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Inside Sales – a growth strategy?

Can Inside Sales be used to grow businesses: Case study Hejco

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<p>This thesis and its purpose, as the heading indicates, is about the Inside Sales strategy and, if companies can grow their business by implementing it. The research question is researched with a case study conducted from a company called Hejco. Hejco is a workwear manufacturer, founded in 1954 in Borås, Sweden. The implementation of Inside Sales failed in Hejco, and the author or the thesis wanted to know the reason behind this and, if companies can benefit from Inside Sales.</p> <p>Qualitative methods were used for the purpose of the nature this research. The qualitative methodology consisted of three in-depth interviews with professional in the fields of sales, marketing and management from Hejco. Furthermore, exploratory data gathering was made, because of this research forming more of a basis for future researches, rather than providing absolute data.</p> <p>The results of both, literature review and interviews, indicated that an Inside Sales strategy can be implemented for the growth of a company, however some key tools and information need to be in place in the company, before the implementation can be done. The integration of marketing and sales is vital for the company to be productive. The key tool for a working Inside Sales strategy is a Customer Relationship Management (CRM) software. Without a CRM software, the strategy cannot work in a modern company. Furthermore, thorough market research needs to be made, because the success of the implementation also depends on the business environment the company works within. The in-depth interviews brought out that, although the implementation was a failure in Hejco, a new effort cannot be ruled out and the first implementation effort taught the organisation greatly, on how to work in the future and what the company was missing, to be competitive in their market.</p> <p>The author recommends every company that is thinking of implementing an Inside Sales strategy to first conducting a thorough market research, if their product/service can be sold remotely to the customers, or even better is a competitor doing so already. Furthermore, if a CRM software has not yet been implemented, they should do it as soon as possible, because before this, they cannot implement a working Inside Sales strategy.</p>	
Keywords	Inside Sales, CRM, Marketing, Sales, Integration, B2B

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1 Introduction

The purpose of this thesis is to get a better understanding of what impact Inside Sales has for the sales figures and success of a company. This case study was done basing from the company Hejco, in which the author of this thesis has worked for since 9/2016, first as an Inside Sales person and then as a Sales Representative.

Hejco was founded in 1954 in Borås, Sweden. The company manufactures work clothes for healthcare, cleaning, hotels, restaurants, catering and to other services. Hejco's main market is in the Nordics (Sweden, Finland and Denmark). Hejco's turnover is approximately €10 million and it employs about 30 employees. This study will focus on the Finnish market, environment and how Inside Sales was implemented there in the first place and how it succeeded in it.

What is Inside Sales? In a nutshell, the basic definition of inside sales is remote sales (Ken Krogue, Forbes 2013). This is the term simplified, meaning that the usual/classical face-to-face "outside sales" is not that needed anymore, but the sales can be acquired through phone calls and emails from your office or home. Inside Sales had not been used before 2016 in Hejco and was a plan that was thought to be good to be implemented in. The plan came up from a research that was done by an outsourced company for Hejco. The research was done on the base of Finnish, Swedish and Danish markets. The results of the research and multiple interviews

showed, that small companies (1-50 employees) did not need a personal sales person, as often as larger companies, and were more likely to rely on ordering via phone, email or web shop. This was, because their perception of purchasing work clothes was too time consuming and not so important. On the contrary, larger companies usually (50+ employees) use more time, money and effort for the work clothes purchasing.

After this finding, it was thought that Inside Sales needs to be implemented for Hejco to resolve the issue of making life simple for the smaller companies and customers

who might not need a contact person. This leads to the purpose of this thesis, to answer the question of can companies grow their business with an Inside Sales strategy and implementation.

2 Literature Review

The purpose of this literature review is to understand and find what theories, concepts and texts other people have written from this topic and everything that relates to it.

2.1 Marketing

As this thesis covers Inside Sales, it is important to know the relevance of marketing in business. Marketing and sales used to be more separated than it has been for the past decades. Now marketing and sales go together. You basically cannot have the one without the other. But what is marketing, and why is it so connected to sales?

Marketing's basic function is to find the needs and wants of the customer and to satisfy them with a profit. Marketing and sales support each other in the sense that marketing provides potential customers and the information about them and then the sales team does the actual sales part from where the profits come from. However, this has changed and will change more in the future to the point where marketing is even more in charge of making sales with different tools such as CRM, which will be discussed later in this literature review. But for now, it is important to understand the importance and support marketing gives to sales. This is, as discussed earlier, to find the potential customers and the needs and wants these customers to have and then with the right content and methods to satisfy them with the help of sales and make that in to profit for the company. If a company does not have marketing, there is no way for it to be successful. However, smaller companies might not have a marketing team per se, but perhaps just one person, who oversees it. Marketing does the research of whom should be targeted and with which way and then to report these data to the sales team and they can implement this information to make sales. (Kotler & Armstrong 2008, 6-7, Macmillian 2007, 185-187)

The marketing mix is something a company uses to get a desired response from the target market. It is done by integrating different tactical marketing tools together and *"...it consists of everything the firm can do to influence the demand for its product"* (Kotler & Armstrong 2008) The marketing mix builds up from four different variables;

product, price, place and promotion. This helps the also in the integration of sales, because with marketing mix, different departments in the organisation need to work together. The Figure 5 below demonstrates the use of marketing mix and what it holds within to impact the target market. (Kotler & Armstrong 2008, 49-50)

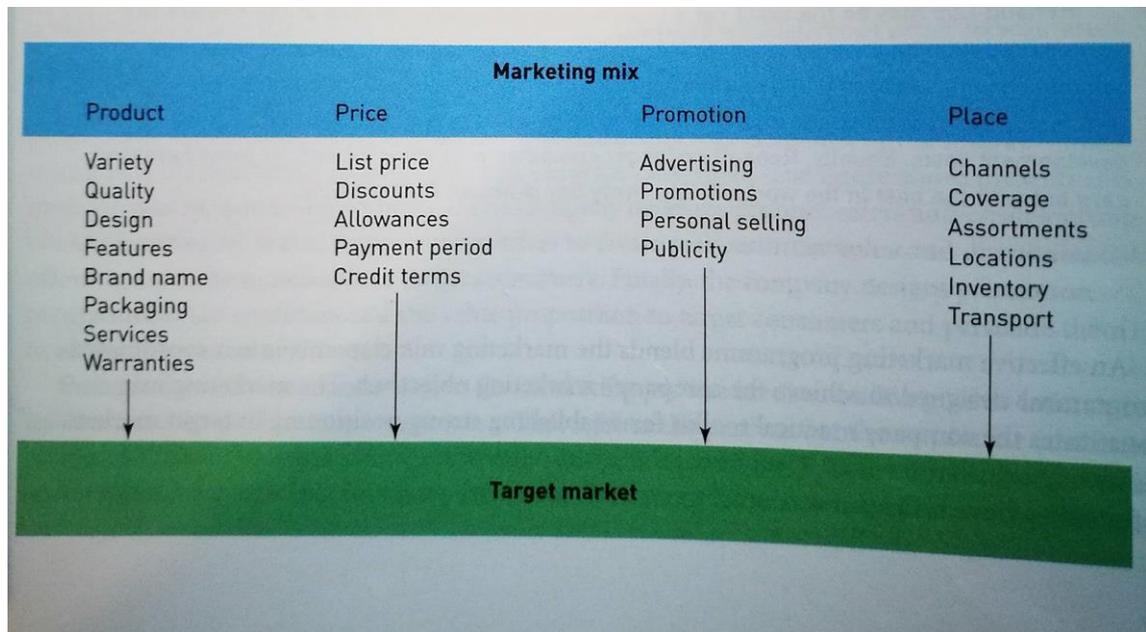


Figure 5 (Marketing mix, Kotler & Armstrong 2008, 49)

2.2 Sales

Sales and marketing nowadays are extremely integrated and continue to be. Sales in a nutshell is an action between two parties (buyer and seller) who exchange a service/good (tangible or intangible) to a certain amount of money or something else of value. This is the core of sales and although a business can be founded before any sales happen, the main goal of a company is to make sales to make profit and to grow (Dixon & Tanner Jr. 2013, 9-13).

There are plenty of different sales strategies (for example direct/indirect and business-to-business/business-to-consumer) that a company can implement, but it is important to define it in initial stages and to adapt to the changing environment with latest sales

strategies, because using only one method cannot work for ever in a competitive market. Another important thing to keep in mind with sales (also heavily linked with marketing) is that the buying power is with the customer nowadays. This means that they can look for alternative choices of a supplier from the internet and that the supplier or the seller needs to get the attention of the customer (used to be other way around, before modern technology) and to reassure them that they are the best available choice for customers' needs or wants. "*A good salesperson creates demand where it doesn't exist.*" (Donelson 1999, 3)

Salespeople could for example make false promises to the customer and they would know it only after the sales had happened. This is not possible anymore, because the information is very easily accessible. This, as discussed, has led to the fact that you need to sell yourself, your idea, your product and your entire company to make the customer believe you. Brand loyalty used to influence heavily in making sales, but again, now that information is available for everybody and companies need to be transparent, brand loyalty has decreased, because of scandals, corruption, unethical methods and the list goes on. This leads again to the fact that companies need to sell themselves and not only the product/service. Getting satisfactory results and profitable sales means that the company selling, need to adapt to the changing environment of business. Furthermore, this has an even greater impact on business-to-business sales, because as discussed, companies need to be transparent, which shows them being environmental friendly, ethical and following all the laws and this is, in today's business world, vital (DeMers 2017, Forbes, Melville-Ross 2013, Telegraph, Horton 2017, Investopedia).

2.3 Business-to-Business Sales (B2B sales)

As was discussed in the previous section, there are different sales strategies that companies implement. When it comes to inside sales, business-to-business (B2B) sales is the strategy to implement.

B2B sales means that businesses trade with each other. A company does not want to get or make all the raw materials needed for their service to function, so they buy the raw materials from another business. Again, this raw materials business buys outsourced accountants from another business and the chain goes on. Businesses need other businesses to survive in their own field of business. They compete in their own

market, but need strong partners to outdo their rivals. In inside sales B2B sales is used because selling to end consumers directly (business-to-consumers) is almost then tele-marketing, which again is very different from inside sales, which will be later covered in this thesis. Inside sales people sell services or products that other businesses need and are interested in hearing out, as long as it is relevant for them (Donelson 2000, 3-5).

