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Navigating Ethical Dilemmas: The Lone Wolf Salesperson

Bruno Lussier, PhD, Nawar N. Chaker, PhD, Nathaniel N. Hartmann, PhD, and Deva Rangarajan, PhD

Within the remote-work culture of real estate, it is not unusual to find a lone wolf salesperson, one who prefers to work independently when making decisions, setting priorities, and accomplishing goals. These individuals tend to prioritize their own interests and are prone to focus on outcomes rather than on structured processes. It is not uncommon for lone wolf salespeople to have a "sell at all costs" mentality, which can lead to ethical dilemmas. In this research, we explore the relationship between lone wolf sales tendencies and ethical behavior. We also explore whether perceived supervisor support and the cognitive attribute of self-efficacy serve as moderators for ethical decision-making tendencies of a lone wolf salesperson.

Lone wolf salespeople are prevalent in many industries, and their strengths likely lend themselves toward a profession like real estate, where much of the work is self-initiating and individualistic. Through understanding the findings of our research, supervisors and sales managers can more effectively manage salespeople with lone wolf tendencies and take action to mitigate any unethical behavior.

Perceived Supervisor Support

Not all salespeople prefer to cooperate and collaborate with colleagues. Lone wolves possess intrinsic motivation, determination, and a competitive spirit that fuels their career success; they are also recognized as poor team players who view colleagues as less competent and not as committed to the organization. Harnessing the aforementioned elements and moderating the negative aspects, though, can produce a highly effective employee.

Through our research, we found that the *perception* of supervisor support tends to decrease the negative relationship between categorical lone wolves and ethical decision making. With input and support from a supervisor, lone wolf salespeople will be less inclined to believe that they can get away with unethical behaviors.

Supervisors who add accountability, guidance, and emotional support can help develop a lone wolf salesperson by promoting values and behaviors that deter unethical decision making. In addition, perceived supervisor support can foster an environment of recognition and feedback where lone wolves may be more inclined to seek support from others. By providing recognition

and positive reinforcement, supervisors can influence lone wolves to excel and attain personal goals while also contributing to and achieving goals of the firm.

Self-Efficacy

Self-efficacy is an individual's confidence in their abilities to perform a job or task in an effective manner. While having confident, competent employees is crucial to running a successful real estate business, salespeople who are high in self-efficacy are more focused on themselves and the pursuit of individual goals rather than the goals of the firm. We explored the impact of self-efficacy on lone wolf salespeople's tendency toward ethical behaviors and found that self-efficacy strengthens the negative correlation between lone wolf salespeople and their ethical decision-making. In other words, salespeople who feel they do not need the help of others may be tempted to complete tasks in an unethical manner if it means they can do it without having to depend on someone else. For instance, an agent may offer legal advice to a client in an effort to expedite the purchase process, whereas legal advice should always be referred to an attorney. In this case, the agent and firm can be held responsible for said advice.

Another key takeaway from our research is that when interviewing for sales positions, employers should note that the assumption that a higher level of self-efficacy is always beneficial is not necessarily true. When paired with lone wolf tendencies, self-efficacy heightens unethical behaviors.

Conclusion

One thing made clear through interviews with sales professionals is that lone wolves are not inherently unethical, nor do they have intentions to act in an unethical manner. However, an inclination toward unethical behaviors can harm customer relationships and have negative consequences for the employer.

Lone wolves provide value to a selling organization in their high energy and determination to get things done, but they require the proper oversight to mitigate unethical behavioral tendencies. By providing guidance and feedback, an effective supervisor can reduce a lone wolf's tendency toward unethical behavior.

In real estate, there is not always a structured, guided process for connecting with a customer and making a deal happen. Every transaction has different obstacles and special circumstances, which is why our research provides helpful insights into effective management strategies. Through our research, we found that lone wolf salespeople, compared to their colleagues, are more likely to act unethically. Most concerning is the finding that self-efficacy strengthens the relationship between lone wolf tendencies and negative ethical behaviors surrounding sales efforts. By contrast, lone wolf salespeople are less likely to act unethically when they feel that their supervisor is supportive of their goals.

By understanding the tendencies of a lone wolf salesperson, a supervisor or employer can effectively manage to achieve optimal results from salespeople while mitigating unethical behavior that is detrimental to the firm.

Recommended Reading

Lussier, Bruno, Nawar N. Chaker, Nathaniel N. Hartmann, and Deva Rangarajan (2022), "Lone Wolf Tendency and Ethical Behaviors in Sales: Examining the Roles of Perceived Supervisor Support and Salesperson Self-Efficacy," *Industrial Marketing Management*, 104, 304-316.

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Co-Worker and Supervisor Support During Pregnancy

Kristen P. Jones, PhD, Jacquelyn M. Brady, PhD, Alex P. Lindsey, PhD, Lilia M. Cortina, PhD, and C. Kendall Major, MD

Many studies confirm the presence of stress in the workplace, including stress incurred at work during pregnancy. These stressors are related to both work-life issues during pregnancy, such as workload and deadlines, and to recovery after pregnancy, especially in the event of postpartum depression and physical recovery from childbirth. Therefore, workplace stress can impact prenatal and postpartum health, which in turn, affects return to the workplace and subsequent productivity. This study reports on two factors that can mitigate stress pregnant women encounter at work: coworker support and supervisor support received during pregnancy. Alleviation of stress during pregnancy is likely to lead to lower incidence of postpartum depression, faster physical recovery, and greater ease of transition back into the workplace for the mother.

Stress Surrounding Pregnancy in the Workplace

Many different factors can elevate stress levels for pregnant women, and this stress can be caused by a handful of things. In the workplace, there are external stressors, caused by the surroundings and conditions of the workplace, and internal stressors that are caused by pregnancy itself.

