sheds off piece by piece as the students practise in real and simulated sales meetings, boosting their self-confidence

at the same time. The image of sales is evolving from bursting out product features towards understanding the importance of listening to the customer and providing value that will match the customers' needs.

In 2017, engineering students from TUAS have already attended local, national and European sales competition and European Sales Engineering Team Competition (ESETC). TUAS sales engineering students have already won the local Turku Sales Competition and the Finnish national Best Seller Competition, and some students were part of the winning team of ESETC. The next sales coaching in English (part of the Sales Semester) at TUAS starts at the beginning of spring semester 2018, delivered by Principle Lecturer **Timo Holopainen**.



Learning selling skills in simulated sales situations.

# Innovation Competences: Consultative Jargon or Something More?

**Harri Lappalainen**  
*Senior Advisor, TUAS*

Who tells us what should we do here at universities? How do we know what kind of competences are needed out there when our students graduate? Basic yet first priority questions. How about we in Turku, how are we doing in this field? A spoiler: great! Just use two more minutes to find out one justification.

Most of the staff working at Finnish universities of applied sciences have a preceding career in industry or businesses. Their existing network provides valuable information on skill gaps and future labour needs. This micro-level knowledge can be cultivated to modernize the curricula, especially when supported with faculty and university-wide forecast processes



Mr. Lappalainen receiving a token of appreciation at an International Learning Conference in Indonesia.

and organs, such as advisory boards and alumni associations.

When speaking of guidance of educational institutions, regional authorities in Finland have relatively little importance compared to many other European countries. Therefore, the Ministry of Education and Culture is setting national level standards and guidance for all higher education institutions (HEI).

In the final end of the Finnish education framework is the European Commission. In late May 2017, the European Commission released a renewed EU agenda for higher education. It sets priorities for the forthcoming years for all those more than 5 000 HEIs that are committed to the joint European principles on organizing high quality and transparent higher education. From the viewpoint of Turku University of Applied Sciences (TUAS), I would like to make three main remarks:

1. The new strategy has four priorities, with which TUAS is already working very well in line.
2. The role of HEIs in innovation processes has more weight and importance than ever before. A logical continuum, underlined in the new agenda, is that HEIs should put much more effort on the development and assessment of students' innovation competences.

3. The renewed agenda is supported by the European Commission Staff Working Document, which explains in more detail what those 4 priorities mean in practice. Regarding the assessment of innovation capacity of students, the document states that out of all of the over 5 000 European universities, the only promising approach is the approach used at TUAS. This high-level acknowledgement to our systematic and persistent international research and development cooperation gives us a good backbone and even more energy to improve our performance in this field.

Looks like that we at TUAS are on the right track!

***Harri Lappalainen** is a passionate developer of higher education. His expertise is utilized by the European Commission as well as numerous universities and ministries around the world.*

\* A renewed EU agenda for higher education, see [https://ec.europa.eu/education/sites/education/files/he-com-2017-247\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/education/sites/education/files/he-com-2017-247_en.pdf)

\* Commission Staff Working Document, accompanying the renewed EU agenda for higher education, see [https://ec.europa.eu/education/sites/education/files/he-swd-2017-165\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/education/sites/education/files/he-swd-2017-165_en.pdf)

# FINCODA: Innovators from Universities to Companies

**Tarja Åberg**  
Project Manager

**Sini Jokiniemi**  
Principal Lecturer (Sales), Sales Excellence Center, TUAS

Would you like to hire an innovative future talent? Would you be curious to hear more about a joint development and assessment framework that enables smooth cooperation and communication between the educators and the recruiters or these future innovators? Wouldn't it be exciting if there were solutions available for creating a solid path for forthcoming innovators from universities to companies?

Participants of the FINCODA project have been working towards these goals since the project

started in January 2015. FINCODA (Framework for Innovation Competencies Development and Assessment) is an Erasmus+ and European Knowledge Alliance project, at the moment proceeding towards its final phase. The official launch day for the results will take place in Hamburg at the biannual CARPE conference on 17 November 2017.

Project Manager **Tarja Åberg** has been involved in the project for 18 months and represents Turku University of Applied Sciences (TUAS), the coordinating organization of FINCODA project. Sales and FINCODA go hand in hand according to Åberg:

– Working life needs skilled people who offer added value for businesses. In addition to subject skills, companies need people with general skills, such as innovation competences that are generic competences regardless of the exact job or the field of business. A sales person needs critical thinking and team working skills, initiative and creativity, as well as networking skills, just like a project manager in a different field of business needs at their job.

Åberg recognizes several target groups that will benefit from the project results:

– University students, university personnel, people working in companies – especially HR department and directors – and decision makers in innovation and education policy.

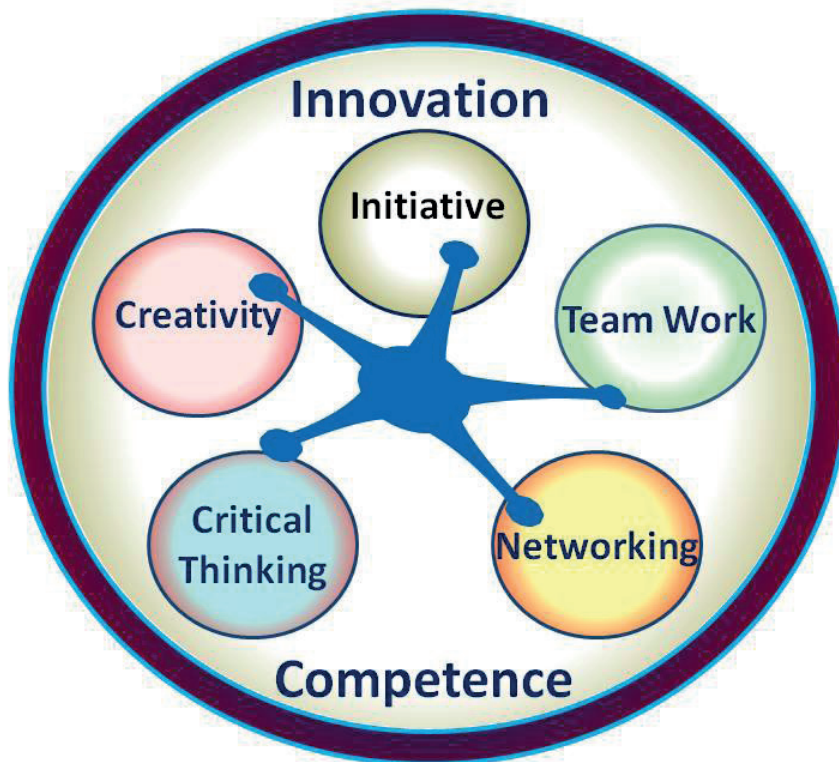


Project Manager Tarja Åberg. Photo: Aino Lindroos.



One of FINCODA's main outcomes is an identified five-dimension innovation competence model with 34 indicators. The model serves as a basis for understanding which generic competences are needed in working life now and in future. Based on the innovation competence model, a FINCODA Innovation Barometer Assessment Tool has been developed. It is a psychometric tool that measures individuals' capacity for innovation. In addition to the online application, FINCODA will produce several remarkable and tangible outputs, such as an online toolkit for behaviour assessment related to innovation.

innovation competence development. The traditional one-dimensional role for a teacher to act as a lecturer no longer works. The assessment tool helps teachers in assessing work but also requires understanding of how, when and whom to assess and how to utilize the results. And of course, teachers at universities are the target group, as well, not only students. In FINCODA project team, there are highly skilled academic people involved, who have offered their skills and resource for FINCODA's benefit. The FINCODA project has provided a good platform for research work on subjects such as how the innovation competences of



© FINCODA UPV-SEE-CSP team (2017). *Innovation Competence Model*

The FINCODA outputs will challenge the traditional ways of teaching and learning. Teachers need to be curious and willing to challenge their ways of working, to act as a coach, mentor and an enabler in field of

the students develop in different learning environments.

Moreover, universities should offer learning environments that support the development

of innovation competences and provide the possibility for assessing the competence development with the help of the Innovation Barometer Assessment Tool. This way, companies will have readier, more value-adding employees to work for their business. On their behalf, companies can utilize the assessment tool for their recruits and for the competence development follow-up within their workforce.

Participation in the FINCODA project has offered Åberg all sorts of benefits, which are likely to be recognized also by the other project participants:

- The international aspect and partners from different universities and companies. To get to know people from different cultures with different backgrounds. To participate a common project with universities and companies. To be able to share the great moments with the team and to participate in an excellent project with brilliant results.

Åberg remarks that these kind of positive effects should not be taken for granted. She offers the following advice for project

organizations to enable a good project:

- Build an open communication environment, keep the focus of the project simple: scope, schedule and budget! Define the roles and responsibilities clearly, keep the scope. Take out the potential of the participants and organizations, and take care of the handover of the results of the project early enough before the project ends.

FINCODA is an extensive project totality with partners from five different countries, different universities and companies in Europe. The project is led by TUAS, and the involved universities are the CARPE members, i.e. Hamburg University of Applied Sciences (Germany), University of Applied Sciences Utrecht (the Netherlands), Manchester Metropolitan University (UK) and Universitat Politècnica de València (Spain). Business partners represent innovation intensive companies from five different corners of Europe, i.e. Finland, UK, the Netherlands, Germany and Spain.

For more information: <https://www.fincoda.eu/>



Co-funded by the  
Erasmus+ Programme  
of the European Union



# INTENSE – Entering New Markets Successfully

***Sini Jokiniemi***

Principal Lecturer (Sales) at TUAS, Sales Excellence Center

Innovation, entrepreneurship and internationalization form the core of the fascinating INTENSE project. The Erasmus+ funded project INTENSE – INTERNATIONAL Entrepreneurship Skills Europe combines the united inputs of five European countries and universities: Hochschule für Technik und Wirtschaft (HTW), Germany; Hogeschool Utrecht (HU), The Netherlands; University Colleges Leuven Limburg (UCLL), Belgium; Turku University of Applied Sciences (TUAS),

Finland; and J.J. Strossmayer University of Osijek, Faculty of Economics (EFOS), Croatia. Small and medium sized companies, students and universities will benefit from the various activities that focus on entering foreign markets successfully.