When you sell business-to-business (B2B), you have to constantly work on new accounts because your old ones are never 100 percent secure. Their plans change. Their business changes. Their customers change their habits. Their competitors "zig," causing your customer to "zag." Every change in your customers' business has the potential to change their relationship with you and their need for your products and services. (Donelson 2000, 3)

2.4 Sales Process

The process of making sales can differ slightly between companies, however the very basic process is that you first define the potential customers, then gain information about them and contact them. After these steps, you need to have something to get the customer interested in, which will be led by negotiating and trying to wrap up the deal (closing) and make the sales. This is then followed by after-sales, for example calling the customer that if everything is alright and trying to make additional sales.

In a nutshell, the sales process is following pre-thought steps in order to make sales and the steps are: prospecting, qualifying, pre-approach, approach (contact), presentation, negotiating, closing and follow-up. The sole purpose of having a sales process is for a company to identify the plan easily and then they can implement different strategies in achieving these steps and to eventually make sales according to the process (Kotler & Armstrong 2008, 996).

The sales process is important to be defined for a company, however in today's world, as has already been discussed, information is available easily, thus the buying process of the customers has changed and needs to be recognised. This means that the company needs to implement their sales process in the right time as they have defined the potential leads and customers for example based on the traffic of the company's website and try to influence the hot leads' buying behaviour with the company's sales process, which will then show in the sales funnel (Aminoff & Rubanovitsch 2015, 42-44).

2.5 Sales Funnel

Sales process and Sales Funnel are very alike, however there is a significant difference between the two. As discussed in the previous part, sales process is the main idea of how the company will achieve their goal of making sales. Whereas, sales funnel shows the rates and possibilities that the company have in each step. This means, that the sales funnel is a clear outlook of how many cases the company has in for example in the prospect phase of the process and how many have they been able to close. The sales funnel is wide at the top and narrows down to the very end, forming a funnel shape (Carroll 2017, Tres Coaching Services, Stahl 2017, Forbes).

The classical sales funnel is very sales oriented, but marketing has its part to play in it heavily. This needs to be remembered and recognised. Sales funnels varies from company to company; however, the idea is the same as explained in the previous paragraph.



The Stages of the Typical Funnel

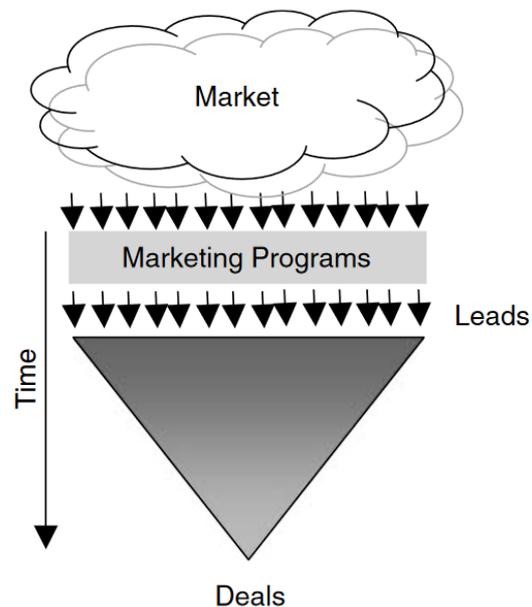


Figure 1 (Sales funnel, Macmillian 2007, 187)

The graph 2.5.1 demonstrates an example of a sales funnel and how it operates. There are the named stages of how a lead becomes a customer for the company. Then there is also demonstrated the fact that marketing programs feed the funnel with hot leads and information.

Macmillian discusses that, the sales funnel should not be a funnel per se - it should be seen and thought more as a buying pipeline, because then the alignment of sales and

marketing is stronger, which leads to more customers and a better understanding of the opportunities this pipeline with-holds (Macmillian 2007, 187-188).

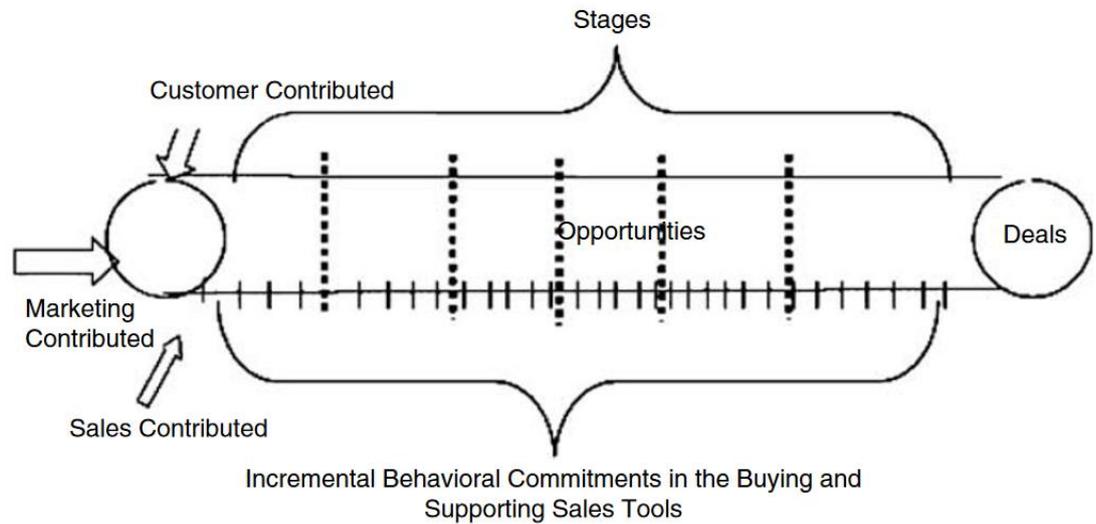


Figure 2 (Macmillian 2007, 188)

As has been discussed this Figure 2 shows a variation to the classical sales funnel – a buying pipeline to improve the amount of leads and understand better the entire company’s current situation (Macmillian 2007, 188).

The sales funnel needs material to show realistic figures and companies use different methods to get that material and customers for the phases of the funnel – one key way is using a CRM software.

2.6 Customer Relationship Management (CRM)

As this thesis covers the topic of Inside Sales, it is only natural that the term, concept and some theories are covered about Customer Relationship Management (CRM). CRM helps companies to handle large pieces of customer data and information, on top of that it eases the management of these customers and the relationship between them and the company. This again is an enormous help for the Inside Sales team, who tend to have many customers and a lot of data to handle. (Goldenberg 2008, 3-5)

The very definition and concept of CRM will be first discussed, then it will be followed by the importance of it. After the concept and use of CRM have been covered it is important to recognise that there are different CRM-systems that companies use and some will be briefly introduced, which is then continued by going deeper to the system Hejco implements – Salesforce.com.

2.6.1 Definition of CRM

To understand the term CRM and connection to the entire case study, it is vital to define the term. So, what is CRM?

There is no one way to define CRM, it varies slightly from the perspective of the definer, since they might see the key benefits of the CRM differently and accordingly to their main interests for their company. Furthermore, CRM evolves throughout time, because technology improves exponentially. However, it is important that CRM is being defined and doing that by using different perspectives.

The CRM is a system used in a company, which, once implemented appropriately, improves profitability by integrating customers, sales, marketing and the entire company to one system. It helps the company to understand the current and potential relationships of customers with clear analytics, metrics, figures and results. Furthermore, it helps the company to keep most of the data in one place, which is constantly up-to-date and is a technological tool of what modern companies, regardless of the industry, should start implementing, because this helps the company to be constantly interacting and reacting to rapid changes of the customers' needs and wants (Goldenberg 2008, 3, Shaw 1999 23-24, Kostojohn & Johnson & Paulen 2011, 1, Chorianopoulos 2015, 1).

2.6.2 Importance of CRM

Now that CRM has been defined in general, the importance of it needs to be discussed. Why should a company use CRM and furthermore, what is the importance of CRM for

the Inside Sales role? The connection between a CRM system and Inside Sales however, will be discussed later in the Inside Sales part, because it is relevant to first identify and understand the Inside Sales concept better.

There are several reasons why a company should use a CRM system and how it benefits from it. Once a company starts to implement a CRM system it will take time to get it going and seeing the positive results and to see the return of investment (ROI), however once the time of training and implementing has been done in the company, the rewards are worth the wait (Boardman 2010, Customer Think).

The benefits of using a CRM system are both tangible and intangible. Tangible benefits are benefits, which will show in Key Index Performances (KPI's) such as ratios of how many prospects contacted and how many cases closed, indicators that can be shown as numbers, figures and hard facts. Intangible benefits on the contrary are benefits, that might not be short-term results and hard numbers, however they are benefits that will show inside a company on the long run and usually the benefits are more valuable than tangible ones. An example of an intangible benefit can be the increase of employee motivation and satisfaction, differentiate your company from the competition, overall work is smoother and employees are more skilled in sales, marketing and customer service. As discussed, the amount of benefits from using a CRM is vast, and there are many more from the ones listed already (Goldenberg 2008, 4-10).

Now that the benefits of using a CRM system have been briefed, it is important to identify the importance of the CRM in terms of how it differs from not using one. Firstly, the reasons for a company not to implement a CRM system are usually linked to either money or time. The company cannot invest at the time or they do not have the time to start implementing such a big transformation. A third reason can be that they do not need it, "*we are fine without one!*". Sure, a company might not feel like needing it, because they might be doing well without a CRM system, however they could do much better, if they used it. Yes, it takes time to implement, but as discussed earlier, the ROI comes quickly and starts paying itself back. The inability to invest is a proper reason for not implementing a high-end CRM system such as Salesforce, HubSpot or Zoho, however as there are over 350 different CRM systems available, there are plenty cheaper ones or some are even free. A company can then use one of those CRM's, which also are of help although, might not offer all the benefits a more expensive and

broader CRM would (Keating 2016, Nimble blog, Rashid & Mclaughlin & Marvin 2017, PCMag).

A major risk in today's companies is the risk of getting hacked or be infected with a virus or malware, which leads to all your company's data and information are at risk to disappear or be used by someone with not the best means. This risk applies to the CRM systems as well, even highlights them, since all the company's data is in one place, hence the CRM needs to be secure. The risk increases as the common knowledge of technology increases. Technology know-how is learnt already in pre-school, hence it is only logical that there are more people with the skills to enter someone's personal information with ease. A CRM needs to be secure to avoid these situations, and this can be achieved through company policies that employees need to follow to avoid any security failures, on top of that, certain IT-experts needs to be hired, who take care of the security of the company's technology and information (Goldenberg 2008, 229-238).