Some external stressors during pregnancy include the fear of pregnancy-based discrimination and the stress caused by conflicting role demands. While there are laws in place protecting pregnant women from workplace discrimination, there is still an underlying level of stress that arises from the fear of being treated differently once women disclose their pregnancy. Task and role demands in the workplace also cause stress as women navigate balancing the demands of work with the demands of their pregnancy. Along with external stressors, there are internal stressors that impact women. These include body changes, psychological changes, and hormone changes—all internal causes of stress that can interfere with health and work.

The stress that pregnant employees experience in the workplace can harm both their health and productivity. Therefore, it is essential to take a closer look at the role that coworkers and supervisors play in mitigating the stress that pregnant employees feel in the workplace.

Supporting Pregnant Employees

According to research, having social support at work from coworkers and supervisors can benefit pregnant employees. Social support is defined as the psychological and material resources provided by a social network to help individuals cope with stress.[1]

Coworker Support

Those in the workforce often spend more hours of the week with coworkers than they do with family members. As such, it is vital for coworkers of pregnant employees to understand how valuable their support can be. Coworker support can look like many different things: helping one another, sharing knowledge, and providing encouragement can all be characterized as forms of support that provide benefits and help alleviate stress for those who are pregnant and employed.

Coworker support can equip women with tools to aid in the balancing act of work and pregnancy. Social support between coworkers not only enables women to better cope with stress, but it also makes them more stress-resistant, which leads to both mental and physical health benefits.[2] Strong relationships at work can also provide pregnant women with a place to outwardly express their feelings and concerns surrounding their pregnancy. These relationships provide a support system within the workplace that becomes a highly valued resource.

Supervisor Support

Supervisor support is a very powerful resource for pregnant women. Research suggests that the benefits of coworker support may be limited if supervisor support is not also present. This is because supervisors hold a different level of power than coworkers. Supervisors are responsible for setting an example and the tone which encourages support among coworkers. Supportive supervisors play a crucial role in protecting women from the stressors commonly found in the workplace.

Supervisors can provide a different level of support for pregnant women, as they make important decisions that can influence women's perceptions of stress, such as decisions about maternity leave, flexible work, time off for doctor's appointments, etc. The decisions a supervisor makes regarding such topics are likely to dictate the level of stress a woman feels at work. Supportive supervisors who react proactively to pregnancy are proven to provide the most benefits for pregnant women.

Effectively Creating a Supportive Workplace in Real Estate

Since the majority of all real estate agents today are women, understanding pregnancy and how to reduce stress among employees in the real estate industry is essential. Not only will social support have health benefits for expectant mothers on your team, but such care can also impact your firm's bottom line. There are already some inherent norms in place that are beneficial for

pregnant women within real estate. For example, flexible work schedules are very helpful when it comes to balancing pregnancy and work. Beyond allowing a flexible schedule, brokers and team leaders have the power to provide support to combat external and internal stressors.

As a fellow broker or agent, you can help alleviate external stressors when you let your pregnant coworkers know that they can rely on you for support. One way this can be done is simply by showing empathy and concern. You can also show support by offering to help with various daily tasks. This could be as simple as filling in for a pregnant agent when she has a doctor's appointment or offering to set up yard signs for new listings. Internal stressors can be more intimidating to approach, but a great way to start would be through strong communication— simply asking a pregnant coworker what you can do to support her or what she needs is a great start. Coworkers may not be able to change internal stressors, but they can take time to listen, support, and encourage. In return, open communication about stress can lead to a healthier self and a healthier relationship with work.

At the end of the day, it takes a committed and caring team to foster an environment that reduces stressors for pregnant women at work. In a fast-paced industry such as real estate, knowing how to help reduce stress for pregnant women is essential. Being a supportive agent or broker is one key that can help both your firm and pregnant employees succeed.

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Dr. Kristen P. Jones (PhD – George Mason University) teaches undergraduate and graduate-level courses related to human resource management, conducts research on workforce diversity and inclusion, and mentors doctoral students. Her program of research focuses on identifying and

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Dr. Alex Lindsey's (PhD – George Mason University) program of research investigates fair and equitable solutions to mitigate diversity-related challenges such as prejudice and discrimination in the workplace. Because seemingly trivial instances of disadvantage can create substantial inequity over time in the workplace, it represents a ripe context in which to study manifestations of disadvantage and potential solutions to these serious problems. His research seeks to generate effective strategies that targets of prejudice, their allies, and organizations can use to reduce inequality and promote inclusion in the workplace. Specifically, Dr. Lindsey's work has addressed diversity training effectiveness, impression and identity management strategies, and diverse team dynamics. His work has been published in quality outlets such as *Journal of Applied Psychology* and *Journal of Business and Psychology*.

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Effects of Sales Managers' Leadership Worthiness on Salesperson Turnover

Vishag Badrinarayanan, PhD, Aditya Gupta, PhD, and Nawar N. Chaker, PhD

Salesperson turnover is an important issue for organizations, not only due to its financial and operational impact, but also for its potential to weaken internal and external relationships. Previous research has investigated individual, organizational, and workplace related causes of salesperson turnover. Building on the familiar saying "People don't quit jobs, they quit bosses," our study proposes a new concept, sales managers' leadership worthiness, and demonstrates that perceived leadership worthiness increases salespersons' trust in and identification with their managers and, ultimately, reduces turnover intentions.

Defining Leadership Worthiness

Previous research has indicated that worthy leadership consists of three dimensions: capacity to lead, commitment to lead, and character to lead.[1] Extending these dimensions to the sales context, our study defines sales managers' leadership worthiness in terms of three factors: (1) competence, (2) charisma, and (3) behavioral integrity.

- *Competence* is salespeople's perceptions of managers' abilities that signal that managers have enough knowledge and can function effectively to assist their subordinates.[2] Thus, competence captures a managerial capacity to be worthy leaders.