A practical example: a Dutch company will work with a Dutch student group that will help the Dutch company to enter the Croatian market, and at the same time, a Croatian student



Lecturers Sirpa Hänti and Helena Rantanen. Photo: Aino Lindroos.

group will conduct market research to further facilitate the Dutch company's market entry in Croatia. During its course, the INTENSE project will also measure and analyse the innovation competencies of teachers and professors, students and company representatives working in an international context.

Principal lecturer **Sirpa Hänti** (TUAS) came up with the original idea for the INTENSE project in 2013 and first sold the preliminary thoughts to her colleague Senior Lecturer **Helena Rantanen**. The duo presented their white paper to CARPE alliance members in Manchester, England. Encouraged by the warm welcome for their ideas, Hänti and Rantanen kept networking and asking for leads for potential project partners. Their European tour covered Belgium, Germany and Croatia. The intensive networking paid off in 2015 when a project consortium was formed and the first project proposal was submitted. After some updating, the second submission was accepted in 2016.

– Just the thought of students from different countries working together in multinational project groups is exciting, describes Hänti, who appreciates an innovative project setting.

Rantanen is equally enthusiastic:

– The combination of both export and import activities is fascinating. We have now started working with a group of nine Finnish bachelor students and their feeling index shows a very positive attitude.

In addition to working with companies, the student groups in each country will test and challenge the contents of a new learning module, equalling 15 ECTS credits. The module consists of various courses focusing on e.g. market-entry, networking, market and cultural analysis, purchasing and selling, as well as

project management, and the first draft of the module has been constructed as a combined contribution from teachers and professors involved in the INTENSE project.

TUAS hosted INTENSE participants – teachers and professors – for one week in August 2017. INTENSE Project Coordinator **Christina Saulich** from HTW Berlin quickly pinpoints several exciting factors:

– The INTENSE project network itself is important. The project also offers a novel role for the universities as they can act as new kinds of local agents: First of all, they bring together companies and local students. Secondly, they bring together companies that have not been working together previously. These new regional networks together form a European-wide supporting network of students, universities and companies.

Manager Innovation **Willem Klijnsstra** from Utrecht HU has an impressive business background and offers especially international business experience to the project. Klijnsstra foresees a need for selling skills as it comes to integrating the project activities and results to a wider network of users:

– All the project participants need to actively 'sell' and promote the project activities internally at their home universities: to their colleagues and supervisors. Managers in each university will need to 'buy' the forthcoming INTENSE outputs and support their integration to the official curricula. The integration will guarantee the longevity of the project and its results.

Both Saulich and Klijnsstra underline that the INTENSE project is an open source programme, promoting open access. This means that the project outcomes can be utilized free-of-charge by any interested university.



The cultural highlight of the INTENSE week in Turku in August 2017 was the authentic Finnish sauna experience combined with swimming in the Baltic Sea. In addition to local kick-offs for the project, the official project kick-off for all student groups will be held in Utrecht, The Netherlands in late November 2017. Utrecht will host students and their teachers from all project countries for a week.

For more information of the project:  
<http://intense.efos.hr>



Christina Sautlich and Willem Klijnsstra. Photo: Aino Lindroos.

## SELLING SALES

Products and services seldom sell themselves. What is needed is a team of sales professionals listening to customer needs and offering solutions for various ends. As a result of successful selling and buying, TUAS has hosted student groups from e.g. Singapore and China.

# Sales Team at TUAS Ready to Make a Deal

**Aino Lindroos**

*Project Coordinator at Sales Excellence Center, TUAS*

Turku University of Applied Sciences (TUAS) provides high quality, flexible education, plays a key role in the field of multidisciplinary applied research, development and innovation, and offers solutions to individuals and companies in the form of trainings, consulting services and projects as well as laboratory and other services.

The Sales Team at the faculty of Technology, Environment and Business offers solutions for customers to improve their processes, people and performance. The solutions to customers can take the form of trainings, education, large development projects, RDI projects, or student projects and services.

The product portfolio of the faculty of Technology, Environment and Business includes solutions ranging from construction

engineering to business development, mechanical and automotive engineering, sustainable development, circular economy, sales, service design, innovation pedagogy, financing, lean, laboratory services, automation technology, logistics and robotics.

The Sales Team at the faculty of Technology, Environment and Business generates opportunities for our professionals and students to increase working life cooperation in the form of products, projects, opportunities and support. The Sales team is led by **Kristiina Meltovaara**, Head of Education and Research. All sales related activities are coordinated by **Timo Holopainen**, Leader of Education and Research in Business Development and Principal Lecturer in Sales. Our customer responsible **Sinikka Leino** takes care of new and existing customers and sells services,

while our sales Coordinator **Tomi Juhala** assists with marketing and development of sales and after sales processes. Senior Advisor **Harri Lappalainen** coordinates our international efforts.

For more information:  
timo.holopainen@turkuamk.fi  
sinikka.leino@turkuamk.fi



Senior Advisor Harri Lappalainen. Photo: Martti Komulainen.



Timo Holopainen; Sinikka Leino, Tomi Juhala and Kristiina Meltovaara (photos: Aino Lindroos).



## Sales and Purchasing Excellence Week

21st - 23rd of November 2017

#Excellence  
In Action

### Tuesday Nov 21st

Turku Sales Competition Day  
Venue Sepänkatu Campus

### Wednesday Nov 22nd

Business Impact Day &  
Excellence in Purchasing and Sales  
Venue ICT City

### Thursday Nov 23rd

Erasmus lectures for students  
Venue Sepänkatu Campus



# Student Group from Singapore Meets TUAS Teaching Methods and Circular Economy

**Martti Komulainen**

*Communications Leader and Project Manager, TUAS*

Picking berries in the forest, corporate visits, group assignments. The multidisciplinary group of students from Singapore was immersed in circular economy during a course implemented by using the methods of innovation pedagogy, a learning approach developed at Turku University of Applied Sciences (TUAS).

The Singaporean students are seemingly inspired and motivated. They have explored circular economy for over a week from various perspectives, such as sustainable food systems. They have even gone blueberry picking in the forest and got to know the Finnish public right of access.



Singaporean students at a workshop. Photo: Martti Komulainen



– The students are very active and ready for this practical way of studying in which the student has an active role. In other words, for studying that follows the principles of innovation pedagogy, says **Piia Nurmi**, Research and Education Leader at TUAS and the leader of the course.

In addition to the Singaporeans, four TUAS students from different fields of study participated in the course. The Singaporean students, as well, are a happy mixture of different fields of study. And that was the purpose, too: a multidisciplinary group can access the core of innovation pedagogy, which is to combine different perspectives and work on ideas in a multidisciplinary manner.

### **Innovation pedagogy attracts interest abroad**

During this course, circular economy – a practice to decrease consumption and the amount of litter and waste material – provides a context for learning. However, it is the multidisciplinary and practical learning approach of TUAS called

innovation pedagogy that has attracted this group of students to Finland.

Innovation pedagogy is a method or, more accurately, a learning approach developed at TUAS and aiming at enhancing the innovation competences of students. This refers to, for example, group working abilities, international competence, communications skills as well as the ability to act as part of a multidisciplinary team. An important aspect of learning is to learn by doing in practice, for instance in projects implemented as assignments for businesses. This 'real-world way of learning' convinced also **Sylvia Ler**, Director of Student Development Office at Ngee Ann Polytechnic, who says that the course met their expectations perfectly.

The purpose of Ngee Ann Polytechnic is to promote students' cross-disciplinary and innovative thinking as well as to offer experiences from abroad through Overseas Merit Fellowship (OMF) programme. This year, 40 out of 300 applicants were selected, and 20 came to Turku.



Singaporean students in action. Photo: Martti Komulainen.

# Being International in Turku: Experiences of Tutoring Chinese Students

**Piia Harvonen**

*Mechanical Engineering Student, TUAS*

**Timo Holopainen**

*Leader (Business Development), Principal Lcture (Sales), TUAS*

Turku University of Applied Sciences (TUAS) negotiated with Tianjin University of Technology for the academic year 2017–2018 to host a group of 12 Chinese students as part of the international export activities of TUAS. During their visit, the Chinese students would spend the autumn semester at the faculty of Technology, Environment and Business studying sales and entrepreneurship. In the spring 2018, the students will join TUAS Business Academy. All the practical matters related to the arrival were arranged by the TUAS International Office and the faculty Sales Team. Industrial Management and Engineering student **Inka Martin** took the main responsibility of the arrangements, and very soon mechanical engineering student **Piia Harvonen** joined the tutoring team for the Chinese, led by Principle Lecturer **Timo Holopainen**.

– I have some experience of the Chinese culture so I thought I might be able to help. At least I knew the campus and the selection at the local China market, Piia explains.

The students arrived to Turku on three separate days. The first student came alone on 23 August. The two tutors met him at the railway station, and from there he was taken with the bus to Varissuo, where his dorm accommodation was located.

The following day, two tutors headed to the bus station with a self-assured mind-set to pick up the next students. Upon arrival, it was noticed that every student had at least two large pieces of luggage with them. In addition, two of the six arriving students were missing, since they had taken the train instead. After a bit of a struggle with the luggage and quick locating the two missing students, another bus ride to Varissuo took place. Every other bus passenger were understanding with the 13 pieces of luggage, smiling warmly at the travelling team. By the time the last group of students arrived in Turku, the tutoring team had learned their lesson and took a taxi.