The reasons of not using a CRM system do not match the benefits a company gets from using one. The importance, in a modern company, of using a CRM system is enormous. Below is Figure 3 provided and researched by HubSpot in 2014. The graph shows, what has been already discussed, in raw figures and facts – the importance of a CRM system. It provides the information of how it positively impacts directly to the sales figures. The Figure also shows the ROI ratio and the other main reasons, why a company should use a CRM system. Of course, the Figure below is a sales speech and highlights the benefits of using it; overshadowing the implementation process and the fact that not everybody is willing to learn new. This again harms the entire company, if a CRM system is decided to implement, but not used properly, thus the phrase "*implemented appropriately*" is needed to be remembered. However, this Figure below gives a great outlook of the potential a CRM system withholds (Brudner 2014, HubSpot Blog).

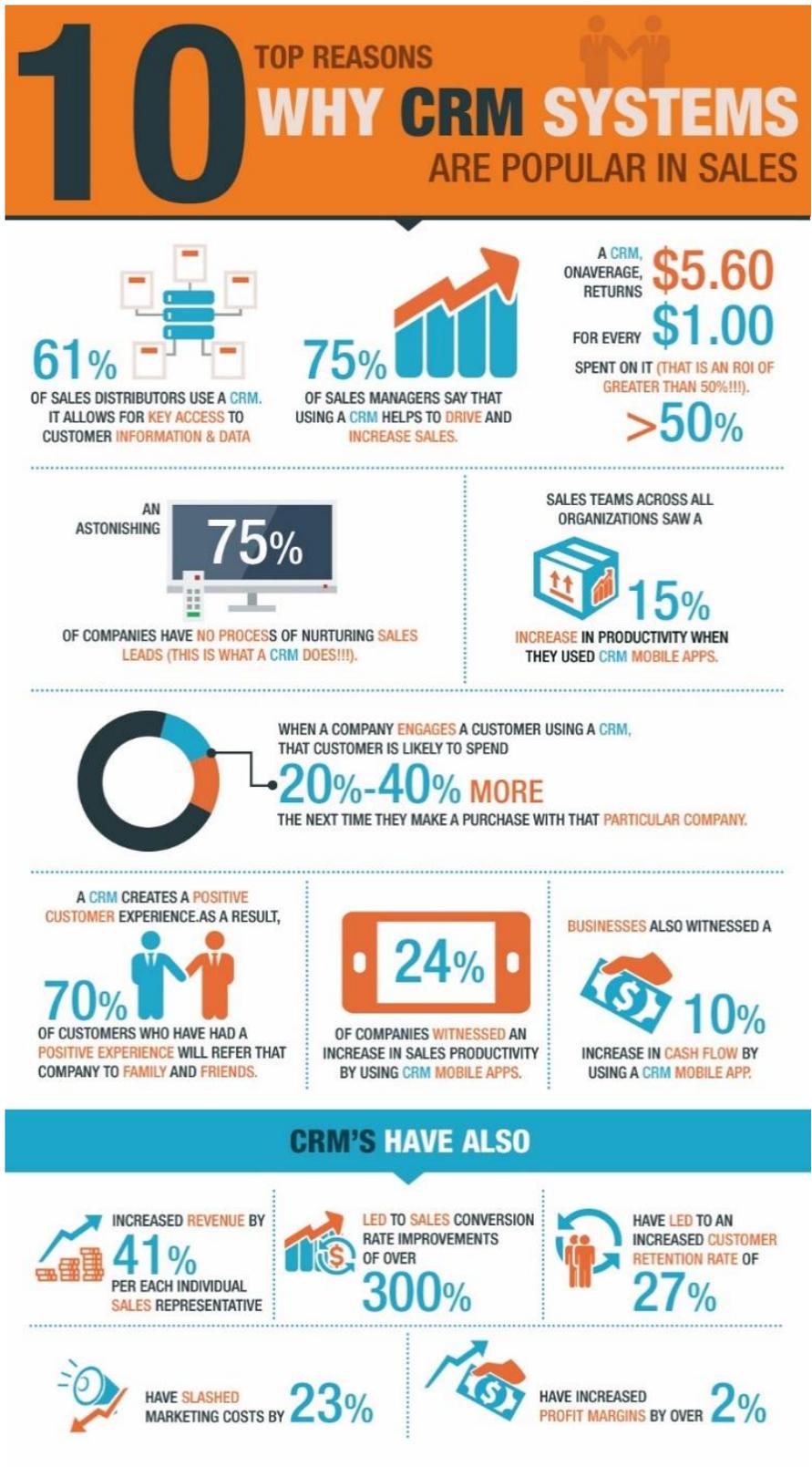


Figure 3, Importance of CRM by HubSpot

2.6.3 Different CRM systems

As was very briefly discussed in the previous part, there are over 350 different CRM systems. They vary in price, simplicity, ability to be customised in to liking and so on. CRM systems differ from each other like many other technological software do. They have different functions and levels, but the primary purpose of using one is the same (Keating 2016, Nimble).

The benefit of having these various choices to implement is that, as already discussed, it does not matter of the company or its current situation, if they want -they can implement a CRM system that is best suited and possible for them. Different CRM systems compete against each other, but also work in different segments and niches, which enables the fact of having these various choices, because for example a high-end CRM system does not compete with one that is free to use for a company but for being free has only limited possibilities. Then again, the CRM systems that compete against each other need to find that competitive advantage to differentiate them from the competition, thus get the market advantage (Keating 2016, Nimble, Rashid & Mclaughlin & Marvin 2017, PCMag).

A company must do thorough research when selecting the right CRM system for them. There are numerous differences between them and a company must identify the key aspects that they are looking for from a CRM system (Goldenberg 2008, 167-169).

2.6.4 Salesforce.com

The CRM system term was first used in 1995, but only in 1999 was the first CRM software developed. That pioneer was Salesforce.com. Salesforce.com was the first one to work as a cloud service and although, in 1999 the first CRM app for mobile devices was founded, the first CRM to remind the today's CRM systems was Salesforce's (crm.financeonline.com 2017).

Salesforce is the CRM market leader at the moment, with an annual revenue of approximately US\$8.4 billion and having a current market share of almost 20%. The founder and CEO of Salesforce is Marc Benioff. Salesforce also has won numerous

awards for being the most successful CRM software available. However, in some reviews, it is not seen as the best CRM available, because for example of its complexity. On the contrary, Salesforce is very customisable and unlike in many other CRM software, the dashboard can be customised to the company's liking by their own employees and also Salesforce enables domestic languages for many countries, mostly because they have the monetary possibility to do so. The benefits of Salesforce do speak for itself. For example; the company Shazam (a mobile music app, which has been downloaded over 10 billion times and is used in over 190 countries daily) increased their sales productivity remarkably in only two months by implementing Salesforce and its business analytics software - Einstein Analytics (Angeles 2017, BusinessNewsDaily, Hawkins 2017, Salesforce.com).

With Einstein Analytics, we've replaced manual, weekly reports that were sent out to leadership teams with dynamic, self-serve dashboards that are available whenever and wherever our employees are working around the world...No other product out there brings Shazam as much value to analysts, VPs and even our CRO, who opens the Einstein Analytics app every morning to understand how teams are functioning (Pete Miles, vice president of advertising operations 2017, Shazam).

As one of the main benefits of a CRM system, such as Salesforce, is managing all the customers thoroughly, no matter the size of the customer, it helps massively the Inside Sales people to be productive and having the strings on their own hands. Furthermore, a CRM software helps to generate more hot leads for all Sales Representatives, especially for the Inside Sales people who are so in need of them (McFadyen 2012, insidesales.com).

2.7 Inside Sales

Now that this literature review has covered the main topics regarding Inside Sales and giving it a deeper understanding, it is only natural to finally cover the main topic itself. The Inside Sales term has been used only since the 1980s, hence the term in itself is fairly new, but the concept and the idea behind it - is not. *"In 2004, when Dave Elkington and I founded InsideSales.com, we searched the keyword "inside sales" on Google and there was nobody else there. However, there were tens of thousands of companies that came up trying to hire inside sales reps."* (Krogue 2013). This previous

quote means that companies want to use Inside Sales as a strategy, but people, at least back in 2004, were not that familiar with the term, hence it needs to be defined clearly and needs to be researched for this thesis to have some understanding, if a company can grow its business with Inside Sales (Krogue 2013, Forbes Magazine).

2.7.1 Definition of Inside Sales

As was in the very beginning defined, "*inside sales is remote sales*" (Krogue 2013). However, this definition does not do the justice for the concept to leave it like this.

Inside Sales is sales done via modern technology, meaning that the usual/classical face-to-face "outside sales" is not necessary in some cases anymore, but the sales can be acquired through phone calls and emails from your office or home. Inside Sales, of course, is very different from telemarketing (Krogue 2013, Forbes).

Telemarketing is mostly just business-to-consumer (B2C) and cold-calling them, whereas inside sales is usually targeted to business-to-business (B2B) and the leads that are contacted are not picked randomly and are more often "warm". This leads to better results and to more sales. Inside sales is also more professional than telemarketing and is not seen as disrupting your work day, but to offer you something you or your company might need. In telemarketing, the sales persons purpose is to get the immediate sales done. However, with Inside Sales the purpose of the call is not always to get sales right away, but the inside sales rep maps out the needs of the customer and does a lead qualification so that the inside sales rep knows, if, and when the prospect is "hot" enough to acquire the sales from them. Whereas telemarketers have a pre-thought script they follow strictly and do their phone calls accordingly, some Inside Sales people might have some key notes or even a script draft, however the main difference is that they rarely follow that script whilst on the phone with a customer, since it is very unforecastable what is exactly said during a sales call between an Inside Sales rep and a customer, hence every phone call is different and cannot be scripted. Furthermore, Inside Sales people need to make multiple calls usually in order to acquire the sales (Krogue 2013, Forbes).

It must be understood also that Inside Sales is not customer service, although some companies refer their customer service as so. If the main purpose of those customer

servers is to make sales and to make outbound calls and not only answering inbound calls and are not in the company to help customers with some daily problems, then they can be referred as Inside Sales reps.

2.7.2 Inside Sales Process

The main difference between an Outside Sales Process and Inside Sales Process is that the latter one does not have the face-to-face step in it. They need to close the deal just using phone, email or other remote ways. As was covered previously in the "Sales Process" part of this literature review, it is vital to define a sales process for a company, because then the company and its sales people know how to proceed with the potential customers and that everybody follows that guide.