- *Charisma* is salespeople's perceptions of managers' abilities to inspire subordinates to work diligently to achieve organizational and sales goals, while being observant enough to understand the needs of their followers.[3] Thus, charisma captures a managerial commitment to exercise worthy leadership.

- *Behavioral integrity* refers to salespeople's perceptions of the consistency between their managers' values and behaviors, as well as managers' tendency to act ethically and respectfully. Thus, behavioral integrity captures managerial character to be worthy leaders.

Although the standalone impact of these factors on certain organizational outcomes has been previously studied, our objective was to determine their collective impact on salesperson turnover intentions.

Leadership Worthiness and Salesperson Turnover Intentions

Our study first hypothesized that sales managers' leadership worthiness would negatively impact salesperson turnover intentions; in other words, the more worthy a leader is perceived to be, the less likely salespeople will experience turnover intentions. Salespeople are more likely to approach worthy leaders for guidance.[4] Through this guidance, salespeople have support when problems arise, resulting in less job stress, higher job confidence, and organizational commitment.[5] Our results indicate that there is a significant negative correlation between leadership worthiness and salesperson turnover intentions, confirming our hypothesis. As discussed next, our study went further to examine the underlining mechanisms by which sales managers' leadership worthiness impacts salesperson turnover intentions.

Salesperson Identification with and Trust in Managers as Mechanisms

Psychological identification, or a perceived sense of oneness, occurs when an individual recognizes and values the attributes of another individual. Identification leads to defining oneself in terms of another individual, which brings about better cooperation and receptivity to that individual's influence. Accordingly, when a salesperson identifies with a sales manager, it can positively influence job-related outcomes, such as increasing the salesperson's desire to support the manager, job satisfaction, and overall job performance.[6]

When salespeople perceive their manager to be competent and charismatic, favorable evaluations of the manager may create a desire to internalize and respond to the manager's attributes. This desire can then be manifested through identification and result in the manager being viewed as a role model for the salesperson. Perceptions of behavioral integrity also play a key role in this process by fostering an environment of psychological safety and creating identity security.[7] The results of our study show that sales managers' leadership worthiness positively influences salesperson identification with managers and that, in turn, salesperson identification negatively influences salesperson turnover intentions. These results support the idea that salesperson identification with managers is one mechanism by which leadership worthiness indirectly impacts salesperson turnover intentions.

A second mechanism explored is salesperson trust in their managers. With managers and salespeople working together constantly and interdependently, trust is a vital component of effective relationships. Previous research has shown that subordinate trust in leaders increases positive outcomes, such as satisfaction and performance, and reduces negative outcomes, such as intention to quit.[8,9] Our results demonstrate a positive relationship between sales managers' leadership worthiness and salesperson's trust in their sales managers. Due to their distinctive

characteristics, worthy leaders cultivate trust through offering support and guidance, promoting shared vision, and exhibiting moral character. Results also show a positive relationship between salesperson trust in managers and identification with the sales manager, supporting the notion that employees are more likely to form bonds that foster identification when they trust their leaders.[10] Finally, consistent with prior research, our results show a negative relationship between salesperson trust in the sales manager and turnover intentions, suggesting that trusted managers can reduce subordinates' desire to leave an organization.

Gratitude as a Moderator

The moderating impact of a salesperson's gratitude toward the sales manager builds on the idea that "attributions are the causal explanations that individuals use to interpret the world around them and adapt to their environment."[11] Along these lines, gratitude, a positive emotion which

stems from an experience-based attribution of past performance to the manager, would help to improve interpersonal relationships between salespeople and their managers. Our study shows that gratitude negatively moderates the relationship between leadership worthiness and employee turnover intentions, suggesting that leadership worthiness leads to lower (higher) turnover intention when gratitude is higher (lower). Further, we find significant support for gratitude as a positive moderator between sales managers' leadership worthiness and salesperson identification with sales managers, indicating that leadership worthiness leads to higher (lower) identification with sales managers when gratitude is (lower) higher. However, we do not find significant support for the positive moderating effect of gratitude on the relationship between sales managers' leadership worthiness and trust in sales managers.

Collectively, our study provides additional insights regarding how sales managers' leadership worthiness may exert a "pull-to-stay" effect (an impact that minimizes salesperson turnover intentions) and the pathways of identification with the manager and trust in the manager that leadership worthiness works through in reducing turnover intentions. Additionally, we also establish the importance of gratitude of the salesperson towards their sales manager. Specifically, this study underscores how salespeople's perceptions of middle management (sales managers) can have an impact on the decision to stay with a company.

Implications for Managers

This study shows how sales managers can develop leadership characteristics and interpersonal relationships to reduce salesperson turnover intentions. First, by understanding how leadership worthiness negatively influences turnover intentions, managers can work to improve their competence, charismatic influence, and behavioral integrity. Specifically in the real estate realm, it is important for managers to be knowledgeable about the current real estate market and be cognizant about challenges that their real estate agents are commonly dealing with. They need to inspire performance toward a collective goal by balancing the needs of the salespeople with the business objectives. In their interaction with salespeople, managers need to "walk the talk" and demonstrate consistent, equitable, and honest behaviors. The combination of these characteristics contributes to perceptions of leadership worthiness, which creates better relationships between managers or team leaders and their agents by creating a space where employees feel safe enough to share concerns and ask for help, thereby, reducing agent turnover intentions.

While applicable to all managers, these results are especially important for middle managers, who have the greatest amount of interaction with agents. For upper managers, the three factors of competence, charisma, and behavioral integrity should be used as core considerations during the hiring process of middle management. These factors should also be integrated in training and in evaluating the performance of managers. Additionally, these perceptions of managers can be periodically assessed among employees to monitor their perceptions of leadership and manage agent turnover intentions.