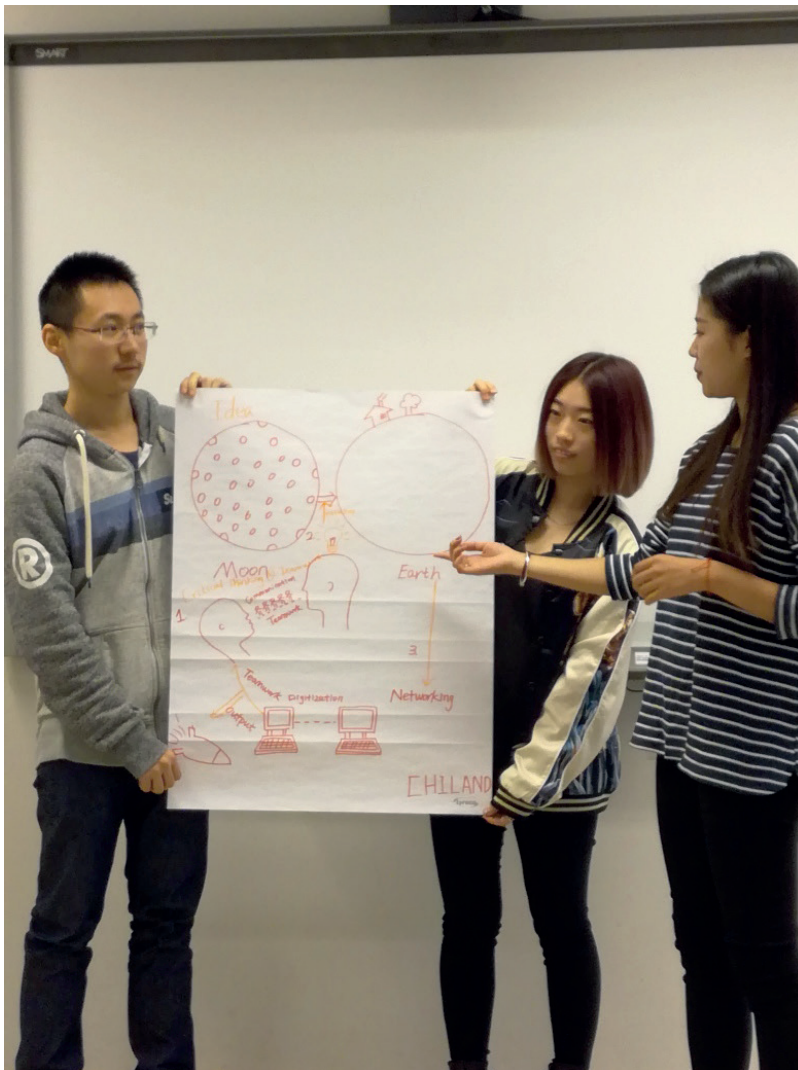
After the arrival to Varissuo and locating the dorm rooms, the visiting students were introduced to the homeware starting packages and information packages that Inka had put together. After the initial introduction, the food related cultural collision occurred. Once helping the students to buy food and other necessary goods, another challenge arose with the language (everything was in Finnish) and types of food, since the only Finnish food the Chinese students knew were potatoes and chocolate. However, the group managed to locate familiar food items and confirm the fact

that one really can drink tap water in Finland.  
– I thought I knew a lot about the Chinese culture but there was a lot to learn from the get-go: like the fact that even if I wanted to greet the students in Chinese and use their original names, one's pronunciation can be a 'bit' different and students could not understand my Chinese, Piia continues.

With these and other adventures, the tutoring team learned what an international experience is all about. It is not that one needs to speak perfect English or another language, not that one needs to be an expert in your own or another culture, and it is not even about perfect

preparation. The key things are related to your ability to be present and to be able to ask and give help. It's all about attitude, and the ability to adopt and learn.

– I feel grateful for this unexpected opportunity to be a tutor. My goal is to at least send the exchange students off with a proper 'goodbye' in Chinese, while keeping the cultural matters I've learned in mind. This has been an important learning experience. At the end of each tutoring day, Inka and myself felt like we had done something a little more worthwhile than usual, concludes Piia Harvonen.



Chinese students at work after arriving in Turku. Photo: Timo Holopainen.

## GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES ON SELLING

Selling can be approached in many ways: as interpersonal interaction between two or more people, as an attempt to enter the global consumer marketplace with one's unique products, as an efficient means of forming networks and ensuring a competitive edge, or as a content for a Bachelor's degree. With these themes the following articles take us from Japan to Belgium and via Austria back to Finland.

# Building Relationships with Your Customers through Coaching-Based Interaction

**Kazuko Deno**

*Ph.D. Student, MBA, Certified Professional Co-Active Coach; Kwansei Gakuin University  
Institute of Business and Accounting, Japan*

Although many researches have recognized the importance of relationship marketing, the necessary elements to build the relationships with customers are so far not yet completely identified. I have been trying to find a framework for relationship building by analysing the coaching approaches used by coaches during their sessions with clients.

Last year, I joined the Sales Excellence Week event at Turku University of Applied Sciences (TUAS) and learned the idea of making use of the Social Style in sales. The Social Style is the behavioural patterns recognized by people around. It is measured through three dimensions of human behaviour: assertiveness,

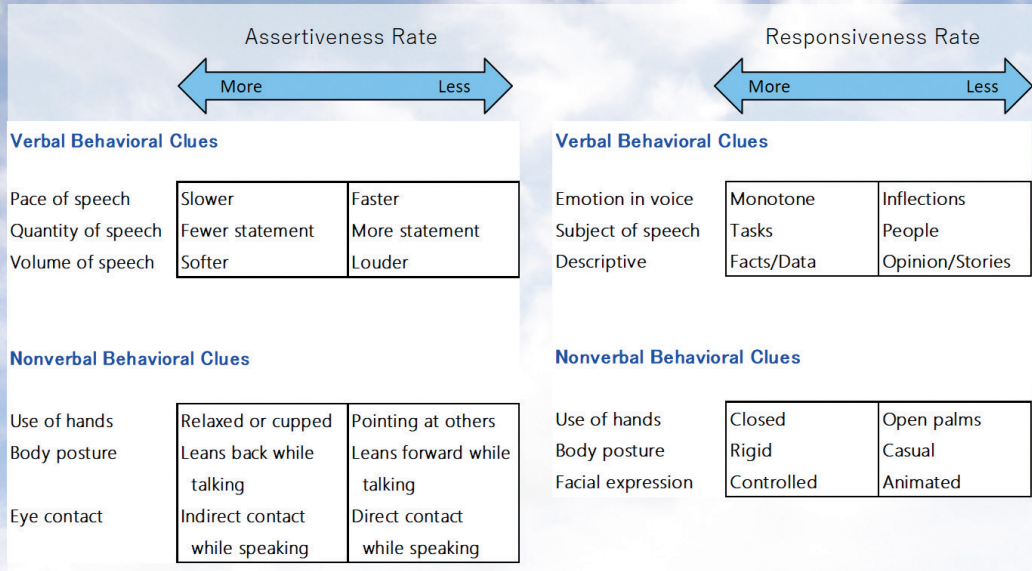
responsiveness and versatility (the extra concept of Social Style, key factor for success). See the picture 'How to identify the Social Style' on the next page.

The idea of social styles inspired me to combine the Social Style and coaching theory for finding clues for effective personal interaction. From my coaching experience, I thought that although each individual coach uses their own personal set of social styles and behaves on their basis, coaches may adapt their behaviour according to the coachee's needs and styles.

The key factor affecting one's willingness to change between social styles based on

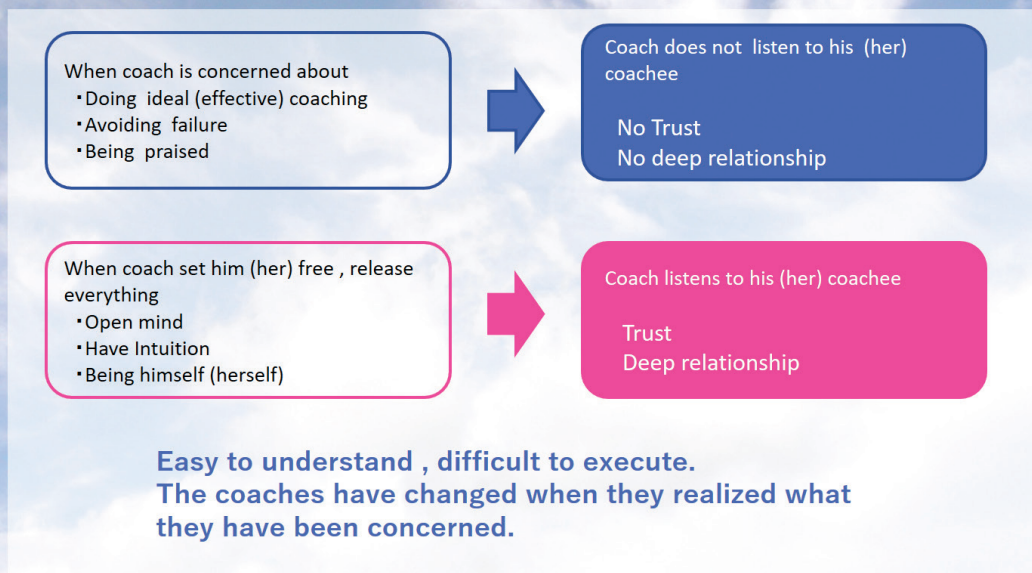


# How to identify the Social Style



PERSONAL STYLES & EFFECTIVE PERFORMANCE, D. W. Merrill & . R. H. Reid, 1999

Identifying Social Styles.



Summary of coach interviews.

the coachee's social style might be found by examining the difficulties and the changes the coaches experience when coaching. Therefore, I have empirically scrutinized the social styles of five coaches who use a co-active approach when coaching. During the interviews I posed e.g. the following questions:

1. Why have you learned coaching?
2. What made you uneasy during the session?
3. How did you overcome the difficulty?

Four out of five interviewees stated that after participating a course on coaching by the Coaching Institution, they have begun to pay attention to and change between their social styles (the picture on the previous page provides a summary of the coach interviews).

In practice, the coaches have changed their social styles when they have noticed becoming

concerned during the coaching session. The result of this research could serve as a clue to construct an effective theoretical and practical model to be adopted by sales representatives, as well.