The sales process for an inside sales team differs between companies. The reason for this is that there is no one way to organise the sales process for a company's inside sales team. However, most companies that have a CRM software, modify their inside sales process accordingly to it. The reason behind this is that the process of putting the information of a lead into the system follow the pattern of a sales process. On the other hand, many companies need to modify even the CRM process and their sales process, because of the service/product they are selling and what type of process suits that company best (Salame 2014, Frontspin).

Next will be covered an example of the sales process used for an Inside Sales team in a Start-up company called "Contactual". They first had the process like following:

1. Inquiry
2. Qualified Lead
3. Prospect/Opportunity Development
4. Quote Proposal/Negotiations
5. Selected
6. Closed – Won
7. Closed – Lost

As can be seen the process is very simple and follows typical steps of a sales process. However, after a period of trial time done by Contactual, they discovered that this was not the best process for them and needed to modify it, so that the Inside Sales team

benefits from it in the most productive way. They removed the “opportunity development” step and included a few steps more to suit for their service. The modified inside sales process looked like the following:

1. Inquiry
2. Qualified Lead
3. Personalized Demo
4. Technical/Feature Fit
5. Quote/Proposal Sent
6. Selected
7. Closed – Won
8. Closed – Lost
9. Nurture

They realised that including steps to demonstrate their service was needed, especially since the Inside Sales person could not show it in person, therefore it is vital to take the customer through the service remotely. Furthermore, they added a “Nurturing” part, which is very important to be included so that the customer relationship is satisfactory and there is the possibility of making additional sales. *“In inside sales, it is important to define a clear sales process that promotes activity to move the prospects to the next stage...”* (Salame 2014, Frontspin)

This case example is a good example of how companies should modify their inside sales process and not take it for granted and emulate their own sales process with the one provided by the CRM software as a default. Inside Sales process steps differ from the ones outside sales people use, because they do not have the steps to meet with the customer face-to-face. They can use the time more efficiently; however they need to be clear when doing the sales pitch and promoting the service/product so that nothing is left unclear just because there is no actual physical presence, but only done remotely.

2.7.3 Importance of Inside Sales

New companies are founded more than ever before. This is at least according to a research covered in the Telegraph in 2016. 2015 was a record-breaking year in Britain and in June 2016, the speed of founding new companies was even greater (Palmer 2016). If new companies are being founded all the time, then it is only natural that

competition rises and a need for a good business strategy is needed (Palmer 2016, The Telegraph).

Then again according to a research done by Forbes magazine in 2013, they stated the following: "Approximately **543,000 new businesses** get started **each month [in the U.S]** (but more employer businesses shut down than start up each month)" (Nazar 2013). This is a result of having that immense competition and not having a solid business strategy (Nazar 2013, Forbes Magazine).

Once the company is founded and the key elements are in place, you need to implement the strategy to sustain the business and start growing it. One vital element is to have the Sales team organised. Companies use different methods to gain sales and especially nowadays, when the power of purchasing is with the customer, since they can browse different options from the internet easily, companies need to know the best way to reach the customer and to be able to sell themselves to the customer. The other aspect with internet and modern technology is that sales methods have changed or are beginning to change at least. Furthermore, the customer makes most of the buying decision online by themselves and might not meet or need a salesperson even at all (Aminoff & Rubanovitsch 2015, 24-27).

Why use Inside Sales? Outside sales people spend their time accordingly:

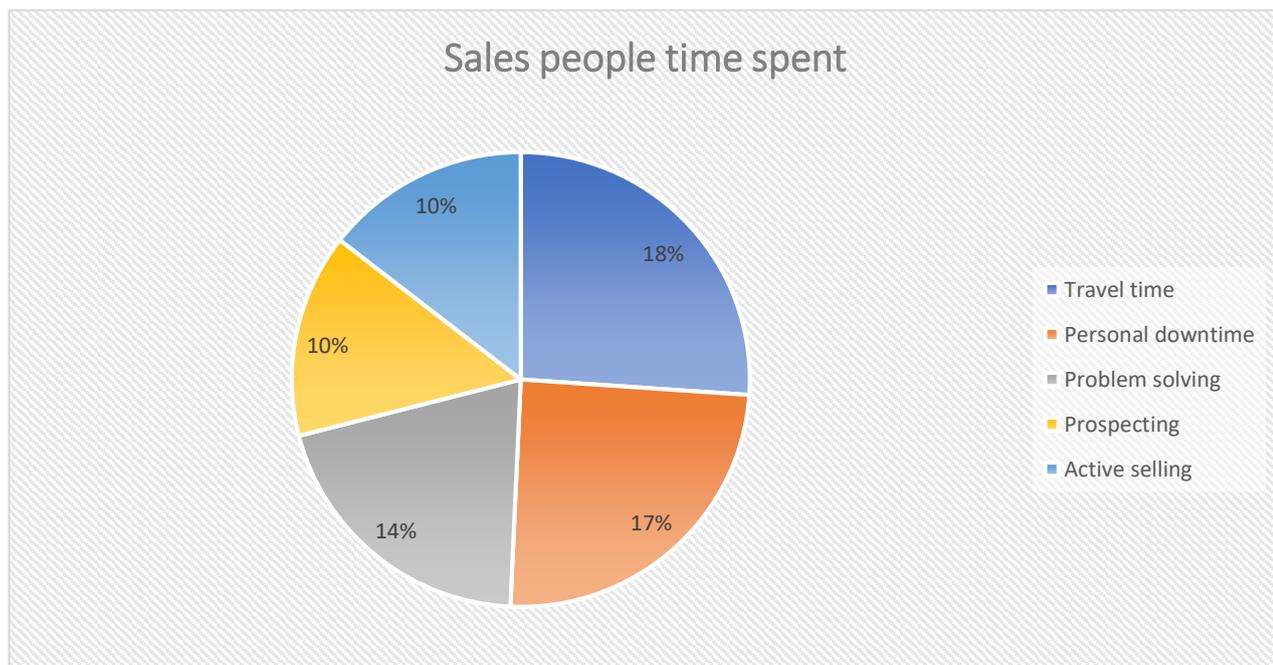


Figure 4 (Kotler & Armstrong 2008, 790)

The Figure 4 shows just how much time is spent for other things than selling. There is no similar graph available for an Inside Sales persons' time spent, but at least the "travel time" can be used for other purposes such as for selling.

Inside Sales is extremely useful, because it takes advantage of modern technology and is a very cost-efficient solution. However, the implementation of Inside Sales role to a company for the market targeted needs to be researched well before starting the actual implementation.

3 Methodology

As has been discussed, the research question and sole purpose of this thesis is to answer whether companies can grow their businesses with the implementation of Inside Sales. The case study was made by a company Hejco, in which the author is employed. The fascination and need to answer this question is relevant especially in Finland, because such researches are scarce in this market, although the use of Inside Sales is increasing in companies and in the Finnish business market.

The research method used for this thesis was exploratory research. This is, because exploratory research gives a great overview and basis for conducting a research about the use of Inside Sales for a company and, if it can be successful via that. The study was based on the company Hejco and the experiences Hejco had implementing Inside Sales. Exploratory research is mainly used to get a broad view of the topic or problem and the need for absolute accurate data is not needed -it gives a great base for a later, more accurate research of the question or problem if needed.

Qualitative research and data gathering was used for this thesis. The main purpose of using qualitative instead of quantitative is that the nature of the research question is fairly unfamiliar in the general knowledge and quantitative data is mainly collected via surveys and polls, which gives more broad opinions and not in-depth knowledge, which in this research is required. Furthermore, because this research focuses on a certain company, the need for people aware of the situation in this company can be only found via qualitative data collection.

Qualitative data was acquired through in-depth interviews. To be more defined the structure of the interviews were semi-structured interviews. "*These types of interviews are more structured than the non-directive interviews. While allowing some amount of flexibility to the interview, the interviewer ensures that he keeps the interview limited to the topics that are essential to the research.*" (Sreejesh 2014, Business research methods)

3.1 The chosen interviewees

The interview questions were structured and based on the contents of the literature review. The interview questions were formed to be open-ended questions to gain well composed answers, which can help to answer the research question with depth.

The three interviewees chosen were all employees from Hejco. This decision of choosing these interviewees was for the sake of getting data and knowledge of this particular company and its success with Inside Sales. The interviewees were all professionals in either the field of sales or marketing. The reason behind this is that, because marketing and sales have such a strong relationship in today's businesses, the research question needs the support of both to be answered as thoroughly as possible.

Two of the interviews were done in Finnish for the sake of a natural conversation and the possibility to let the interviewees answer as effortlessly as they can in their own native language. The third interview was done with a person from a different country. This interview was done via Skype and in English, which is not the native language of the interviewed nor the author. This, however did not affect the flow of the interview nor the depth of the questions or answers, since the interviewed is a highly educated professional who could compose well-explained answers to all questions.

The interviews are all in the appendix, so that the reader can see the questions and answers. The answers for the interview with Petri Vähä-Antila, the sales Manager of Hejco Finland, were written by the interviewed himself, but a Skype interview was done, although the answers were already written by the interviewed. Through this method of the interviewed having the questions pre-handed, he could give better answers, compared to answering from the spot. The answers written by Vähä-Antila were translated by the author freely.

The second interview was done face-to-face with the Marketing Coordinator of Hejco Finland, Jukka Lammi. The author wrote the answers as the interview went on and thus translated freely, since the interview, as already discussed, was done in Finnish. This method of being face-to-face was more natural comparing to the one on Skype. Furthermore, it flowed slightly better and produced some follow-up questions.

The third and final interview was with the Commercial Manager of Hejco, Johan Lekman. The interview was done in English and the author wrote the answers of the interviewed, whilst having the interview on Skype. The length of the interviews varied from 30-50 minutes.

4 Results and findings

The findings and results based on the interviews will be separated in to two parts. The first part will be discussing the support functions for an Inside Sales implementation in Hejco, these are the integration of marketing and sales, the sales process and funnel of Hejco and the use of CRM. The second part will then focus only on Inside Sales implementation findings based on the interviews. The literature review will be also used to provide some more in-depth analysis. However, as this is the case study for Hejco, most of the findings will be based on the interviews.