Recommended Reading

Badrinarayanan, Vishag, Aditya Gupta, and Nawar N. Chaker (2021), "The Pull-to-Stay Effect: Influence of Sales Managers' Leadership Worthiness on Salesperson Turnover Intentions," *Journal of Personal Selling & Sales Management*, 41(1), 39-55.

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Making Every (Employee) Voice Count
Marlene S. Neill, PhD, APR and *Shannon A. Bowen, PhD*

Organizational communication managers are tasked more and more with prioritizing employee communication due to the increase in employees working remotely. Listening, one of the primary components of communication, which also influences employee turnover, has not received much attention in research or in practice. We conducted our study to learn more about the state of listening in U.S. companies and organizations.

The Basics of Listening and Strategic Organizational Listening

Listening is organized into three dimensions: cognitive, behavioral, and affective.[1] Cognitive listening indicates understanding and interpreting messages; behavioral listening includes using verbal and non-verbal cues; and affective listening indicates understanding emotions.[1]

While everyday listening can be defined using these components, it is important to highlight strategic organizational listening, which requires more formal focus, as it may lead to improvements in organizational performance, trust, and commitment with stakeholders and publics.[2] Strategic organizational listening focuses on information that 1) improves organizational learning, 2) questions the organization's current assumptions, and 3) impacts the organization's decisions.[2] This organizational-centered definition of listening, however, is dependent on leadership's sincerity and desire to learn from listening to employees.[2]

Ethical Listening and the Voice of Employees

Ethical listening comes with an expectation that everyone has something important to share while promoting being open, proactive, and empathetic.[3] Valuing the voice of employees is crucial to ethical listening in an organization. Previous research involving the voice of employees found eight elements necessary to best benefit from this asset:

1) Company culture is open to listening
2) Organization addresses the politics of listening
3) Organization has policies that specifically require listening
4) Organizational systems are open and interactive
5) Organization has invested in technology that can help with listening on a large scale

6) Resources for listening are available to support the active monitoring, analysis, and response to complaints, questions, and suggestions made by employees
7) Skills for large-scale organizational listening have been developed
8) Articulation of what is said to senior management is accurate and clear[3]

The importance of ethical listening to the voice of employees is necessary, as employees often resort to silence when they believe it won't make a difference or may result in negative consequences.[4] Employee silence typically results in increased disengagement and decline in trust. Pseudo-listening—when stakeholders share concerns that have no impact on decision making—is another issue that negatively impacts employee voice.[5] Additionally, if employees see that the organization is failing to listen to their voices, the organization will likely experience higher employee turnover, lower morale, and less productivity.[6]

Current Environment of Listening Based on Study

While understanding the theories of strategic organizational listening, ethical listening, and employee voice are vital in improving listening within organizations, it is important to first examine what listening looks like today within organizations. Specifically, our study sought to examine the most common methods organizations are currently using for organizational listening and the effectiveness of those efforts.

When asked what methods organizations use to listen to internal stakeholders, the top five answers survey respondents highlighted were departmental meetings, meeting with direct supervisors, annual employee surveys, employee intranet, and anonymous reporting systems. Departmental meetings and meetings with direct supervisors had many more responses compared to anonymous reporting systems. When comparing these answers to what was most *effective* to organizational listening, managers and nonmanagers greatly differed in their answers. The five most effective efforts in order according to nonmanagers were 1) meeting with direct supervisors, 2) departmental meetings, 3) anonymous reporting systems, 4) employee intranet, and 5) town hall meetings. By contrast, managers rated the following five efforts as the most effective: 1) meetings with direct supervisors, 2) annual employee surveys, 3) departmental meetings, 4) employee intranet, and 5) anonymous reporting systems. Based on this information, what is currently being used in organizations may closely match what managers view is most effective but varies in terms of what nonmanagers prefer when it comes to communication and listening.

This finding is then mirrored by the satisfaction ratings of organizational listening efforts for the two groups. Nonmanagers were seen to have significantly lower satisfaction when looking at organizational listening compared to managers. Specifically, nonmanagers were found to be the least satisfied with the quality of listening that occurs with high-level leaders and most satisfied with the listening that occurs in meetings with their peers. Nonmanagers also collectively rated their organizations more favorably in their usage of technology for listening but noted less

satisfaction when addressing their organization's ability to collect bad news and concerns. Meanwhile, women were also seen to have a significantly lower satisfaction about organizational listening compared to their male counterparts. Women were also less likely to agree with the statement that they personally felt listened to. Overall, women and nonmanagers were less satisfied with the level of listening and how listening was happening currently within their organizations compared to managers and males. Likewise, lower-level managers were also less satisfied with organizational listening compared to mid- and top-level managers.

How Can Real Estate Management Improve?

These findings can be applied to real estate firms and even to client-agent relationships. We recommend that managers implement listening methodologies that nonmanagers consider more effective for organizational listening, such as direct meetings, departmental meetings, and town hall meetings where agents can voice concerns and comments to managers. Additionally, it may be helpful to decrease less-effective means of listening and designate resources toward more effective methods.

Employees can perceive inauthentic approaches to listening, particularly when management does not take action on employee concerns. Inauthentic listening can result in decreased commitment and engagement by employees. As such, firms and managers should focus on improving listening skills and practicing more ethical listening while considering feelings and emotions of their employees.[6] Management should also consider following up with employees who bring forward specific concerns and/or recommendations. To maintain trust and commitment, managers should discuss changes or plans of action to address employee concerns.