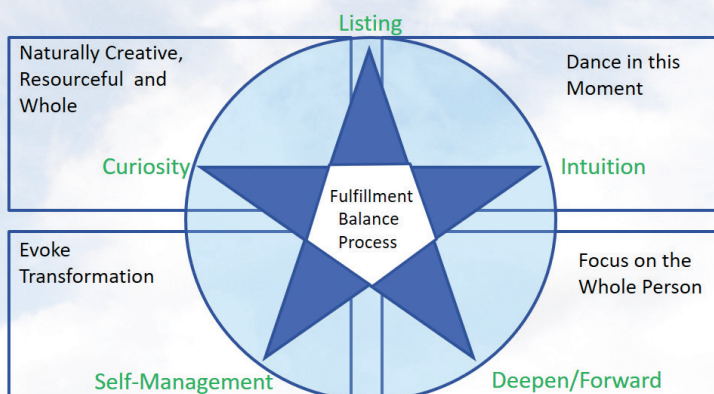
Each coach has learned not only coaching principles but also about versatility through coaching training and practice (see 'The Co-Active Model' below).

According to the interviews with the coaches, they tend to overcome difficulties during a coaching session by relying on the process of versatility, including the following four steps:

1. Know yourself = feedback, awareness
2. Control yourself = self-management
3. Know others = listening
4. Do something for others = coaching conversation

## The Co-Active model

- Created by the founders of the Coaching Training Institute (CTI), found in 1992
- Supporting people to make life-giving and life-changing choices



CO-ACTIVE COACHING third edition, H. Kimsey-House et al, 2016

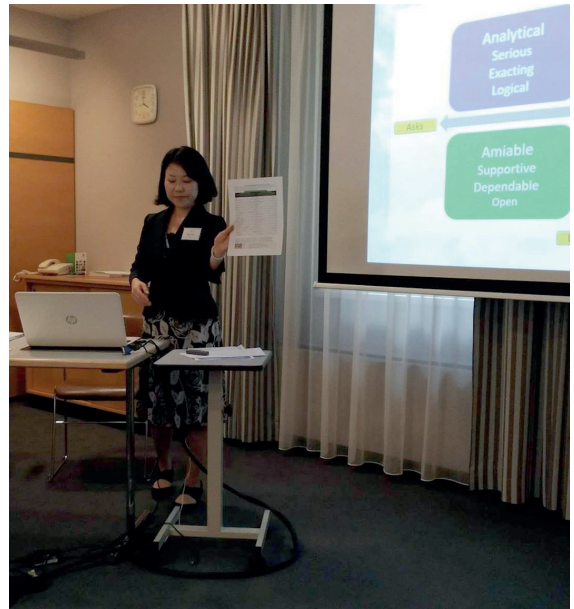
The Co-Active Model – created by the founders of the Coaching Training Institute (CTI), founded in 1992.

I think that coaching practices stimulate transformation of the coaches as well as coachees. In summary, learning coaching skills and principles bring on versatility. Moreover, coachees regard coaches as more trustworthy when the coach focuses on the coachee as a whole, not only on what the coachee says or should say aloud. The whole 'being' of the coach is the key of building a relationship.

My conclusion is that the effective way of training a sales representative, based on coaching-related insights, could be:

- Adapting one's social styles
- Having a coach
- Being a coach

*This article is based on a presentation offered at the MIRDEC 5th VIENNA, Conference on Social Science, Sept 2017.*



Kazuko Deno giving her presentation at MIRDEC Conference in Vienna, Austria, 2017.

# Semi-Vertical Integration between Companies

**Dylan Van den Bremd**

*Bachelor Student, Hogent Belgium*

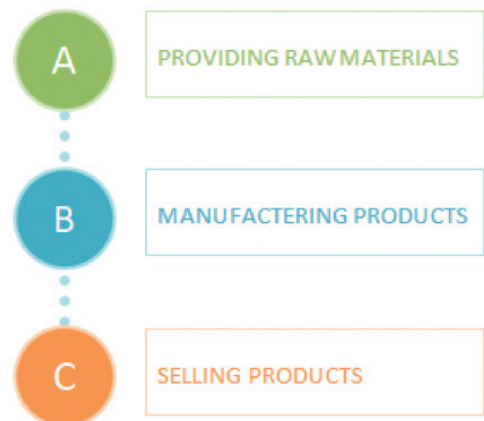
Small businesses often struggle to handle the competition with bigger companies, which tend to grow and grow, giving the smaller businesses a hard time. The following article will focus on such a solution for this problem that allows these smaller businesses to become worthy competitors in the market by creating the ideal financial situation for them to grow and expand their business. In this context, I will disagree with the famous saying 'divide and conquer' and advise to 'unite and conquer' instead.

Since this article will be covering the topic of 'vertical integration', which is an already existing term that I have come to know through strategic management classes, the textbook of this course will be used as a reference. All references can be found at the end of this article. Besides 'vertical integration', this article will also be covering 'semi-vertical integration'. This is a new concept that is solely based on my own ideas and thinking, which explains the lack of references for this part of the article.

## What is vertical integration?

Before explaining how semi-vertical integration (SVI) works and what it consists of, it is important to know what vertical integration is. With the help of the following schemes, the basics of vertical integration will be demonstrated. The diagram below shows a simplified version of a production chain that

depends on different companies, in order to, for instance, be converted from raw materials into a finished product that can be sold to customers.



The workings of a traditional product chain.

The housing industry is an excellent example to show the working of these product chains. In order to deliver the finished product (a house) to the client, different parties depend on each other to finalize the product. The soil must be decontaminated, the main construction needs to be build, after which the electricians and plumbers will do their jobs, followed up by interior works.

All these different tasks are mostly accomplished by many different businesses.



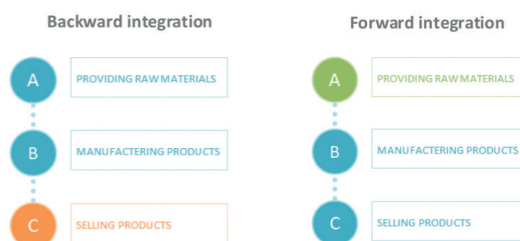
In other words, each business takes care of one part in the product chain. A delivers the first part of the product (e.g. providing of raw materials, decontaminating of the soil where a house shall be build). After this, B can add value to the finished product of A (creating the product, building the house). Finally, C (the broker, salesman) can sell the product to the customers. It is important to know that even though we only use three different parties in this example, the number of involved parties can be much higher, depending on the business that you run.

All these different parties add value to the finalized product; each party does this with its own knowledge and skills. In some way they need each other in order for their own businesses to exist. However, being dependant on another company is not always the best case scenario when you have to compete.

When a business is successful, they have to option to invest in and expand their business. For example: B has had a very successful year and wants to expand their business. They notice that one of the bigger costs comes from the purchase of raw materials, which is necessary for manufacturing the product. However, company B can bring down their costs by deciding to provide their own raw materials instead of buying them from A. This will possibly allow B to set itself in a better position than the businesses that still have to buy their raw materials from A.

In other words, B will integrate a part of the product chain into its own business, instead of letting another business manage this part of the product chain. When a previous part of the product chain is integrated into the business, we can speak of backward integration. The current position in the product chain will be expanded backwards. When the part of

the product chain that follows on the current position in the product chain, we speak of forward integration. The current position in the product chain will then be expanded forwards. The following diagrams offer a visual representation of these concepts.



Backward and forward integration.

In order to successfully vertically integrate (backwards or forwards) a part of the product chain into your own business, two things are essential: knowledge and capital. Vertical integration requires enough capital to allow the company to buy the right equipment and machinery to manufacture the product parts, materials and corresponding items that were earlier provided by another company. Besides that, this capital also allows the company to create a brain drain into the company, as people with the right knowledge to operate within this new branch of the business will be needed.

Knowing all of the above, it is rather evident that vertical integration is more often used by bigger, more established companies than smaller businesses or start-ups. This allows bigger companies to keep growing until the point in which they do not need to worry about the competition, while the smaller companies have hard time keeping their business alive.

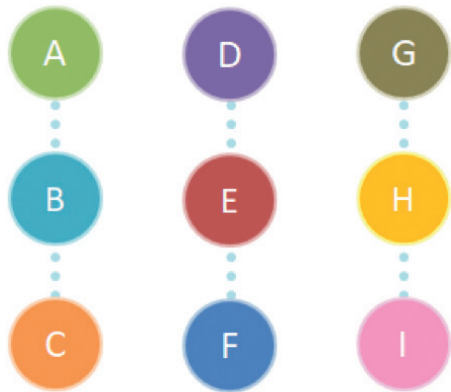
This is where my adaptation of the vertical integration process, that is the semi-vertical integration, makes a big difference. This strategy allows even the smallest businesses to invest

in the future and let their business grow, thus becoming worthy competitors in the market. The following part of this article will focus thoroughly on how semi-vertical integration works and on the positive effects it may have on your business's sales; this is presented by using adaptations of the diagrams that were previously used for explaining the basics of vertical integration. (Heene, Vanhaverbeke & Vermeylen, 2015)

**What is semi-vertical integration?**

As I have mentioned earlier, the vertical integration process requires a lot of capital that allows the company to acquire the right equipment and knowledge. This creates a problem for smaller businesses. However, semi-vertical integration focuses on a solution that eliminates the financial problem. Semi-vertical integration is a process where different parties will collaborate in order to integrate a part of the product chain that they share into their businesses. This method will require a lot of negotiating and bargaining in order to find the ideal situation for all involved parties. With the following example, the basics of semi-vertical integration will be explained.