4.1 Marketing, sales and the CRM

Before the research question can be analysed thoroughly, it is important to analyse the findings regarding the supporting concepts based on the interviews. The interviews held questions about marketing, sales and the CRM.

4.1.1 Marketing and Sales

The interviewees were all first asked about their general knowledge on sales and marketing, depending on in which the interviewed was specialised in. Furthermore, they were asked, how they develop their knowledge in their respective areas of business. This question is already very relevant, because a modern organisation develops constantly and the people within, especially managers, needs to develop themselves accordingly to be up-to-date to the latest trends, concepts and models.

All the interviewees had the similar thought of not being satisfied on the level of their current knowledge, but wanting to educate themselves either with searching latest information online or from books or then attending a Master's Degree to improve themselves even further. This is a sign of modern professionals who want to perform well in the competitive employee markets. Furthermore, they are acknowledging the fact that they are not perfect and need to learn new things, to not only improve themselves, but also to improve the company they work at. These findings are relevant, because this proves that the idea of implementing Inside Sales for Hejco was not just a random

strategy to go for, however this subject will be discussed further down in the findings section.

After this question the interviewees were asked about how important they saw the integration between marketing and sales. Now, it must be pointed out, that the interviewees had not seen or heard the answers of other fellow interviewees, thus the fact that the answers were very similar, shows that the management in Hejco is in the same level of thought and development process of Hejco.

To begin with the answer of the Marketing Coordinator, Jukka Lammi, he said that the integration of sales and marketing is extremely important for a modern company. Lammi pointed out, that a company cannot function productively with the original model of having two separate departments. The need of the integration is for both departments and the information flow should go both ways. *"The integration should be seamless"* (Lammi 2017). Furthermore, Lammi stated that the current integration of marketing and sales in Hejco is not perfect and needs to be worked on. Now marketing is a middleman between management and sales. This means that the management tells marketing how they should work with sales and then marketing tells this to sales, which leads to the fact that it is a one-way discussion. Lammi concluded that the possibilities of marketing and sales are endless, if the integration does not stop and is being taken to new levels.

The Commercial Manager of Hejco, Johan Lekman, had very similar thoughts about the relationship of marketing and sales. Lekman stated that the integration is extremely important, because marketing takes care of a much broader customer group, whereas sales then has more focus on certain customers. These together help each other by marketing spreading brand awareness, which helps sales and then sales give out more detailed information for marketing after contacting and nurturing the customer, of which marketing can make use of for marketing purposes. They feed each other. Lekman pointed out that Hejco is on the right track, but not yet integrated enough.

The Sales Manager of Hejco Finland, Petri Vähä-Antila, had a very thorough answer to this question, which will be directly quoted and is translated from Finnish: *"The role of marketing has changed so that it is no longer a separate function, but is a part of different functions. A functioning marketing department integrates as a part of the customer's purchasing process and once done correctly it generates increasingly positive customer experiences, which has a direct impact on the company's sales revenue and*

profitability. In my opinion, understanding and putting extra effort to the customer journey, is a pivotal challenge for marketing nowadays. In Hejco it is important to understand that sales functions are developed to match the developing buying behaviour of a customer, as well as that the marketing functions integrate into sales even tighter.” (Vähä-Antila 2017)

This question was asked, because there is a strong link between marketing and sales, as can be seen from the answers of the interviewees. Furthermore, this information is vital to get a better answer for the research question of this thesis.

4.1.2 The Sales Process and Sales Funnel of Hejco

The interviewees were asked about how they saw the sales process of Hejco. This is important to know, because the sales process gives a direction for the Inside Sales process as well. Again, the interviewees were like-minded with their answers.

The main thought was that “cold-calling” is history and should not be used at any circumstances. Now that there are software solutions that automate and generate warmer leads, there is no sense in putting time and effort for making cold-calls. This was especially the thought for Vähä-Antila. He stated that the sales process is strongly going to the way of recognizing warm leads from a digital environment and that the sales functions in the process help the customer to make the purchasing choice.

In the interviews with Lekman and Lammi, the sales process for Inside Sales was also discussed briefly. Both stated that the process cannot work without a working CRM system, because just having a list of companies and names leads you nowhere and is a waste of the use of Inside Sales strategy. Furthermore, Lammi noted that there is no one way to go with a sales process and it depends on the customer and on the situation. However, he further added that marketing is needed in this sales process to give support for the sales people to have as much knowledge of the potential customer as possible.

Vähä-Antila was the only person to be asked about the Inside Sales funnel of Hejco. Vähä-Antila said that it is good to be used, because with that it is easier to track the

prospects and to link them to the automated marketing at a desired phase of the funnel. He said that this enables the prospect/lead to be contacted and warmed in a structured way. *"The shape of a funnel comes from the fact that on the bottom of the funnel there are the pearls and on the top, there are the vast amount of leads. Marketing impacts every phase of the funnel to boost the lead becoming eventually a pearl."* (Vähä-Antila 2017)

Vähä-Antila's view of the sales funnel, although is a funnel shape, was very similar to the one pointed out in the literature review by Macmillian. Vähä-Antila too, used the term pipeline often and stated the contribution of marketing and sales being constant not just something done at one point of the funnel, or not at all (See Figure 2).

4.1.3 The CRM in Hejco

As has been discussed previously about the importance of implementing a CRM system, this was a subject that needed to be included in the interviews. The interviewees were asked about their opinion of the importance of CRM, connection between CRM and Inside Sales and how the implementation of a CRM for Hejco has felt for them.

The best way to gather the findings about the CRM topic is to go each interview one by one, it gives a clearer outlook of the opinions of CRM for the purpose of this research question. The interviewees all had slightly different perspectives to the CRM subject. The first interview to gather the results will be Lammi's and other results will be looked afterwards in a more briefed form.

Lammi had an excellent observation about CRM: *"The CRM software does basically nothing in itself – it is the people who use it, that bring out the vast benefits and potential of the CRM."* (Lammi 2017). Lammi then continued that a CRM is vital for a modern organisation. As was in the literature review discussed, Hejco chose Salesforce for their CRM software, the interviewees were also asked for the reason, they thought, why Salesforce was chosen. Lammi said that in the perspective of marketing, HubSpot (the other CRM system the choice was made between) would have been the better choice, because its marketing tools are a bit more advanced than in Salesforce's. However, Salesforce is much better in the sense of sales and management, hence the choice was Salesforce.

Lammi then gave his opinion about the importance of a CRM for Inside Sales. He said that it is essential for Inside Sales to function properly. Once the Inside Sales person receives important data from different meeting points about the lead via the CRM software, it eases the job and even changes it, because there is no need for cold-calling anymore. Furthermore, even the less active leads will be contacted and not let hanging, like would be if there are no Inside Sales people to contact these less active leads. The field sales people do not have the time or interest to contact the "smaller" customers, hence the CRM system together with Inside Sales help massively.

Lammi concluded the CRM topic with the opinion of how the implementation has been so far for Hejco. He emphasized that the CRM is a responsibility that all the employees need to put effort in, otherwise it will be just an expensive Excel-sheet. Hejco is on a decent path with the implementation, but as said, all the employees need to be motivated to get it working for them. The problems and difficulties in the implementation process arise with people having different general knowledge of technological adaptation. This means that there are people who have no problem in learning a new software, whereas others are having major difficulties learning, which then cause frustration and lack of motivation, which again then leads to the CRM not being used and this causes it to be useless. It needs to be understood that the implementation takes time, effort and education for something new, but the potential and benefits are worth it.

The results of the interview with Lammi, give a great basis for the analysis, hence the interview results about CRM with Lekman and Vähä-Antila will be covered in a smaller scale.

Lekman agreed with Lammi, that it is essential for a company to have a CRM. *"Having a CRM is a must today, you need to have a tool to support you, [and] the main benefit is to help me do things at the right time, so that I can be as productive as possible."* (Lekman 2017). Lekman also stated that a company needs to be data driven and a CRM software enables this. Being data driven helps to understand better, which customer in your portfolio are big or small, thus who needs the most time from you. Lekman also shared the idea of which Salesforce was chosen – better for management and sales.

Lekman finally stated that having this CRM is great and Hejco is on the right track. Also, in the management perspective, his opinion was that, it is very good to have this kind of a software, because it helps managers to see easily, that in which step of a

sales process or funnel the sales person needs the most help. For example, if a Sales Representative has a lot of prospects and leads, but few closed and won, it means that this person needs help in the quotation and making the final push for the eventual sale.

Vähä-Antila also shared the idea, that a CRM software is needed for a modern company. He said that it is necessary, because now it can be coordinated, in Hejco how a lead becomes a paying customer for Hejco. He also added that it increases the productivity of a sales person and clarifies the management of the sales department. Furthermore, he thought that a CRM is an excellent tool for the integration of sales and marketing. His first impression of the implementation of Salesforce for Hejco has been good, and although Hejco is still in the early stages of adaptation, benefits have risen in the form of seeing the current situation Hejco is in and also that they are much better aware of the customers and their needs and situation.

To put together the ideas in a very cohesive way. All interviewees agreed that the integration of marketing and sales is vital nowadays and that it is going well for Hejco, but it could be taken a bit further. The same opinion applied to having a CRM system – it is essential for a modern organisation. It is an excellent tool, which is extremely beneficial once implemented thoroughly and is being put effort in. Hejco is on the right track with the implementation as well, but is still on the early stages now.

4.2 Inside Sales in Hejco

The interviewees were asked a few questions regarding Inside Sales in general and then regarding the implementation of it to Hejco.

To get the reader a better understanding of how well the concept of Inside Sales is even amongst the professionals, they were asked about their previous experiences regarding Inside Sales. The most experience of the interviewees had had Mr Lekman. He has worked as an Inside Sales person in his working career, in Sweden though. The other side of the coin is Mr Lammi. He had not heard of the term Inside Sales before the implementation in Hejco. Mr Vähä-Antila knew the term well and has been around his entire working career, only in different names, such as phone sales.

The knowledge of the term also reflects to the definitions the interviewees gave for Inside Sales. Mr Lammi said that in his opinion the definition of Inside Sales is two-folded. The first is that if implemented just like that without using any modern tools to support it, it is telemarketing and nothing more. The second definition was that if there is a working CRM software, then an Inside Sales person can either sell, or then just help the customer and then forwarding the customer to an outside sales representative, if needed. It is similar to customer service, but added with outbound sales oriented calls. Lammi has a point, that once implemented correctly, it works well, but when it lacks the right tools then it is more of telemarketing. In the literature review the difference between telemarketing and Inside Sales was discussed, but the benefits of Inside Sales vanish without the tools and right implementation as Lammi points out.