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Dr. Marlene Neill's (PhD – The University of Texas at Austin) research interests include ethics in public relations, public relations management, integrated communication, ethics in advertising, and internal/employee communication. Her research has appeared in leading academic journals including *Corporate Communications: An Internal Journal, Journal of Current Issues & Research in Advertising, Public Relations Journal, Journal of Media Ethics,* and *Public Relations Review,* among others. Dr. Neill has also co-authored *PR Women with Influence: Breaking through the Ethical and Leadership Challenges and Public Relations Ethics: Senior PR Pros Tell Us How to Speak Up and Keep Your Job.* Dr. Neill is significantly involved in the prestigious Public Relations Society of America, previously serving as the chair for the Southwest District, on the PRSA Nominating Committee, and as the faculty adviser for the Baylor University PRSSA chapter. Prior to her academic career, Dr. Neill worked in nonprofit and government public relations.

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Digital Information Flow Continuum: A Service Dominant-Logic Perspective

James Peltier, PhD, Andrew Dahl, DBA, and Eric Swan, DBA

Value-enhancing digital innovations are transforming service ecosystems and evolving the service provider and consumer relationship. Traditionally, value co-creation has been considered in light of business-to-consumer (B2C) interactions. The emergence of digital information platforms allowing consumer-to-consumer (C2C) communications is changing how service ecosystems establish and create value for service innovations. The communications regarding these innovations have transitioned from pure "one-to-one" communication and engagement processes to "many-to-many" informational touchpoints. Our study assesses these information flows in service ecosystems and how they influence decision-making of digital innovations. Using Service-Dominant Logic (SDL) as a theoretical lens, we observed digital information flows and how service providers and consumers co-create value within these platforms. We studied three types of information flows, business-to-consumer (B2C), consumer-to-consumer (C2C), and combinations of both (B2C/C2C), and the extent to which they influence value perceptions and usage likelihood across new digital innovations.

Service Ecosystems and Service-Dominant Logic

A service ecosystem is a system of actors, all involved in creating value through exchange and interaction. SDL is a theoretical perspective that places service exchange (not goods) and consumers (not producers) at the center of value creation.[1] Under this perspective, value is defined and co-created by the consumer, and co-creation only exists if the consumer is actively involved in the process. There are three core principles of the SDL perspective that have implications when evaluating the usage and rollout of new digital innovations.

First, an emerging SDL service ecosystem perspective suggests that a complex network of actors exists involving interrelationships and communications among multiple participants that may not exist in a traditional service exchange.[2] In other words, there are more people involved exchanging information with digital innovations. Second, SDL explains that each actor contributes operant resources to co-create value. Operant resources reflect the personal skills and knowledge each participant uses during the service exchange and serves as the primary basis of exchange. In the real estate context, the real estate agent contributes professional expertise and

market knowledge to serve clients in the real estate transaction process. The buyer contributes contextual information such as housing requirements, preferences, and financial capabilities. Value occurs at the highest level when actors maximize their usage of their operant resources. Finally, efficient resource integration and utilization of the limited operant resources available to service participants are critical to ecosystem value co-creation. Consumers experience information asymmetry in service ecosystems when they feel their providers and current social networks offer insufficient insights for making appropriate decisions. Consumers are likely to then seek out external information and resources to reduce information asymmetry to help judge the viability of service innovations.[3]

Digital Information Flow Continuum

Recent service research suggests that service ecosystems are entering a new era in which service providers, technologies, and consumers all play key roles in the creation, dissemination, and sharing of information for decision-making.[3,4] The interactions between actors who are sharing their knowledge and resources are thus key contributors to decisions related to purchases and usage of new digital innovations. Traditionally, service providers viewed consumers as passive recipients of information. As digital platforms have evolved, there is a growing consensus that C2C communications play an increased role in decision-making. Information flows have thus transitioned from at-arms-length communication processes to interactive processes in which consumers access and share information from a multitude of digital sources. Specific to real estate, consumers have information from multiple sources including information created by their real estate agent (B2C), external sites such as Zillow that have agent created information and also offer C2C information sharing (B2C/C2C), and social media platforms where consumers share information with other consumers (C2C).

Successful rollouts of new digital innovations require multiple actors to share information and offer their expertise to maximize usage and value co-creation. Consumers are likely to seek out information from various sources to make decisions or consider utilizing a new digital innovation. Our research conceptualized this through our Digital Information Flow Continuum. The continuum captures B2C communications, combined B2C/C2C communications, and C2C communications. We examined the impact of each of these communication types on how consumers perceive value and then expected their usage of a new digital innovation.

Our findings indicate that all communication types (B2C, B2C/C2C, and C2C) in our Digital Information Flow Continuum directly or indirectly impacted usage likelihood of a new digital innovation. This indicates that service ecosystem decision-making and communications are complex, integrative, and collaborative. Many organizations view their communications with consumers as dyadic relationships. Our results suggest that communications should be viewed in light of a multi-actor service ecosystem in which there are diverse information sources influencing decision-making.

This research offers new insights into the ever-growing use of online communication platforms that affect decision-making. One surprising result is that the blended communication platform (B2C/C2C) was the only information source to directly impact usage likelihood without an indirect mediator. We would suggest that this is because in a blended communication platform consumers receive both trusted information from their provider, and at the same time, desire to receive insights from other consumers. This hybrid contains competencies associated with each endpoint of the Digital Information Flow Continuum that enable value co-creation.

Real Estate Implications

Digital innovations have changed the way real estate customers receive information and make purchase decisions. Our research offers a number of insights for real estate professionals. First, as real estate professionals seek to rollout new digital innovations with their clientele, such as a new document signing software or video tour platforms, they should consider how they communicate with clients to encourage usage. The communication strategy should include multiple approaches within the Digital Information Flow Continuum. For example, to maximize utilization of a new digital innovation, a real estate organization should consider communications directly with their customer (B2C), through some sort of combined platform (B2C/C2C), and point their customers to other customers reviews (C2C). If the real estate organization only directly communicates to their customers (B2C), the customer will then likely seek out C2C information on their own before deciding to adopt or use.