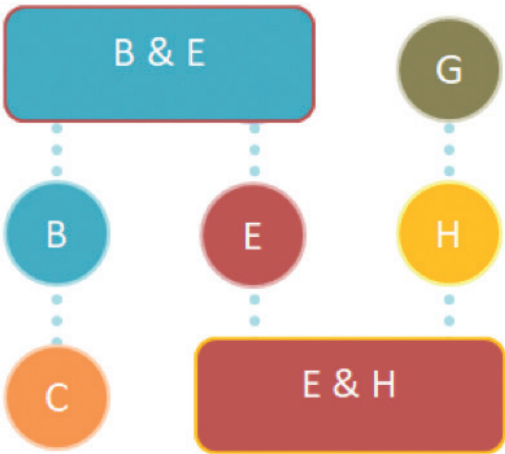
Following the same build-up as the previous examples, the product chains will consist of three different chains. However, instead of focusing on a single completed product chain, this time we will concentrate on three different product chains.



Three independent product chains (A-B-C, D-E-F, and G-H-I).

In the diagram above, three product chains are displayed. The first product chain consists of businesses A, B and C. The second product chain consists of businesses D, E and F. The last product chain consists of businesses G, H and I. In this example, all businesses that are located on the same level fulfil the same task within their own product chain. This means that businesses A, D and G focus on e.g. providing raw materials or decontaminating the soil. Businesses B, E and H focus on e.g. manufacturing the product, building construction, etc.

Assuming that company B and E are small businesses and both have had a successful year, they might think about expanding their business. However, it would most likely be impossible to integrate a part of the product chain into the companies because they both have an insufficient amount of capital.



Partial semi-vertical integration.

Assuming that both companies really want to expand their business, no matter what, they could engage in semi-vertical integration. In this case, B and E merge their capital to integrate a part of the product chain that they will operate together. In other words, instead of company B buying products from company A and company E buying products from company D, B and E integrate this part of the product chain into their businesses by forming a cooperation mechanism as shown in the visual representation above.

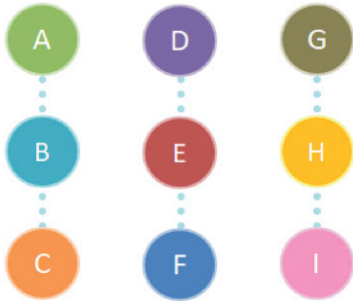
Assuming that company E had a much more successful year than company B, the company can decide to engage in more than one semi-vertical integration process. Assuming that company H also had a successful year, E and H can perform a forward semi-vertical integration within their own product chains. This means

that E and H will build a cooperation to jointly manage the tasks that were earlier accomplished by companies F and I.

It is important to remember that these collaborations are not limited to two companies working together. The collaboration is not limited by numbers; instead, there may be as many different parties as needed. This will allow the different parties to spread the costs even more.

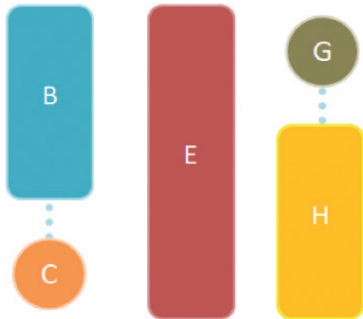
Looking at each product chain individually, the following evolution has occurred.

Before SVI



Before semi-vertical integration.

After SVI



After semi-vertical integration.

By cooperating with companies B and H, company E has managed to integrate each chain into its own product chain, while B and H still depend on other companies to complete their product chain. Therefore, the cooperating companies will still be able to compete with each other.

Returning to the example, the semi-vertical integration will have caused the following evolution:

Companies B and E have formed a cooperation which provides raw materials. Company G will be their competitor, providing raw materials in subcontract for company H. Companies B, E and H will manufacture the product separately, which creates space to compete with each other. Afterwards, companies E and H will form a cooperation focusing on selling the product (for instance, showrooms, marketing campaigns, adverts or packaging). Company B, on the other hand, will allow company C to sell the products that B manufactured.

It is important to understand that semi-vertical integration will only occur when the involved parties find the ideal situation. In other words, the cooperation has to allow the involved companies to keep competing with each other. Otherwise there will be no benefit from the semi-vertical integration. The cooperation only exists in one part of the product chain; in other parts, the involved companies keep their independency.

### **The positive effects of SVI on your sales?**

Before engaging in semi-vertical integration, it is good to be aware of the positive effects it brings on your sales. First of all, we have focused on the reduction of capital needed for performing a semi-vertical integration. This means that the capital saved by cooperating with other companies can be used for other purposes. Due to this, more capital may flow

to the sales department, marketing campaigns, construction of new stores or warehouses and corresponding functions.

Besides that, the collaborations allow the company to expand their network. A bigger network could possibly mean that other semi-vertical integrations may be occurring in the future. This will have a positive effect on the sales-numbers by no doubt. A bigger network, with other possible semi-vertical integrations could also mean more variety within the offered products and expanding to new markets.

Knowing all of the above, semi-vertical integration could be just what your company has been looking for. With more and more new companies being established each year, the solution to starting a successful business may be found by focusing on cooperating rather than competing with all other businesses.

### **References:**

Heene, A., Vanhaverbeke, J. & Vermeylen, S. (2015). *Praktijkboek strategie: Routeplan voor het ontwikkelen van een werkbare bedrijfsstrategie*. (5de druk). Leuven: LannooCampus.



Dylan Van den Bremdt, student at HoGent, Belgium.



# How Luxury Entrepreneurs and Businesses Can Go Global

**Jukka Aminoff**

*Board Member, Author, Master of Arts*

The rise of the Internet provides plenty of possibilities to go both nationwide and global. However, let us go back in time. Prior to the current online environment, marketing and advertising was extremely expensive. It was also slow and hard to expand personal networks. Hence, marketing meant high costs, which may be the reason for some people still being very poor in marketing; they do not realize that the landscape has changed. They might still remember logos that cost over 10 000 euro. Creating a simple ad to a newspaper easily cost over 60 000 euro. Nowadays, these sums seem totally absurd. These days, high-cost ads may be accepted if the logo designers and ad-makers are superstars in their own fields.

Thanks to smart devices, computer software and other new technologies, it is extremely easy to practise sales and marketing both nationwide and globally. It has been said that this is the best time to start a business, be an entrepreneur and do business. Everyone with the access to the Internet can set up websites without any cost and establish social media channels. Royalty free pictures and videos can be used to make ads. It is even possible to use marketing automation systems without any charge. Networking is made very easy, with opportunities for nationwide and global networking. Benefits of the current digital environment are endless.

The current digital environment was designed to free people and open new opportunities for small businesses. Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, LinkedIn, Twitter, Google+, Skype and others provide powerful tools for individuals and SMEs. But here is the dilemma. SMEs have been extremely poor in using these services. When some actors have used them in a correct way, they have achieved remarkable results; expanded their private networks, gained nationwide and global partners and customers, and also increased the awareness of their brand, both personal and company.

Even local actors can reach to local partners and customers if they decide to embrace digital marketing. A single social media update can reach thousands of people, and updates are free of charge. Targeted advertising is an extremely affordable way to reach new customers and enhance re-purchases. Designers, artisans, artists, restaurants, night clubs, museums, art galleries, local beverage brands and many others have been able to practise marketing with a personal touch, which is not possible for large brands. Small actors have true advantage over bigger ones due to their opportunity to be extremely distinguishable in the marketplace with a quirky touch.

Small brands always say that they do not have the required financial resources to produce stunning visuals. However, it is possible to create stunning pictures and videos even with a

single smart device. For creative minds who like to write, take pictures and shoot videos, this is your time to shine because the possibilities are endless. The only limitation is your own mind. Hence, be creative. You can even bypass the whole advertising industry by producing your own marketing materials. There is a number of creative freelancers who may become a part of your team.

Let us not forget internal bureaucracy. A large consumer industry brand had one year ago an internal discussion on whether they should open an Instagram account. The year was already 2016. It took them over six months to open a single social media account. Moreover, the six months was not even the worst part. Instagram was founded in 2010, which means they were already several years late. Large brands are always slow, which means that SMEs have a true competitive advantage over

larger ones. The only problem SMEs have is a low self-esteem. When they realize their market environment, they will become empowered winning brands.

The biggest advantage comes here: SMEs can build personal relationships with their customers and other stakeholder groups. For actors with fluent social skills, it is extremely easy to build personal and company networks. Social capital is the most important thing in the current marketplace, as those who know how to read and analyse their customers, partners, employees and others can reach a sustainable competitive edge in the marketplace. Business has always been about human-to-human relationships, but in the digital environment, it is possible to 'scale' this knowhow. Therefore, be yourself and be genuine. When you give love and care, it comes back to you - always.



Board Member and Author Jukka Aminoff. Photo: Mikko Käkälä.

# Marketing & Sales Education @ the University of Applied Sciences Wiener Neustadt

**Johannes Reiterer**

*Mag.(FH), MA, Lecturer at the University of Applied Sciences Wiener Neustadt, Austria*

The University of Applied Sciences Wiener Neustadt was established in 1994 as the first of its kind in Austria. Its general aim is to combine academic studies with practically oriented education suited to the business and technology sectors. Today, the university has built up its reputation of excellence and is internationally recognized. It currently consists of five faculties (Business, Engineering, Health Studies, Security and Sports) and has about 3 600 students enrolled.

The Business faculty encompasses several specialized fields that offer German and English speaking study programmes. The Marketing and Sales Department led by Prof. (FH) Mag. Dr. **Karl Pinczolits** is responsible for the marketing and sales related courses in the business degree programme, and it represents the biggest department of the faculty in terms of number of students and employees. Currently the department supervises about 600 students across seven different bachelor and master programmes. All of these students attend courses concerning the topics marketing and sales.

The curriculum of the programmes includes Key, Large and Global Account Management, Customer Relationship Management, Sales Controlling, Sales Management and more. A

further focal point is the customer insight approach, which is covered by numerous courses as well as by various projects that students work on individually.



The unique sales laboratory.