Mr Lekman's definition had somewhat similarities. He has had a lot of experience with Inside Sales, furthermore with Inside Sales which has been a successful unit in a company he has worked previously. Lekman's definition is the following: "*Inside account manager, a sales rep handling customers inhouse, if not selling directly at least leading them there [to the website]. Account management by phone.*" (Lekman 2017) It can be said that this definition has the same idea behind it as does Lammi's second one.

Mr Vähä-Antila had a slightly different definition. He thought that it is a sales function that helps the customer to purchase the products or service of the brand by using electronic equipment such as email, a CRM system and phone.

4.2.1 Reasons for implementing, the belief in it and the planning

Interviewees Lekman and Vähä-Antila were asked the question of what were the key reasons to implement the Inside Sales strategy. Mr Vähä-Antila said that the decision thrived from the outsourced research done for Hejco. The research showed that the smaller customers did not need a field sales representative to come to them, therefore it was seen logical to implement Inside Sales.

Mr Lekman had a more in-depth answer to this question. On top of the research, he had other reasons why Hejco should implement Inside Sales. It was seen that the customer mix of Hejco had mainly smaller customers included, therefore it would be sensi-

ble not to go there and sell face-to-face, which had been the case before the implementation. This, of course, was not the most cost-efficient way to contact and sell to these customers, hence the idea of implementing Inside Sales. Furthermore, the frequency of contacting would be much higher with Inside Sales reps, than field sales reps, therefore it would be again more productive.

Connecting to the previous question, Lekman and Vähä-Antila were also asked that what assured them that this was the right strategy to go with. Mr Vähä-Antila referred to the research done again and that there were no reasons seen at that time, why they should not go for it. Lekman also mentioned the research, but also added that Hejco had such strong ambition to grow and the targets were set high for the coming year, that they wanted to find a way to grow the sales revenue with low costs. Inside Sales was thought to be the answer.

Finally, the two interviewees were asked about how they planned to get the Inside Sales role to work well in Hejco, since it had not been implemented before in the company. Vähä-Antila stated that the plan was that the Inside Sales team validates the vast amounts of customers that the field sales reps could not, because of prioritisation. Then after the valid data would be in place, they would contact them when the purchasing time was right according to the information received during validation.

Lekman's idea was that the role first had to be defined, then defining the sales process and then acquiring new customers and keeping tabs with old customers. With this model, it was thought that Inside Sales was sure to work. The salary model was constructed to be motivating to acquire new customers and to nurture existing ones as well.

4.2.2 Inside Sales: to be or not to be...

The interviewees needed to answer the question of why Inside Sales strategy failed in Hejco. Mr Lammi stated, that Hejco lacked the tools and systems to implement Inside Sales well. The costs were higher than the benefits, since there was no CRM or a complete sales process for Inside Sales to work with. It was an excellent learning process; it taught that Hejco needs a CRM system and that cold-calling is not effective. Furthermore, the Hejco organisation learnt that selling work-clothes remotely is extremely

hard and the Nordics were not ready for it. "*Hejco cannot be the one to teach the customer this way of purchasing, it can be Coca-Cola or some other big company with the resources to teach the customers for a new way of purchasing the B2B products or services, but Hejco cannot afford it.*" (Lammi 2017)

Mr Lekman's answer was very alike to Lammi's. There was not enough knowledge about the markets, although the research had been done. Furthermore, the right tools were not in place for Hejco. It was not about the people who worked within Inside Sales or supported it, but the strategy could not be implemented, because of the pre-mentioned factors, supporting tools are essential and the setup needs to be right.

Mr Vähä-Antila answered, that the timing was wrong, the tools were not in place and the setup was wrong to be integrated as apart of marketing and sales.

The follow-up question to the interviewees was that, what would they have done differently in the implementation. All the interviewees had the same answer; the implementation happened too early and a CRM software should have been in place before implementing an Inside Sales strategy.

All the interviewees were asked about their opinion, whether Inside Sales could be used as a working sales strategy for the growth of a company and if it could be implemented again later in Hejco. All the interviewees said that it can be used as a working sales strategy, however a CRM needs to be in place for Inside Sales to work in an organisation in any way. Lammi and Lekman both had the idea of not having the Inside Sales people do only selling, but to help the customers and to forward them to the right purchasing channel for example to another field sales person or to the web shop. Vähä-Antila added that: "*the seamless integration of sales and marketing is vital for Inside Sales to work in a company.*" (Vähä-Antila 2017)

5 Discussion and conclusion

The research question, the author wanted to answer was: can a company grow its business by implementing the Inside Sales strategy. In addition, the case study was done from a company called Hejco, an international work-clothes manufacturer.

Based on the literature review and the three interviews conducted with professionals from Hejco, it is important to review whether it there is sense in putting effort to form an Inside Sales team. Hejco is an international company, however it concentrates on the Nordic countries, therefore the markets are similar to each other, at least in the amount of possible customers and trends, whereas comparing for example to the United Kingdom or United States of America, the markets are very different. Thus, this thesis cannot be used as a world-wide accurate research, from which decisions whether to go for Inside Sales or not, should be made of.

However, based on the pre-mentioned research a conclusion of the use of Inside Sales can be made. The literature review generated a great basis for the answer for this question of this thesis. There were plenty of data and information pointing out that companies need to adapt new strategies and one of these is Inside Sales.

5.1 Marketing, Sales and the CRM

Marketing and sales cannot work as separate departments anymore, but they need to be integrated together. With the integration, the company works more efficiently and the seamless work together enables the entire company to be more productive and generate better sales revenue.

A clear sales process needs to be defined for the company, no matter if the company uses only field sales or also Inside Sales, with the sales process the company works in an efficient way (Kotler & Armstrong 2008, 996).

A sales funnel helps the management and other employees such as marketing and sales reps to see the status of their progress, furthermore in the perspective of marketing, they put input to all the phases of the sales funnel and as they are integrated to sales they work together to help the customer make the purchasing decision.

A CRM software is vital for a modern company. This was stated both in the literature review and in the interviews. Without a CRM software, a company cannot work in a modern productive way, however as Lammi stated, it is not the CRM that does the job, but the people who, with their efforts, make the CRM fill its potential and benefits. Furthermore, Inside Sales strategy cannot be implemented without a working CRM system in the company.

5.2 Inside Sales in Hejco

Hejco implemented the Inside Sales strategy in 2016, based on a research conducted for them by an outsourced company. The implementation was made, because the research suggested that small companies would be willing to buy work-clothes without the need of a face-to-face meeting. However, after the implementation, it was quickly noticed that this strategy did not work. The reasons were poor timing, lack of knowledge in the target market and customers. Furthermore, one of the most influencing factors of it not working was the lack of a CRM system.

Inside Sales people would be cold-calling customers based on Excel-lists and outdated data. Furthermore, the sales process of the Inside Sales team was not clear enough; for example, once the customer had been contacted and they were in the need of new work-clothes, there were no clear steps or process of who should help them in the purchase, which again confused the customer and made the internal closure difficult.

The fact that Inside Sales strategy failed in Hejco, happened in all markets. Hence, it can be stated that the reason was not with the people who worked as the Inside Sales people, but because of the already mentioned reasons. However, for example according to Johan Lekman, the Commercial Manager of Hejco, Inside Sales is an extremely good sales strategy to get results with low costs. Furthermore, as had been stated in the literature review, the time spent by field sales representatives is not extremely effective (see Figure 2).

In Hejco, the ambition of acquiring new customers and via them, being more profitable at low costs, was one of the factors that led to choosing Inside Sales as a strategy. As Jukka Lammi, the Marketing Coordinator of Hejco Finland stated, it was an extremely

good learning process for Hejco. The understanding of needing a working CRM software and learning more about the market and customers was essential information for Hejco.

5.3 Conclusion

Inside Sales (remote sales) as a sales strategy has been around for a long time, however now it is starting or is already in an even stronger role for the growth of a company. It is very cost effective and through this method, more customers can be contacted, thus it can bring more sales to the company. However, if it would not bring more sales for the company, but approximately the same figures as before the implementation, it would still mean that the company is more profitable, because Inside Sales people are much cheaper than field sales reps.

In order to get the Inside Sales working for a company and growing your business, a working CRM system needs to be in place. Furthermore, thorough knowledge of your target market and customers need to be acquired before going for Inside Sales strategy, because this method might not work as well in a work-clothes market as it works for an office supply market. Timing of the Inside Sales role needs to be accurate and also clear sales process for them needs to be made. Furthermore, Inside Sales is not just selling, but giving aid to the customer in all the steps of the purchasing journey, thus the sales person needs to be professional and needs to know if they can sell the product/service to them, or should they forward the customer to either a field sales representative or to the web shop.

6 Further Recommendations

As has been widely discussed, the first effort of the implementation of Inside Sales for Hejco, failed. However, the concept can work for a company and grow the business and make it more profitable. The previously mentioned characteristics and processes need to be in place though.

Hejco could start the implementation again in the future, especially now that Hejco has implemented Salesforce as their CRM software. More research needs to be done for the markets of Hejco and the company needs to have the resources to implement this strategy again. It cannot be hurried, because then the same mistakes are being repeated. A company can grow its business via Inside Sales, once done right and with the right tools.

This thesis is not an accurate research, but was done on the basis of the company Hejco. If a company should decide whether to implement Inside Sales or not, they should do further research, because it highly depends on the market they work in and not just do the decision based on this thesis. As exploratory methods were used, it gives a good basis for further research, but not accurate data. In general, Inside Sales can be used to grow the business, this is however, in the right business environment, with the right tools and functions.

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Interview with Jukka Lammi

The purpose of this interview is to get qualitative information about the topic of this thesis – Inside Sales.

The interviewed is Jukka Lammi, the Marketing Coordinator of Hejco Finland.

1. **Who are you; what is your role in Hejco?** (Name, and the role in Hejco, what are your responsibilities etc.) Jukka Lammi, Marketing coordinator, Finnish marketing, digitalization of global Hejco markets.
2. **What is your background for your marketing career, education, other workplaces?** Worked in companies: Meedoc, Basso Media, Puoli aika-website, HIFK-football marketing.
3. **How would you see your knowledge for marketing in general? In other words, how do you improve your knowledge about this subject, to become a better marketing manager and to improve your skills in marketing, or are you already perfect in it...?** Markkinointi nykyään laaja käsite, ei vain tv-mainos, toimenkuvaiset lasit päässä, eli tarvitsee lisätietoa vain tietystä asiasta kuten crm, tai verkkosivujen optimointi. Kun päätetään jotakin yrityksen tasolla niin silloin kehittää itseään juuri sillä alueella, ongelmaratkaisupohjaista.