Our research also offers insights into the decision-making process of customers in a real estate transaction. Most customers will likely seek and receive information from all elements of the Digital Information Flow Continuum (B2C, B2C/C2C, C2C). Therefore, agents should be very cognizant of the various platforms from which customers are viewing information about their personal agent profile and also any listings that may be on various digital platforms. Information is coming from multiple sources to customers, and agents need to be proactive updating and cultivating that information across the continuum.

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About the Authors

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Dr. James Peltier (PhD – University of Wisconsin-Madison) is a leading researcher and national voice in the sales and marketing practices. As an active author, Dr. Peltier has over 150 referred journal publications and conference presentations. His research has been published in the *Journal of Personal Selling and Sales Management, Journal of Business Research, Industrial Marketing Management, Journal of Public Policy and Marketing, European Journal of Marketing, Journal of Advertising Research, Journal of Interactive Marketing,* and *International Journal of Advertising,* among many others. Dr. Peltier's sales expertise lies in developing buyer-seller relationships, understanding students' intent to pursue a sales career, database requirements for the sales force, and successful relationship marketing practices.

Dr. Peltier directed the launch of the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater Institute for Sales Excellence in 2012 and has led it to national prominence as an institution and as a sales competition powerhouse. Dr. Peltier is a Past-President of both the University Sales Center Alliance and the American Marketing Association Collegiate Chapters Council (twice). He has received life-time Achievement Awards from the AMA, the Direct Marketing Educational Foundation, and is the only person to have received UW-Whitewater's top three Lifetime Awards, including the Roseman Teaching Excellence, University Research, and University Service Awards. Dr. Peltier has been faculty advisor for UW-Whitewater's AMA chapter since

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Dr. Andrew Dahl's (DBA – University of Wisconsin-Whitewater) primary areas of research are digital marketing, value co-creation, internal marketing, transformative consumer behavior, and heath care marketing. Dr. Dahl has published in *Journal of Business Research, Journal of Research in Interactive Marketing, Journal of Consumer Affairs, Journal of Marketing Education, Journal of Financial Services Marketing, Progress in Transplantation, American Journal of Transplantation,* and others. Andrew serves as the primary advisor for Creative Marketing Unlimited, the student-run marketing consulting branch which provides UWW AMA members extensive professional development experience. Under Andrew's direction, UWW student teams regularly participate in marketing strategy and digital marketing competitions such as the Collegiate ECHO Marketing Challenge (including a 2014 Silver ECHO Marketing team featuring UWW AMA members) and the International Digital Marketing Competition. In addition to teaching digital marketing courses, Dr. Dahl has over fifteen years of marketing consulting experience and is the Director of Research/Partner at Applied PhD Research & Marketing, LLC. Beyond helping hundreds of clients establish database marketing efforts, launch products, or evaluate marketing/branding efforts, Andy served as the program director of a four-year international social media campaign raising awareness and support for organ donation. He has served since 2017 on the AMA Collegiate Chapters Council, including serving as the Council President in 2020-2021. He is also one of six Google Academic Panel members from around the world.

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INSIDER: The First-Time Manager

Brandon Chenevert, MBA Candidate

So, you've been promoted to manager—now what? You may have been promoted because of strong technical knowledge or performance, a personal relationship with a boss, or this was an inevitable next step due to seniority. Regardless of the reason, you now have others—and yourself—to take care of. Loren Belker, Jim McCormick, and Gary Topchik's *The First-Time Manager* is a resourceful guide to help ease nerves, learn the ropes, recognize new responsibilities, relationships, and risks, and help you make a lasting impact on your organization and others around you through your new management role.

Learning the Ropes

Starting out may be scary to some new managers. As cliché as it sounds, the authors recommend new managers take it slow and approach this new role one day at a time. As a new manager, you will learn each day and also experience change as your career progresses, but one fact that will not change now is that you are working with people, potentially even more than before. As you are promoted, you will most likely experience the following four types of people in the workspace: 1) the people who are not happy about your promotion and may feel jealous, 2) the "yes people" who will start playing up to you, 3) the people who will test you early on to see if you are a good fit, and 4) the more common "wait and see" people, who need time to adjust. All of these personalities will be measuring you against your predecessor—which can be a good or bad thing, depending on where the bar is set. The best way to earn respect is to have a personal touch and get to know your team, and vice versa. They need to know that you are dependable and can hold others accountable to meet the goals of the firm.

Managers must be aware of different styles of leadership and tools to use when interacting with different personalities—and this applies to dealing with superiors, direct reports, and even oneself! For superiors, understand their expectations, personality style, and communication preferences. Do they need extreme details? How do they process information? What are their interests? What is their level of immediacy? For direct reports, understand the level of encouragement and control they need from you. Do they need to constantly be motivated, or do they need more skills and knowledge to complete tasks? Set clear goals and directions for those who need them and be aware of their constraints. Lastly, for yourself, understand the difference between management and leadership. Management is a top-down approach that is directive, structured, and determines methods. Leadership is bottom-up and participative with focus on
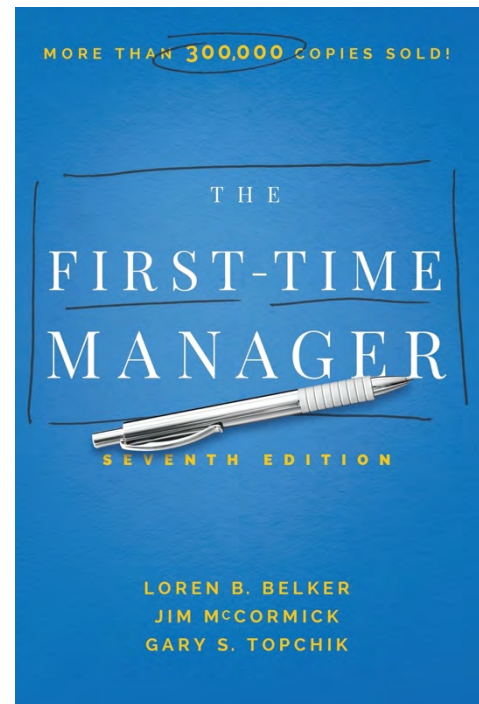
exceptions, less structure, and dynamic groups that let members determine their own methods. Be a strong manager who is a respected leader so that you can be the most effective and impactful partner possible for your team.