The students are trained in sales behaviour and negotiation techniques in a state-of-the-art sales lab, which is unique in the educational sector in Austria. The laboratory is equipped with a skin resistance measurement instrument, an infrared thermography to measure the body temperature, a sphygmomanometer and an observation room. The students also learn about the customer typology and try to interpret the observable behaviour. Based on their interpretation, the students can adapt to the specific customer type, for example a more rational customer needs to be convinced via

facts and figures. In the first term of the master programme the students conduct plenty of role plays at the sales lab. Students are confronted with challenging sales situations and are motivated to apply advanced negotiation techniques in dealing with unexpected customer reactions. The students analyse the hidden biological reactions, for example the changes in the thermal image. Every face-to-face sales meeting is video recorded, for documentation and in-depth analysis of customer behaviour during the conversation.

The first purely sales related programme on a master level in Austria, called 'Sales Management for Technical Products and Services', was developed in order to serve the industry needs of tech-affine sales people in Austria. In this programme, students learn about sales through practically-oriented exercises and by developing projects in close cooperation with our company partners, for example Samsung Electronics Austria, B. Braun Austria and Oracle Austria GmbH. All sales courses are taught by corporate experts with a strong background in sales.

The unique combination of marketing, market communication, market research and sales provides students with the essential skill set required to succeed in a national or international business environment. Accordingly, the focus is on the cooperation with companies and other universities in the field of Sales Management in order to provide a curriculum that connects with potential employers in the field of sales.



Participation at the European Sales Competition 2017 in Edinburgh (Scotland) with Master students.

In addition to the regular curriculum, students have the opportunity to participate in special sales trainings. Students can sign up for the training programme 'Advanced International Selling', in which they prepare for national and international sales competitions.

In the past, our students achieved to be ranked as one of the top five students. It is the perfect way to train their skills, compete and compare notes with other sales students from all over the world.



Sales Force #1 Event themed 'Cycle of Sales'.



Another networking opportunity is the sales association 'Sales Force #1' founded 1998 by Prof. (FH) Mag. Dr. Karl Pinczolit with the aim to connect students, graduates and business partners and provide a platform for networking. Every year the bachelor programme students organize an event where sales studies

(conducted by the department) are presented with a subsequent get-together.

The University of Applied Sciences Wiener Neustadt was rated by the Sales Education Foundation as one of the top universities for professional sales education in Europe.



**FACHHOCHSCHULE  
WIENER NEUSTADT**  
Austrian Network for Higher Education

# Journal of Excellence in Sales

Sales Excellence Center combines the needs of the businesses in the region with students' input and world-class research on sales. Excellence Centers put together and develop the education, RDI activities and services of Turku University of Applied Sciences. The Journal of Excellence in Sales is a part of the activities of the Sales Excellence Center.

**Publisher:**

Turku University of Applied Sciences  
Joukahaisenkatu 3  
20520 Turku, Finland

**Printed by:**

Painotalo Painola, Turku 2017

**ISSN (printed):** 2343-5291

**ISSN (online):** 2489-2203

**Editor-in-chief:**

Sini Jokiniemi

**Editorial board:**

Sini Jokiniemi  
Mirva Virtanen  
Marjo Kumpula  
Timo Holopainen  
Aino Lindroos

**Cover Photo:**

Aino Lindroos

## BUSINESS CASES WITH STUDENTS

Studying at TUAS is strongly working life oriented. Learning at TUAS is based on innovation pedagogy, which links together professional know-how and theoretical research. Learning revolves extensively around project and teamwork. This offers students unique opportunities to work in real need-based projects assigned either by companies or TUAS R&D projects. This section offers an overview of one selected student project. The following article is written by the Bachelor students who carried out the project.

# Young Adults as Consumers

***Konsta Pöyhönen and Henrik Ekman***  
*Bachelor Students in Sales at TUAS*

During the spring term 2017, we were offered an interesting challenge as part of our project course. Our task was to study the buying behaviour of young adults as well as their customer experiences. We formed a group of four Bachelor students specializing in sales: **Konsta Pöyhönen, Henrik Ekman, Tiina Alanen and Janina Mustikkamaa.**

Our assignment was inspired by EPSI Rating Finland and their customer satisfaction studies. In our project we explored the following themes: loyalty towards a company; willingness to recommend; the meaning of company responsibility, service quality, corporate image and customer-orientation; and company-customer communication. The themes were

not offered to respondents as related to any specific line of business.

### **How did we carry out the project?**

We needed to carry out the project within an eight-week time frame. We began by clarifying explanations for various concepts by reading literature and blogs. Then we moved on to planning and executing our survey covering all the themes in the project assignment. We distributed the survey to students both in paper and as an online-based survey. We received answers from altogether 162 respondents.

In addition to the survey, we conducted video interviews. Luckily, several students studying design, construction and mechanical

engineering volunteered to participate in the video interviews. In fact, we avoided gathering answers from business students because many of the themes in the survey are already too familiar to them due to their studies. Our aim was to get the interviewees to talk in a free and open manner, without any (or as little as possible) preconceptions. We constructed a longer video that included clips from the video interviews as well as our own commentary covering the survey itself and the findings.

In addition to the survey and video interviews, we set up a panel discussion in order to involve students from several fields of study. The discussion turned out as we had hoped: the participants brought up various aspects and viewpoints. It was great to see the variety of opinions young adults may have even on the same subject.

### And what did we find out?

Out of our 162 survey respondents 91 (57%) were male and 69 (43%) were female. A majority of the respondents were 22–23 years old and represented the following fields of study: 86 engineering students, 43 sales students, 18 nursing students, 12 design students and 1 circus student. We have summarized the main findings of the survey in this article.

Related to quality of service, young adults favour the kind of customer service where the shop assistant lets the customer explore products in peace for a while before offering help (70% of the respondents chose this option). ‘Intense proactivity’ as well as ‘only a little bit of help’ did not gain support.

Corporate responsibility and ethical actions were highly appreciated by the respondents.



Photo: Shutterstock.

Especially students in the fields of design and health care underlined these aspects.

A couple of interesting viewpoints came forth when young adults were asked which channel (phone/email/social media/postal mail) they primarily prefer for keeping in contact with a company. 54% of the respondents preferred to be contacted by the company via email, 19% preferred social media channels, 18% wanted a phone call and 9% waited for traditional postal mail.

Furthermore, there seems to be a difference between genders when it comes to choosing a suitable channel for company–customer contacts. Male respondents (26%) preferred to be contacted via phone while only 7% of female respondents chose the phone and instead ranked social media as their first option (28%). Social media was not that popular with male respondents; only 13% of them preferred social media over other channels.

For contacting a company themselves, young adults ranked calling as their first option (48%). Second place went to email (41%), third place to social media (6%). Once again, there were differences between genders: Female respondents chose email (46%) as their first choice for contacting a company while male respondents preferred a phone call (57%).

It seems that young adults – at this point in their lives as students – do not consider themselves as active users of social media when it comes to communicating with a company. Perhaps surprisingly, young adults prefer more traditional forms of contacting: making a phone call and writing an email.

### **Comments from EPSI Rating Finland**

– This study was definitely worth the effort: one might think that we know how young adults think today, as we all have been young once. But times, behaviours and preferences do change, and they do so more than we might be capable of understanding. The young adults apparently do not feel loyalty towards companies any more, like we maybe did and still do. They perceive brands and labels more interesting. This field study, conducted by students among their own kinds, shows interesting results that are also supported by EPSI Rating customer satisfaction data divided into age groups, says **Tarja Ilvonen**, CEO of EPSI Rating Finland.





## CAREER EXPERIENCES

Working with sales at a university of applied sciences is an interesting possibility. The former and the current Project Coordinators at TUAS Sales Excellence Center share their thoughts together with one of our three Principal Lecturers of Sales. Finding a sales-related or other kind of job opportunity directly after university can be tricky, but the SMERec project is working towards offering new tools to ensure a smooth transition from university classes to working life.

# Working with People

### **Aino Lindroos**

*Project Coordinator, Sales Excellence, TUAS*

It was a warm summer day in 2010 when I got my first degree done. I was qualified as a hotel receptionist and I started my working career in customer service. I liked, and still like, working with people and with customers. I worked for four years in customer service and decided that I wanted to further develop myself.

I applied for TUAS to study a Bachelor's degree in Business Administration. There were two opportunities: professional sales and finance. I was sure I wanted the finance. I was accepted to this degree with my first apply and first test – shock!

Time flies! I studied for three years and now I'm working at TUAS. As I said, I was sure that I want to study finance and at first it felt right. Then I started to think again and had a chance to include also professional sales and project work in my studies. So I decided to expand my studies.



Project Coordinator Aino Lindroos. Photo: Tomi Juhala.

I noticed that project work was really 'my thing.' Real projects with real customer needs was interesting and a learning experience. Through projects, I acquired working life skills, learned problem solving skills and created real contact with working life. I also did my thesis about project work.

After graduation, I got a job at TUAS. With my project work skills, I'm now a Project Coordinator at TUAS in the faculty of Technology, Environment and Business. I work with teachers, students, companies and so on – I am now working with people, just as I said I wanted to do. Right now I'm further developing myself and I'm learning more all the time. I enjoy my all-round work as a Project Coordinator at TUAS.

# Selling is Everyone's Job

**Sirpa Hänti**

*Principal Lecturer and Leader of Education of Professional Sales, TUAS*

The insight that sales is everyone's job is nothing new. For over a hundred years ago Stevenson presented in literature the claim that 'Everyone lives by Selling Something'. By this he referred to the need for everyone to be able to sell – an idea, product, service, skill, talent, or opportunity that we can offer to another to benefit from. Lately Pink (2014) underlines the same ideology in his best seller *To Sell is Human*. The main message in Pink's book is 'non-sales selling' and the idea that selling is central part of humanity. It is the leveraging power to move people, both inside and outside of the organization. He describes the invisible sales situations in private life, e.g. among family members or friends – as well as the direct and indirect sales encounters or meetings where selling is seen more visible.

The transformation of sales has led to multi-level and multi-occupational interaction, instead of the earlier dyadic discussions between the sales person and the buyer. It is important that all the members of the organization have the attitude and motivation to understand sales as an essential part of their job. This moulds the roles of the employees and the leaders, too. More often the successful performance entails cooperation with other people inside and outside the organization.