Translation: Marketing nowadays, is a broad concept, not just a TV-commercial. To educate myself, I focus on certain things that relate to the work I am doing at that moment. This means that if I am implementing the CRM for marketing, I will educate myself in the matter of CRM. This self-education is problem solving based.

4. **What is your view with marketing and how do you see it connecting with sales, especially in Hejco?** Tärkeä rooli markkinoinnilla, ne integroituvat myynnin kanssa, pitäisi olla saumatonta, tietoa molempiin suuntaan, pidetään ajan tasalla. Toiminta ei tehokasta, jos perinteisellä menetelmällä, Markkinoinnista saarellaan ehdot myynnille, joita myyjät joutuvat noudattamaan, pois tästä, markkinointi välikätenä johdolta myynnille. Rajattomat mahdollisuudet, jos viedään eteenpäin integroitumista.

Translation: Marketing has a vital role nowadays and the integration between sales should be seamless. Information should flow both ways and keeping both departments

up-to-date. Functioning is not efficient, if done in a classical way. Right now, in Hejco marketing sets the tone for sales and is a middleman between sales and management. If the integration is taken to the next level, the possibilities are endless.

5. **What do you feel is the sales process for Hejco and can you explain the steps?** Riippuu, todella huono inside salesissa oli, kylmiä soittoja oli jne. Ei yhtä tapaa, automaation kautta lämmin liidi jolloin kenttämyyjä ottaa kontaktia tietyn rajan ylitettyä, myyjä koittaa sopii tapaamista, siitä tehokas ajankäyttö ja käynti alueittain, tarjous, clousaus. Markkinointi tukisi koko prosessia antamalla tietoa asiakkaasta etukäteen, ja myös myöhemmin.

Translation: It depends, it was not well formulated in the Inside Sales, there were cold-calling etc. There is no one way to do it though. Digital automation generates warm leads, and once the lead is warm enough a field sales person will contact them and then work accordingly to get the sales. Marketing supports the entire process by providing information at that time and later on.

6. **What is your view for CRM, why did you choose to go for Salesforce and how do you see it linking to Inside Sales? Why use a CRM and how do you feel about it now as we have implemented it?** Pakollinen, modernin organisaation elinehto, Crm ei itse tee mitään, vaan käyttäjät mahdollistavat sen potentiaalın ja hyödyn.

Translation: A must. Essential for a modern organisation. CRM in itself does nothing, but the users enable the potential and benefits.

Myynnin kannalta ja johdon kannalta oli parempi, HubSpot olisi ollut parempi markkinoinnin kannalta, paremmin suunniteltu markkinointia varten.

Translation: Salesforce was better for management and sales, but for marketing, HubSpot was better.

Ehdoton, johon kirjoautuu aktiivisesti tietoa eri kohtaamispisteiden kautta ja helpottaa/muuttaa kokonaan Inside Sales työtä. Ei kylmiä soittoja eikä jätetä vähemmänkään aktiivisia asiakkaita roikkumaan, vaan Inside Sales ottaa koppia.

Translation: Vital, information is being collected from different meeting points, which is a game changer for Inside Sales. No more cold-calling and less customers are left hanging.

Hyvä, kunhan se lähtee vauhtiin, heikkous on eritasoiset käyttäjät it-osaaminen, sekä motivaatio. CRM hyödyt eivät jakaudu tasaisesti, vie aikaa implementoida, omaksuminen. Jos kaikki eivät ole mukana, niin homma ei toimi. Maakohtaiset erot Suomi vs Ruotsi vs Tanska, vain kallis excel jos ei käytetä. Integraatiovastuu.

Translation: It is good, as long as we get it running. The weakness is the different levelled users and their knowledge on modern technology and software. Motivation is important and the implementation takes time. If everybody does not involve themselves, it will not work. If it not used properly, it is just an expensive Excel. Differences between countries with the usage.

7. **How do you see Inside Sales and where did you first hear about it? How would you define Inside Sales? Had you had any previous experience of it, before implementing it to Hejco's sales strategy? Hejcolla kuulin ensimmäisen kerran, määritelmä: kaksvaiheinen, malli a) puhelinmyyjää vastaava tehtävä b) välivaiheen myyjä, tarvittaessa myy ja tarvittaessa tukee asiakkaan palvelua. Kun tarpeeksi validia dataa, niin Inside Sales voi toimia. Ei aikaisempaa.**

Translation: First time heard at Hejco. Definition is two-folded. model a) telemarketer like, model b) a sales person, who helps the customers and also sells. Once there is valid data enough, then Inside Sales can work.

8. **What was your first opinion or assumption of the implementation of Inside Sales to Hejco? Ei hyvät, sen hetken järjestelmien takia onnistuminen todella epätodennäköistä**

Translation: Not good, the tools and systems used at that time made the implementation working highly unlike.

9. **How do you now feel about Inside Sales as a possible strategy for a company in general and for Hejco's future? Pystyy markkinoilla, joissa ei tarvitse**

nähdä tuotetta. Visuaalisilla avuilla voi toimia. Asiakkaan ehdoilla toimiva sekä joustava. Inside salesia voi hyödyntää siten, että käyttää esim. chat palvelua jossa näyttää tuotteita Hejcolla.

Translation: In markets where the products does not need to be seen. With visual aids, it can work. Works with the terms of the customer in a flexible way. For example, the use of chat can be used to help the implementation of Inside Sales work in Hejco.

10. What would you have done differently in the implementation of Inside Sales in Hejco? Liian aikaisin, CRM tarve.

Translation: Too Early, the need of CRM.

11. In your opinion, what were the main reasons why the Inside Sales strategy failed in Hejco?

Ei järkeviä prosessia, ei CRM, vain exceliä, ei valmista myynti prosessia, tehontonta, kulut korkeammat kuin tulot siitä. Oppimisprosessina hyvä, opittiin CRM tarve, kylmä soitto turhaa, työvaatteita ei voi ostaa puhelimessa, ei oltu organisaationa valmiita tähän myyntimalliin, markkinat ei valmiita, me ei haluta olla se kuka opettaa asiakkaalle tämän. Onnistumista ei mitattu.

Translation: No good processes, no CRM, only excel-sheets. No premade sales process, inefficient, costs higher than profits. In a learning process, good. Learnt the need for CRM, work clothes cannot be bought via phone, as an organisation we were not ready. The market was not ready, we do not want to be the one to teach the customers this way of purchasing. The success was not measured.

Interview with Johan Lekman

Interview questions for Johan Lekman

The purpose of this interview is to get qualitative information about the topic of this thesis – Inside Sales.

The interviewed is Johan Lekman, the Commercial Manager of Hejco.

1. **Who are you; what is your role in Hejco?** (Name, and the role in Hejco, what are your responsibilities etc.) Johan Lekman, The commercial manager, (1/2016, 10 brands) responsible of Hejco, future sights to be an own brand.
2. **What is your background for your sales career, education, other workplaces?** Diploma in marketing, selling ads to computer magazines as an Inside Sales person. Office Product company (Staples), Inside Sales person there 1 year, Sales Rep then, 25-years old Sales Manager there 1+ years, felt too young to be there in that role, key account manager then 3 years at another company, then back to Staples 1 year as a KAM, the being Staples regional manager, Now at Hejco for 3 and half years.
3. **How would you see your knowledge for sales in general? In other words, how do you improve your knowledge about this subject, to become a better sales manager and to improve your skills in sales, or are you already perfect in it...?** Having this experience is good, and being a sales person so I can relate to the employees, trusting others for selling and I support, because this is how I feel is the best way. Developing skills in management with different courses and in Staples having an own training school, strategic working learning etc, this all has helped me as a leader. Keeping up-to-date, how others do in their market, you need to develop, not only sales strategy but the entire organization.
4. **What is your view with marketing and how do you see it connecting with sales, especially in Hejco?** Very connected to each other's, marketing takes care of a larger customer group, and it creates brand awareness which is very important, digitalization nowadays makes sales and marketing very connected. In Hejco we are quite integrated and on the right track.
5. **What do you feel is the sales process for Hejco and can you explain the steps?** Sales process in Inside Sales; Based on the research, replacing work

wear once a year, validating the date of purchase, targeting warm leads thanks to crm, then contacting them,

6. **What is your view for CRM, why did you choose to go for Salesforce and how do you see it linking to Inside Sales? Why use a CRM and how do you feel about it now as Hejco has implemented it?** Having a CRM is a must today, you need to have a tool to support you, the main benefit is to help me do things at the right time, so that you can be as productive as possible. Having sales & marketing connected we are getting new leads. You need to have it to be data driven, you need to analyse it and then you know who to target when you have accurate data of all the customer (big, small, time usage, timing etc.) We chose Salesforce, because I had previous experience of it, in HubSpot the marketing was better, but the sales tool was better in Salesforce.

We need to get the use of it, crm is there to help not only sales people but also management, needs to be implemented thoroughly, need to see the data for manager, helping in coaching when you see the pipeline of the sales rep.

7. **How do you see Inside Sales and where did you first hear about it? How would you define Inside Sales? Had you had any previous experience of it, before implementing it to Hejco's sales strategy?** At Staples. In the future getting the customer service to work outbound as well, needs to be structured though. Definition: Inside account manager, a sales rep handling customers in-house, if not selling directly at least leading them there. Account management by phone.
8. **What were the key reasons that helped to make the decisions to go for Inside Sales?** One reason was the research, customer mix for Hejco are mainly small customers, outside sales reps visiting too small customers too often, costs high, Inside Sales is more cost effective, also the frequency of being in contact to customers higher than outside sales.
9. **What was your first opinion or assumption of the implementation of Inside Sales to Hejco?** In the beginning, it was hard to measure how well it went, quite early realised it was quite hard to sell and get the required information.
10. **What assured you that, this strategy was right to be implemented to Hejco at that time?** Quite same as question number 9, had ambition to grow, how could we increase our sales in the best possible way at costs low enough. Having support for the sales reps etc.