Responsibilities, Relationships, and Risks

In addition to individual duties and projects, a new manager now has others to consider when performing daily operations. A manager must oversee major responsibilities, learn to build and maintain relationships, and manage risks/be aware of potential negative outcomes.

Major responsibilities include, but are not limited to, hiring, firing, communicating, planning, organizing, training, monitoring, evaluating, and participating in and leading meetings. While these tasks may seem tedious and direct, some include indirect or behind-the-scenes work. For example, a first-time manager must understand how to encourage initiative and innovation, while also being motivating and disciplining. This is sometimes a hard balance to maintain, as you want to create a safe, relaxed environment where employees will be happy and comfortable while avoiding an environment where there is no drive to succeed. The authors recommend establishing a "work hard, play hard" mindset within your team so that employees understand that strong performance is rewarded in a competitive atmosphere.

A first-time manager should understand how to build relationships. The first step is establishing trust and confidence within the workplace. The authors recommend creating successful habits and avoiding perfectionism. This creates confidence and doesn't place a negative effect on productivity if minor mistakes are made. Also, be an active listener and show genuine appreciation towards your team—they need to know they will be heard and that you care about the hard work they are doing. This sense of trust and confidence builds a team dynamic that is open to communication, empowers others, and holds goals and roles accountable, which is a sign of effective management and leadership.

The most complicated skill that a new manager should learn is how to manage risks, which are situational and handled on a case-by-case basis. Compare the current problem to past issues, and create a solution from there. Do not rush into a tough situation and try to deliver a quick resolution, as there may be an underlying or bigger issue at hand. The authors recommend new managers remember to not take anything personally and eliminate misunderstandings of complex jobs. Although HR or other departments usually cover this topic, a manager must have a strong sense of legal awareness, as well. A manager should be aware of privacy laws, sexual harassment and substance abuse problems, and disability or medical rules. Lastly, as remote work has become prevalent, learn how to communicate virtually with your team, treating them equally as you would someone in the office.

Improving and Developing Yourself

You may have heard about "managing your own brand" and taking care of your priorities first for good reason. If you do not have trust and confidence that you can lead or that others respect you, then you should reevaluate your skillset and habits, or ask someone for help. The first step is to develop a positive self-image of yourself. This is not creating an impression of arrogance, but having a mindset that you are successful and that you will get the job done. This positive self-image will lead to better emotional intelligence and body language and create a touch of class in your leadership style. Complement a positive self-image with a strong control of time management. Prioritizing the most important tasks ahead, doing smaller segments of work, and taking time to reflect on completed jobs can be very beneficial for a manager at any level. Practicing time management improves delegation skills, work-life balance, and better stress coping mechanisms.

Real Estate Implications

At some point in your real estate career, you may move into management, be it of a team, a market center, or even your firm. As you move into management, make sure to have constant communication with your team and your clients. The last thing you want is poor feedback because of poor communication. Next, be prepared with a broad range of market knowledge and keep an updated data system. The real estate market is constantly changing, and it is imperative to be up-to-date on listings and sales data, such as average volume sold, property prices, and appreciation rates. Finally, you must be reliable and available to your clients. As an agent, you can make or break the buying or selling process, and people are depending on you to negotiate, understand the legal aspects, and be a facilitator between parties. Being a manager is not always going to be easy or fun, especially for first-time managers, but if done correctly, your leadership can make a difference and leave a legacy.

Recommended Reading

Belker, Loren B., Jim McCormick, and Gary S. Topchik (2021), *The First-Time Manager [Seventh Edition]*, HarperCollins Leadership: New York City, New York.

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Brandon Chenevert is a graduate student from New Roads, Louisiana. He earned his Bachelor of Science in Kinesiology with a concentration in Human Movement Science from Louisiana State University. His work experience includes managing a new Baton Rouge restaurant, BRQ, and being the Founder and President of two LSU student organizations. Brandon is currently seeking an MBA with a concentration in Entrepreneurship & Corporate Innovation at Baylor and plans to pursue a career in the management consulting industry.

INSIDER: Emotional Intelligence for the Modern Leader
Tyler O'Mary, MBA Candidate

The best predictor of long-term success in the workplace is emotional intelligence. Emotional intelligence, or EQ, is what takes leaders from average to extraordinary. Not only does it help one understand more about oneself, but it can also help form deeper relationships with others. Having a better understanding of how emotions influence behavior will enable you to make more intelligent decisions, overcome obstacles, and transform the way you lead. There are five pillars comprising EQ, and understanding how each pillar plays a role serves as the foundation for becoming an emotionally intelligent leader. After leaders fully understand the role of each pillar, they must pick a leadership style. Each person is unique, and some styles will naturally fit better than others. In *Emotional Intelligence for the Modern Leader*, Christopher Connors walks us through six different leadership styles of emotionally intelligent leaders.
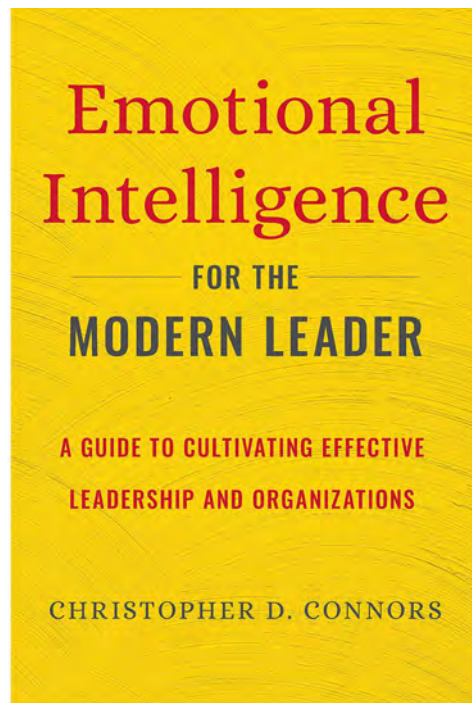
THINK POINT #1: Five Pillars of Emotional Intelligence