Sales skills are needed in all occupations, in which people should be motivated to act, to learn and to develop something valuable. To drive people to scale up success and happy life

calls for understanding of sales and sales skills as a crucial competence of everyone. Often, this also requires redirecting the organization culture towards sales culture.

**Sirpa Hänti** (Ph.D. [Econ. & Bus. Adm.], BA [Adult Educ.]) has made a long career in business in Business Coaching, Marketing Communications, Sales and Marketing, International Business and Entrepreneurship. Her research interests include e.g. B2B sales, value creation, digital marketing and entrepreneurship. Hänti has published a B2B sales book (Oivaltava myyntityö. Asiakkaana organisaatio) together with two co-writers in 2016.



Principal Lecturer Sirpa Hänti. Photo: Aino Lindroos.

# A Story of Being too Excited about Sales

**Aino Korhonen**

*Former Project Coordinator at Sales Excellence Center, TUAS*

Do you know that student who always gets too excited about new projects at university? That was me.

Our Professional Sales studies at TUAS included many different kinds of projects and business cases. I was passionate about sales and wanted to learn it all.

When I graduated in spring 2016, I was asked to work as a Project Coordinator at the newly founded Sales Excellence Center of TUAS. One door opened and I decided to enter. To be honest, at first I had no idea what Sales Excellence Center was and what I was supposed to do. One thing, however, I was sure about - whatever I am asked to do, I want to do it humbly and the best I can.

This attitude has been important. Someone needs to carry the tables and dust the cells if you arrange a networking event in a former prison. After that I wiped the dust from my blazer and walked to the door to welcome the business guests and international visitors. And filmed the event of course. When I did it, I tried my best and it was noticed. But most importantly, after doing all these crazy assignments, I have learned to trust my ability to handle all kinds of situations.

One thing I love about TUAS is low hierarchy. When I, titled as a Coordinator, dust the cells, I do it with the Principal Lecturer and

Key Account Manager. When developing the Sales Excellence Center, I can equally join the conversation with the Dean, Education and Research Manager and Principal Lecturers.

I have been able to work with these senior colleagues, who are used to working with young professionals and therefore believe in



Former Project Coordinator Aino Korhonen. Photo: Martti Komulainen.

our abilities. They believe in us so awkwardly much that one of my first tasks was to design and implement a recruiting channel combining sales students' introduction videos and CVs. I didn't have too much IT expertise, but now I am quite proud about TUAS Student Talent Pool – a channel that enables partner companies to recruit TUAS students. I stepped into a discomfort zone and made it my comfort zone.

I have grown from a student to more of a professional and learned to be myself in the new role. Diverse assignments have taught me more about myself – which is my piece of the cake and which pieces are for others. I have

had my sales glasses on, trying to see how each situation helps me to learn more about sales.

Many of the things I have experienced during the year working at TUAS have strengthened my feeling of wanting to be a salesperson. I want to learn more about different fields and companies and help them solve their challenges and further develop their business.

Another door has opened again. This autumn I started a new job in B2B sales as a Junior Account Manager in at digital marketing and sales company Fonecta. Learning continues. I could not be more excited.

# SMErec - Ensuring Successful Recruiting

**Tanja Hallenberg**

*Project Coordinator, TUAS*

The small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) are extremely important to the Finnish economy and employment. Micro and SME companies form a majority of the business enterprises in Finland, meaning that 99.8% of the Finnish enterprises having fewer than 250 employees. 93.4% of the Finnish companies are micro enterprises, referring to employing fewer than 10 people. (See [www.yrittajat.fi/en/](http://www.yrittajat.fi/en/)) SMEs generate 58% of the combined turnover of all Finnish businesses. The SME share of the Finnish export revenue is over 16%.

Compared to these facts, it is easy to understand how important 'SMErec - New recruitment skills for SMEs and workforce' as a project is. SMErec aims at promoting competitiveness of the Finnish SME enterprises by supporting

their recruitment skills. Its ultimate objective is ensuring successful recruiting for SMEs.

The SMErec project is coordinated by Karelia University of Applied Sciences. Subprojects are carried out by Joensuu Regional Development Company JOSEK Ltd and Turku University of Applied Sciences (TUAS). SMErec is also part of a transnational project consortium called Improving Selection Skills for SMEs and Work. The consortium has a common goal to improve the human resources and selections skills at SMEs, enable growth for enterprises and develop digital tools for recruitment.

In the course of the SMErec project, actions for SMEs include improving human resources strategies, management and competences as



well as modernizing the company image. A digital tool will be developed by the project to support micro enterprises in their recruitment processes. For jobseekers, SMERec provides support for applicants' skills to use virtual technology in the job seeking process. Our subproject at TUAS will implement a web-based competence platform including a database for creating a virtual CV.

SMERec's target enterprises are located in two different economic regions, that is, Eastern

Finland and Southwest Finland. The regions experience different recruitment challenges. Changes in the Russian economy and import reflect in the economy of North Karelia. Enterprises are doing well, but not as well as during the years when the export to Russia was at top level. The economy of Southwest Finland, on the other hand, is near to overheating, and enterprises suffer from difficulties in finding qualified employees to meet their recruitment needs.



## WHY STUDY SALES?

If you have wondered what kind of students study sales or if you are still not sure whether you should study sales yourself or not, the following articles offer you nice perspectives. When you have made up your mind that you should study sales, TUAS exchange students offer you tips how a foreigner can make the best of studying sales in Turku, Finland. If you are motivated by competitions, we offer you a glimpse at the European Sales Competition, 2018.

# Sales as a Part of Me

***Elina Inkinen***

*Bachelor Student (Sales), TUAS*

As a child of entrepreneur parents, I have had the chance to observe sales from both my own and business perspective from a very young age. Sales has always been at least in the back of my head, and because of this it has become a natural part of my own work mentality, despite the role in which I work for a company.

Already in primary school, when my friends were enjoying of the summer vacation, I spent my summers in Turku Market Square selling vegetables and flowers to happy customers with a casual touch. Sales in the market square was very intimate, which is why I quickly learned conversation skills and how to be quick-witted. Sunny summers of this kind continued for nearly ten years.

After this, I ended up through my studies and internships to work as a receptionist in two

different hotels. In the second hotel I got to develop sales competitions for employees and naturally to take part in them myself. In this task I noticed that sales competitions and concrete targets motivate me, and the thought of a career in sales that had already been planted in my mind became stronger.

When I decided to start studying sales at Turku University of Applied Sciences, I saw it as a reasonable solution to acquire a part-time job that would support my studies. This is how I ended up working at a jewellery store that invested strongly into sales trainings and sales monitoring both on personal and team level. At the same time, I also worked for a marketing agency with product launching and product promotion. These jobs taught me to approach people in an unprejudiced manner and sometimes also to enter my personal

discomfort zone. Over a couple of years, I gained naturalness in sales process control and my sales strategy developed into calmer yet more confident direction.

Studying at a university of applied sciences involves a lot of independent learning, except for countless projects and team working that are conducted in collaboration with other students. I was open-minded and motivated when I started my studies, because after a gap year my thirst for knowledge was endless and I wanted to gather all the possible information there was on hand. In subjects such as support functions for sales, this paradigm worked nicely, but as is generally known, sales is not a subject that can be learnt by just reading books about it. This was taken into account in the curriculum of the sales subjects, so the learning techniques that were used in the sales courses were not by any means traditional. Sales Coaching taught encounters, human interaction and consistent conversation structures. These skills require creative exercises, which, in turn, requires a lot of discouragement from the participants and the motivation to challenge oneself. Even though these exercises felt a bit frustrating and even quite childish from time to time, I still always kept in my mind the fact that this was exactly the way out of your comfort zone, something that is the requisite for improvement.

As we were practising sales negotiations, I developed a desire to go and try solution selling, and when I was handed the opportunity, I seized it. This is how I ended up working as a Sales Manager in the energy industry. Combining school and a full-time job demands lots of work, but fortunately sales is a grateful field because of its flexible working hours that you can build to match your own daily rhythm. The Sales Manager's position was a step to the unknown, but thanks to my employees' comprehensive training programme and the support that school provided, the jump didn't feel that scary at all.

When it comes to sales negotiations, the relevance of what is taught at school crystallized to me just after a few meetings with customers. The sales frame that was assembled in Sales Coaching for Sales Competition 2017 had settled in my head so clearly as a result of constant refilling that all I had to focus on was the essential; the contents of the conversation. As I gained more experience, also the practice and the routines of sales work became stronger day by day. I also began to quickly see facing the customers as human beings and building the trust with them became in a whole different light in the process of professional and personal sales. For the very first time there were more situations based on emotional intelligence in the centre than patterns studied by heart.



Bachelor Student Elina Inkinen. Photo: Aino Lindroos.

# Be a Sales Pro

**Miikka Nurmi**

*Bachelor Student (Sales), TUAS*



Bachelor Student Miikka Nurmi. Photo: Aino Lindroos.

When I started my studies at Turku University of Applied Sciences in 2015, I did not understand anything of B2B sales or how to network. Well, I did know that B2B sales means trade between companies and that thousands of euros move in the trading. B2B as a word sounded very elegant and abstract to me. Could I be a professional salesman in the future? I thought.

As my studies progressed, I began to believe in my potential as a pro. After numerous lectures and several projects in which I worked as a team leader, I can say that a professional salesman is not born but instead you can grow to be one. At the secondary school I did not like discoursing, at upper secondary school I liked them, but not that I'm studying at TUAS, I truly love them. I started to like presentations of that kind because of it is like selling. You have to sell yourself first, then you must survey the situation and after that, you have adapt to audience and close the deal with your own plausibility. How did a shy, young student, fearful of appearing in front of an audience, became a convincing sales consultant?

Everything starts with yourself. If you have a speech defect or sweat when you talk in front of the crowd, approve yourself. Be a star. I have seriously developed in this respect at TUAS. The more I discourse and the more I meet stakeholders, the better I become. In my previous job, the hashtag #bestpractices was often used; that is really correct. But first you have to be aware of things you could do better. After that, you should step out of comfort zone over and over again. Be a professional.