11. **What were your plans to get the Inside Sales role/team to work successfully for Hejco?** First had to define the role, acquiring new customers, defining the sales process, according to this theory it would work. Salary model to motivate both new customer acquisition and old customer nurture. To define the KPI's, targets, nro contact, customers, created business opportunities.
12. **How do you now feel about Inside Sales as a possible strategy for a company in general and for Hejco's future?** Absolutely, but not the same way we did last time. Digital marketing helps so much, and we did not have that, hot leads etc. we should have a role working in the onboarding process to bring potential customers and contacting them at the right time and leading them to the right purchasing channel. In general, it is a good base to grow.
13. **What would you have done differently in the implementation of Inside Sales in Hejco?** Should have started in a smaller scale. To see if it works or not. The tools need to be in place CRM Pardot etc...
14. **In your opinion, what were the main reasons why the Inside Sales strategy failed in Hejco?** Not having the right tools, lack of knowledge of the markets and customers, not about having wrong people in place, but in general had good people for the role as well as coaching, but the setup was wrong at that time.

Interview with Petri Vähä-Antila

The purpose of this interview is to get qualitative information about the topic of this thesis – Inside Sales.

The interviewed is Petri Vähä-Antila, the Sales Manager of Hejco Finland.

1. Who are you; what is your role in Hejco? (Name, and the role in Hejco, what are your responsibilities etc.) Petri Vähä-Antila, Myyntijohtaja, vastuuna Hejco liiketoiminta Suomessa.

Translation: Sales Manager, responsibility – Hejco business in Finland.

2. What is your background for your sales career, education, other workplaces? Koulutus : Markkinoinnin YO 1989, menossa parhaillaan EMBA koulutus TAMK Tampere, myynnin ja markkinoinnin johto – ja kehitystehtävistä 26 vuoden työkokemus.

Translation: Marketing college degree 1989, now an EMBA education in TAMK Tampere, the management of sales and marketing. A 26-year experience from the field.

3. How would you see your knowledge for sales in general? In other words, how do you improve your knowledge about this subject, to become a better sales manager and to improve your skills in sales, or are you already perfect in it...? Minulla on laaja kokemus myynnin kehittämisestä vuodesta 1991. Kullakin aikakaudella on omat erityispiirteensä, niin nytkin kun asiakkaiden ostoprosessit ovat isossa murroksessa digitalisaation johdosta. Haluan olla tässä kehityksessä mukana ja siksi työskentelen nyt brändin kanssa joka panostaa tulevaisuuteen, myynnin ja markkinoinnin kehittämiseen. Samanaikaisesti MBA opintoni tukevat työtäni.

Translation: I have a long history of developing sales from the year 1991. Each time period had their own special features, like now, when the purchasing behaviour are going

through a big break due to digitalisation. I want to be involved in this change and therefore work in a company with future visions and ambition to develop sales and marketing. At the mean time MBA studies support my work.

4. What is your view with marketing and how do you see it connecting with sales, especially in Hejco? Markkinoinniin rooli on muuttunut siten että se on osa toimintoja, ei irrallinen toiminto. Toimiva markkinointi integroituu osaksi asiakkaan ostomatkaa ja onnistuessaan tuottaa kasvavassa määrin positiivisia asiakaskokemuksia joilla on suora yhteys liikevaihtoon ja kannattavuuteen. Customer Journeyn ymmärtäminen ja siihen panostaminen on markkinoinnin mielestäni keskeinen haaste tänäpäivänä. Hejcoissa tärkeää on että myyntitoiminnot kehitetään vastaamaan asiakkaiden kehittyvää ostokäyttäytymistä + että markkinoinnin toiminnot integroituvat yhä tiiviimmin myyntiin.

Translation: The role of marketing has changed so that it is no longer a separate function, but is a part of different functions. A functioning marketing department integrates as a part of the customer's purchasing process and once done correctly it generates increasingly positive customer experiences, which has a direct impact on the company's sales revenue and profitability. In my opinion, understanding and putting extra effort to the customer journey, is a pivotal challenge for marketing nowadays. In Hejco it is important to understand that sales functions are developed to match the developing buying behaviour of a customer, as well as that the marketing functions integrate into sales even

5. What do you feel is the sales process for Hejco and can you explain the steps? Myyntiprosessi on voimallisesti siirtymässä malliin jossa tunnustetaan kuumat liidit digitaalisesta ympäristöstä ja myyntitoiminnot auttavat asiakasta ostopäätösten tekemisessä. Kylmäsoittojen aika on historiaa.

Translation: The sales process is going to the direction of a model of recognizing warm leads from a digital environment and the sales functions help the customer to make the purchasing decision. The time for cold-calls is history.

6. What is in your opinion about the sales funnel for Inside Sales in Hejco, meaning that can Hejco use one and if so, what does it consist of (prospects, leads, closers

etc.)? Myynnin pipeline on hyödyllinen Inside sales toiminnolle mahdollistaen liidin tehokkaamman seurannan ja kytkemisen markkinoinnin automatioon halutussa vaiheessa. Tämä mahdollistaa liidin / prospektin lämmittämisen hallitusti.

Translation: The sales pipeline is useful for Inside sales, enabling a more efficient way of tracking leads and connecting marketing automation on a wanted phase. This enables the warming of the lead / prospect in a controlled manner.

7. What is your view for CRM, why did you choose to go for Salesforce and how do you see it linking to Inside Sales? Why use a CRM and how do you feel about it now as Hejco has implemented it? CRM on välttämätön jotta voimme koordinoida asiakkuuden kehittymistä liidistä asiakkuuteen, hoitaa ja kehittää asiakkuutta systemaattisesti. Tehostaa yksittäisen myyjän toimintaa ja selkeyttää myynnin johtamista. Loistava työkalu myynnin ja markkinoinnin tiivistäville toiminnalle. Ensivaikutelmat erinomaiset, olemme vasta alussa mutta jo nyt voidaan nähdä positiivinen vaikutus kun kaikilla tasoilla näemme tilanteen ja olemme aivan uudella tavoin hereillä ja valmiin asiakkuuksien kehittämiseen.

Translation: CRM is essential so that we can coordinate the development of a lead in to a customer and develop the customer systematically. It boosts the functioning of a single sales person and clarifies the management of sales. Excellent tool for the integration of marketing and sales. First impressions are great, we are at the beginning, but already benefits can be seen.

8. How do you see Inside Sales and where did you first hear about it? Inside sales on hyvä myyntikanava silloin kun se on integroitu brändin markkinointiin ja myyntiin riittävällä tavalla ja että tietojärjestelmät tukevat ko. myyntikanavan toimintaa. Inside sales on vanha termi ja se on ollut käytössä koko myyntiurani aja eri muodoissa, aiemmin se kulki nimellä puhelinmyynti.

Translation: Inside Sales is a good sales channel when it is integrated to the marketing and sales on a proper level and that data systems support the function of it. Inside Sales is an old term that has been used throughout my sales career, with different names, earlier it went by the name phone sales.

How would you define Inside Sales? Inside sales on myyntitoiminto jossa myyntihenkilöt auttavat asiakas ostamaan brändin tuotteita sähköisiä työvälineitä ja puhelinta hyväksikäyttäen.

Translation: Inside Sales is a sales method, where the sales person help the customer to buy the product / service using electronical aid or a phone.

Had you had any previous experience of it, before implementing it to Hejco's sales strategy? Kyllä, aikakaudella jolloin internetin vaikutus ei ollut vielä tässä mittakaavassa 91-2010, tuolloin puhelin oli merkittävässä roolissa ja sillä kontaktointi tehokasta vs. nykyisin.

Translation: Yes, in a time where the internet did not have a massive impact, 91-2010, at that time phone had a great role and contacting customers with it was efficient vs now.

9. What were the key reasons that helped to make the decisions to go for Inside Sales? Vuonna 2016 teimme pohjoismaisen markkinatutkimuksen, jossa todettiin että pienemmät asiakkaat eivät tarvitse myyntiedustajaa paikalle, teimme johtopäätöksen että voimme kontaktoida nämä asiakkaat Inside sales toiminnolla.

Translation: In the year 2016 we made a Nordic reasearch, where we noted that smaller customer do not need a sales rep there, hence we made a decision that we can contact these customers using inside sales.

10. What was your first opinion or assumption of the implementation of Inside Sales to Hejco? Kannatin johtoryhmässämme esiintuotua mallia perustuen em. tutkimukseen.

Translation: I supported this model, brought out in our management team.

11. What assured you that, this strategy was right to be implemented to Hejco at that time? Tutkimus antoi meille näkemyksen kuinka tehostaa myyntitoimintoja, emme nähneet tuolloin syytä odottaa myyntitoimintamallin uudistamisen kanssa.

Translation: The reasearch gave us a vision how to improve sales, at that time we did not see a reason why to wait for the implementation of the new model.

12. What were your plans to get the Inside Sales role/team to work successfully for Hejco? Suunnitelma oli se että Inside sales validioi ja kontaktoi n. 3000 asiakkuutta joiden kontaktointi vanhalla myyntiorganisaatiolla oli priorisoinnin takia jäänyt tekemättä. Tämän validionnin tavoitteena oli asiakasdatan päivitys joka johdtaa täsmällisempään kontaktointiin jatkossa sekä myynnin että markkinoinnin osalta.

Translation: The plan was for Inside Sales to validate and contact about 3000 customers, which with the old methods could not be done, because of prioritisation. The target for this validation was to update customer data, which leads to a more punctual contacting.

13. How do you now feel about Inside Sales as a possible strategy for a company in general and for Hejco's future? Inside sales on mahdollinen myyntikanava jatkosakin, mutta sen tehokkuus perustuu toimivaan CRM järjestelmään ja saumattomaan markkinoinnin ja myynnin yhteistoimintaan.

Translation: Inside Sales is a possible sales channel in the future as well, but the productivity bases on the CRm system and seamless integration between marketing and sales.

14. What would you have done differently in the implementation of Inside Sales in Hejco? Käynnistimme liian aikaisin, käynnistys olisi pitänyt tehdä vasta kun CRM on ollut toiminnassa vähintään 6 kk.

Translation: We started it too early, it should have been done after the CRm system had been running at least for 6 months.

15. In your opinion, what were the main reasons why the Inside Sales strategy failed in Hejco? Ajoitus sekä toimintamallin puutteellinen integrointi osaksi markkinointia ja myyntiä.

Translation: Timing and the lacking integration of the model to sales and marketing.