The first step in developing emotional intelligence is understanding what it is. EQ refers to a person's ability to recognize, understand, and manage their own emotions and recognize, understand, and influence the emotions of others. Five pillars of emotional intelligence serve as a base for developing this skill: self-awareness, self-management, motivation, empathy, and social skill. Each of these pillars are equally important, but EQ begins with self-awareness.

Self-awareness is the ability to understand ourselves and use that knowledge to grow, learn, and improve. In other words, it is the ability to understand *why* we do what we do. It is the most difficult pillar to master because truly understanding ourselves is challenging; however, if mastered, we will see a boost in self-confidence, belief in self, and commitment to knowing what our true potential is. To become emotionally intelligent leaders, we must start by looking inward before we can positively impact others.

Connors defines the second pillar, self-management, as holding yourself accountable to commitments, having the ability to adapt to positive and negative emotions, and learning how to manage your emotions publicly and privately in a healthy way. Self-management is more than just having a strong grasp of your emotions and strong time management skills—it is about combining the two.

Motivation, the third pillar, is defined by Daniel Goleman as a passion for work that goes beyond money and status. Motivation is far more than material things and extrinsic factors. It is the "fire that burns bright inside you," according to Connors. If we want to do great things, then having a passion for what we do is crucial. Motivation is very much within our control, no matter if we are motivated by generating it ourselves or by being around inspiring people.

Empathy is the fourth pillar and, in essence, is the ability to understand and share the feelings of others. Empathy is standing in someone else's shoes instead of our own. This skill can build relationships, create opportunities to work with new people, and, more importantly, help you lead with greater love and compassion. Empathy will move people to admire and respect you while allowing you to lead more intentionally and effectively.

The fifth pillar is social skills. Our ability to form lasting relationships with others is what separates us as leaders. To inspire others, we must take time to get to know them, show that we care, and show that our success is their success. The best work environments emphasize collaboration, and every emotionally intelligent leader should focus on social skills within their firm. Once these five pillars are in place, individuals must choose the leadership style that best suits them.

THINK POINT #2: Six Leadership Styles

There are six leadership styles of emotionally intelligent leaders: visionary, coaching, affiliative, democratic, pacesetting, and commanding. A visionary leader sees potential where others do not. This style is for the dreamers, and it is inspired by creative imaginations. Coaching leaders help employees see the greatness inside themselves. These are the servant leaders who bring out the best in people. Affiliative leaders build relationship capital and manage conflict as it arises within a team. They take time to understand everyone's job functions so they can determine the best path forward to create a successful outcome for everyone.

Democratic leaders build powerful relationships that turn into collaborative teams. These leaders both make people around them better, as well as becoming better themselves by the influence of those around them. In other words, "for the strength of the pack is the wolf, and the strength of the wolf is the pack." Pacesetting leaders expect their employees to arise to the standard of performance that the leader is setting. These leaders are extremely competitive and encourage people around them to perform at their highest level. Lastly, the commanding leader is what most people typically picture when they think of a leader. These people are commanding, assertive, driven, and competitive. This style of leadership is prevalent in situations where a leader is dealing with an extremely difficult set of circumstances, like the military. While there are multiple leadership styles, the most effective one will be the style that fits most naturally with you.

THINK POINT #3: Sustaining Emotional Intelligence

Becoming emotionally intelligent is not an easy task, but it is also just as hard to sustain. Connors explains that it takes time, discipline, consistency, and commitment to maintain and even improve emotional intelligence. To avoid regressive behavior, leaders must make conscious decisions, keep an open mind, create time for reflection, and avoid excuses. Embracing a constantly self-improving mindset will combat any type of regressive behavior.

Real Estate Implications

Real estate, whether residential or commercial, is an industry that revolves around relationships, and EQ is a crucial factor in creating lasting, productive relationships. Agents must have outstanding social skills to form strong connections with both buyers and sellers. They must also be empathetic, putting themselves in the shoes of their clients and understanding how the client's emotions can affect the transaction. An agent must also be highly motivated in this industry where commission is a large portion, if not all, of the earnings. A highly motivated agent will inspire clients to work just as hard to get the deal done. Additionally, agents typically juggle numerous deals at one time, and all the emotions associated with the stress can quickly lead to burnout. Self-management is crucial so agents can be as productive as possible for as long as possible. Lastly, self-awareness is extremely important because if an agent cannot understand why they do what they do, then they won't be able to adequately understand their clients. Emotional intelligence can take years master, but it is essential in the world of real estate.

Recommended Reading

Connors, Christopher D., *Emotional Intelligence for the Modern Leader*, Rockridge Press: Emeryville, CA.

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Tyler O'Mary is a graduate student from Austin, Texas. He earned his Bachelor of Business Administration from Baylor University with a double major in Finance and Entrepreneurship & Corporate Innovation. Tyler is currently pursuing an MBA at Baylor and plans to pursue a career in the commercial real estate industry.

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