The second key to success is entrepreneurship and perseverance. If you want to succeed, you have to try different things. If they work, good! If they don't, learn from them and try something different. The entrepreneurship and perseverance are not synonyms but they work together tightly. Every salesperson should be relentless; the trade will follow. For example, if you book meetings and the client says directly no, you have to try to convince the client in another way. When you have heard no for two to three times, you can stop arguing. Be like an entrepreneur, have perseverance.

Right, the networks. Like I previously told, I had no clue what networks are and how they work in real life. I did not understand their purpose: why network with people? How can I create and build networks, I wondered when I started my studies. Luckily at TUAS, we cooperate with stakeholders and it is easy to network with companies. As a student, it is very important to convince company representatives to cooperate with you and your team. Maybe it will work out for your good in future. It is possible that they are hiring you at some point, who knows? Do not be ashamed to bring yourself in front of representative. Be a networker.

Create your own story and be a pro!



# The Must-Haves You Need (to Know) When You Visit Finland

**Marvin Mächt**

*Exchange Student, TUAS*

Preparation is essential when facing either wanted or unwanted events during a business meeting, travel with friends or even your next meal. Handling objections while negotiations or an exam is hard if you haven't prepared yourself properly. It's the same if you decide to travel into a country you haven't been to before. How do the citizens behave? What is the main language? How are the weather conditions? There are a lot of questions you can't answer by yourself if you have no experience of how it's like in the foreign country.

We want you to only be speechless by the marvellous nature and the cities of Finland, not because of all the unanswered questions before your trip. That's why you will find the most important information you should know before you start the journey you will surely never forget.

## **Get a credit card**

Getting a credit card before your trip is highly recommended. Supermarkets, shops, bars and coffee shops, also long-distance buses have their own card terminals. You don't need to carry cash with you as it is more comfortable to pay by credit card. In addition, most credit card services include a travel insurance, so you are protected for any unforeseen events during your trip in Finland.

## **Update your language skills**

English language skills can be helpful in every situation in life in nearly every country, also in Finland. Either if it's for business or social life, you can talk to Finnish citizens in English. As for movies and TV series are not dubbed in Finnish but instead subtitled, most of the population have polished their English by watching movies and are able to have a conversation in English. Despite the fact that you will get anywhere in Finland just by speaking English, try to learn some simple words in Finnish. Finns will appreciate your effort to speak their language.

## **Dress properly**

Winter is coming. In summertime, you shouldn't have any problems with the weather as long as you stay dry. However, when you visit Finland in winter, you should be well prepared. Long underwear, sturdy winter boots, scarves and gloves are crucial to stay warm when walking outside. Buying winter clothes is expensive in Finland, so it's recommended to take care of it in your home country.

## **Crowded city vs. wild life**

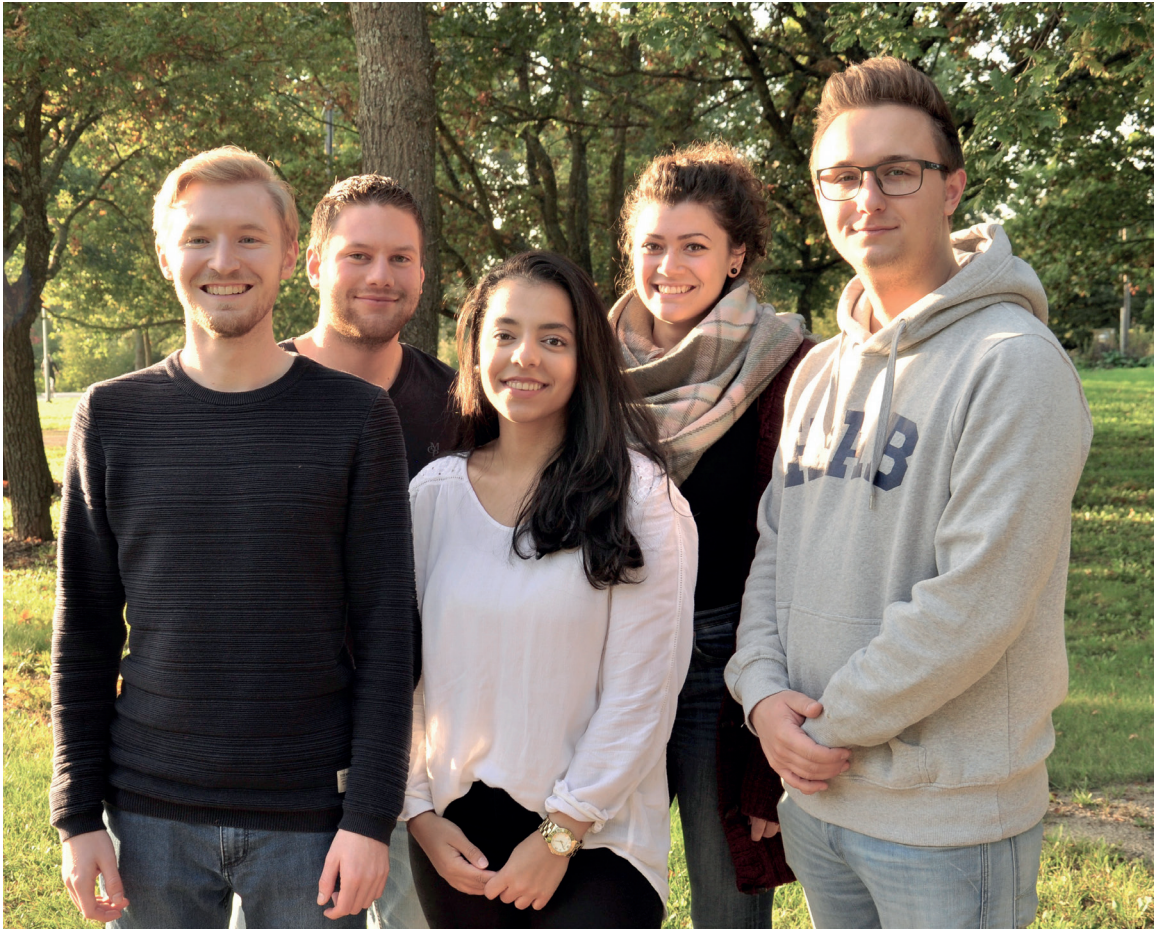
In a world full of digitization, it's hard to stop at one place and take a deep breath of nature to calm down. In Finland, you can learn what Work-Life-Balance really is about. Drive a couple of minutes out of a city and you will find yourself in a peaceful place with wildlife and forest. Hiking, fishing or just enjoying the silence will help you regain your energy and

make you will feel strengthened for the next business meeting or exam.

### **Finnish way of life**

People are staring at the ground while passing you? They don't greet you? At first sight, it seems like Finnish people are disrespectful and impolite. But like in every other country in the world, you have to look deeper in the cultural

aspects. Finnish citizens respect each other's privacy, which is the reason why they won't look into your eyes and greet you while walking on the street. Instead of being offended by such behaviour, adapt to it and be open for new cultures. After spending some time in Finland you will see that Finnish people are kind and open-minded, and *kiitos* ('thank you') is one of the words you will hear most.



Marvin Mächt, David Mack, Safa Rahmann, Lea König, and David Borrmann. Photo: Jil Hansper.

# ESCA Ready for the European Sales Competition 2018

**Timo Holopainen**

*Leader (Business Development), Principal Lecturer (Sales), TUAS*



The European Sales Competition Association (ESCA) is eager to participate in the next European Sales Competition (ESC), as **Liisa Kairisto-Mertanen**, the President of the Association and Dean at Turku University of Applied Sciences (TUAS), explains.

‘ESC in Paris, France, in June 2018 will be my fifth time, and I look forward to see again how the new generation of sales experts are going to excel’, she confesses. ‘Our association is going to give all the possible help and support to the competition and its organizers so that we can grow this concept even bigger.’

The European Sales Competition Association was founded in 2015, one year after the first competition was held in Belgium. As the European Sales Competition has grown, the association has kept its compact team together, so that the competitions will be easier to organize. The board of the association consists of **Timo Holopainen** from TUAS, **Tony Douglas** from Edinburgh Napier University, **Tuula Korhonen** from Haaga-Helia, Finland, **Karl Pinczoliths** from The University of Applied Sciences Wiener Neustadt, Austria, and Paris competition Director **Bernard Hasson** from Euridis, France, in addition to Liisa Kairisto-Mertanen.

– The 2017 competition in Edinburgh, Scotland, was a great success, promotes Timo Holopainen, the Vice-President of ESCA and a Principal Lecturer in Sales at TUAS. He continues:

– We were happy to see that Napier University did such a good job. We were also pleasantly surprised by the amount of contestants from different countries. ESCA board member and Competition Director Tony Douglas did a great job and I am very happy to see how this competition has grown and reached more universities and students across Europe. Salesforce Cloud was a great challenge for the competitors.

The European Sales Competition was founded to strengthen sales studies across Europe by bringing the art more visible to the public, by sharing the best teaching practices and by benchmarking the best universities across Europe. One great example of the best sales practises spreading in Europe is engineering student **Lassi Seppälä**, the winner of Turku Sales Competition and a semi-finalist of European Sales Competition in 2016. Lassi was coaching the students at University of Applied Sciences Aalen in Germany in sales and negotiation skills as part of his student exchange. He was also part of the Aalen coaching team in Edinburgh, Scotland.

For more information about the European Sales Competition Association, please contact

Liisa Kairisto-Mertanen:  
[liisa.kairisto-mertanen@turkuamk.fi](mailto:liisa.kairisto-mertanen@turkuamk.fi)  
Timo Holopainen:  
[timo.holopainen@turkuamk.fi](mailto:timo.holopainen@turkuamk.fi)





**#Sales  
Excellence  
Center**

# **Towards next issue**

**The next issue of Journal of Excellence in Sales  
will be published in May 2018.**

**Happy Selling!**