**Graduate School of Business**

# Exploring Anticipatory Emotions and Their Role in Self-Perceived B2B Salesperson Effectiveness

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# Declaration

To the best of my knowledge and belief this thesis contains no material previously published by any other person except where due acknowledgment has been made.

This thesis contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university.

The research presented and reported in this thesis was conducted in accordance with the National Health and Medical Research Council National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007) – updated March 2014. The proposed research study received human research ethics approval from the Curtin University Human Research Ethics Committee (EC00262), Approval Number # GSB 03-13

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November 2016

# The Journey

## Exploring unchartered seas



*"Until you have the courage to lose sight of the shore,*
*you will not know the terror of being forever lost at sea."*

Charles Cook

# Acknowledgements

This journey has been life changing; an emotional roller coaster ride at a time of great change and at a stage of life much later than most.

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# Abstract

The purpose of this research was to achieve insight to how the anticipatory emotions of B2B salespeople impact upon their sales effectiveness. In general there has been limited research conducted in Business to Business (B2B) sales with the vast majority of sales research being carried out in the Business to Consumer (B2C) market (Lichtenthal and Venkatapparao 2009). In addition to this is the fact that very limited research has been conducted on anticipatory emotions or for that matter emotion in organisations in general. When considering the paucity of research in the areas of B2B sales and anticipatory emotions, it was clear that there was a need for more research to extend the knowledge of these areas and to explore the role anticipatory emotions might have on B2B sales effectiveness. To date, researchers have had limited success explaining B2B sales call dynamics. In an attempt to address this, the application of Complexity Science was used to obtain new insights into sales call dynamics.

In order to understand the lived emotional experiences of B2B sales people it was necessary to adopt a qualitative approach by collecting narratives from B2B salespeople about their sales experiences. The recalled experiences or narratives were their interpreted, socially constructed realities of the events that occurred during the sales encounter. A constructivist ontology and interpretivist epistemology were therefore chosen which then informed the research design for the study. A pre-hypothesis research design was used to ensure that an open architect framework enabled the collection of anonymous narratives from B2B salespeople. Application software called SenseMaker© was used for the collection and analysis of the data. The use of dynamic Triads and Dyads designed around the sales literature were used to obtain additional data about the sales experiences. The sophisticated analysis capability of SenseMaker© provided powerful graphical and statistical interpretations of the collected data which was then used to develop themes based on the data collected.

The findings from the research established what anticipatory emotions were experienced by B2B sales people; how they impacted on call effectiveness and the factors that influenced their anticipatory emotions. Overall it was found that B2B salespeople experience anticipatory emotions and that they generally worry and experience anxiety before attending a call. It was found that once in the call, the salesperson re-appraised the situation and found their worry and anxiety was unjustified. The application of Complex Adaptive Systems theory provided new insights to sales call dynamics and has contributed to sales theory.

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# Chapter 1   Introduction

## 1.1   Background to the Study

The role of anticipatory emotions and their potential impacts on business-to-business (B2B) salesperson effectiveness is little understood as evidenced by the paucity of research articles in the sales literature. Indeed there is a lack of research in the B2B sales field generally, especially when compared to the abundance of research articles in the field of business-to-consumer (B2C) research (LaPlaca and Katrichis 2009; Lichtenthal and Venkatapparao 2009). The overall situation is compounded when considering emotions research and the general lack of agreement on definitions and causes of emotions and that is without taking in to account the relatively new and emerging research interest in anticipatory emotions.

This research aims to achieve an insight into how anticipatory emotions in B2B sales organisations, impact upon salesperson effectiveness. The literature to date has largely taken a positivist approach to the study of emotions with the majority of research focusing on emotional intelligence and emotional contagion (Landy 2005; Conte 2005; Dulewicz, Higgs and Slaski 2003).  B2B sales calls cannot be perfectly pre-determined and to that extent are unpredictable and emerge in real time through the interchange of communication and sense making that takes place during a sales call. The ongoing dynamic that takes place as the call unfolds effectively constructs and re-constructs the realities of both the salesperson and the customer (Stacey 2003a).  With the inherent uncertainty of how a sales call might unfold, it is common practice for B2B salespeople to experience anticipatory emotions, both positive and negative which can impact on their call effectiveness.  With this in mind, the decision was made to adopt an interpretivist approach to understanding the lived experience of B2B salespeople and in particular the anticipatory emotions they experience before a sales call and what impact those emotions might have on their call effectiveness.

A web based software application called SenseMaker© by Cognitive Edge® Pte. Ltd. was used for the collection and analysis of data. The software was proprietary and installed on a server in Singapore and accessible by participants by invitation only from anywhere in the world.  A total of 134 narratives were collected.

## 1.2   Statement of the research gap

The research gap that exists is in exploring the role that anticipatory emotions play in B2B salesperson effectiveness. The limited research that does exist on anticipatory emotions in B2B sales environments is from a positivist view.  In an attempt to minimise the knowledge gap an exploratory research design was considered appropriate for this study. This in turn led

to the creation of an overall research objective and the formulation of a number of research questions.

## 1.3 Research Objective

The primary objective of this research is to address the following question:

**To what extent are anticipatory emotions perceived by B2B salespeople as impacting on their sales effectiveness?**

## 1.4 Research Questions

In order to answer the research objective, the following research questions were developed:

1. What are the primary *anticipatory emotions* experienced by *B2B* salespeople?
2. In what ways do they perceive these *anticipatory emotions* impacting on their *sales effectiveness*?
3. What are the key factors perceived as influencing anticipatory emotions?
4. What insights might complexity theory provide with regards to anticipatory emotions?

## 1.5 Significance of the Study

The majority of sales research to date has primarily been in the B2C market (Lichtenthal and Venkatapparao 2009). The research that has been conducted in the B2B market has often focused on sales performance from a metrics driven perspective rather than a sales effectiveness, behavioural perspective (LaPlaca and da Silva 2016). In addition where empirical research has been conducted, it has more often than not, adopted a purely quantitative research design which invariably has not provided for the exploration and interpretation of lived experiences of B2B salespeople and their feelings and emotions. Whilst there has been increasing interest in the role of emotions in sales call environments a very limited amount of empirical research has specifically investigated anticipatory emotions and the role they play in sales effectiveness.

This research extends the B2B sales literature and provides new empirical knowledge in the areas of emotions research, B2B research methodology and B2B sales effectiveness. Secondly it provides a practical contribution to sales management by identifying which anticipatory emotions B2B salespeople experience and how the anticipatory emotions are perceived as impacting upon sales effectiveness. Valuable findings with regard to the impact of anticipatory emotions on salesperson effectiveness have resulted in practical insights that can be modelled to leverage B2B salesperson performance. The findings allow Sales

Management to consider key relevant information in the design of their sales training, territory planning, recruitment and selection practices and overall salesperson performance management.

This study is of significant value in terms of the unique methodology and research design that was used to answer the research questions. The use of SenseMaker© provided an inductive and abductive open discovery research framework where hypotheses were not pre-determined. Research designs utilizing hypothesis driven surveys and questionnaires alone, constrain the participant to the choices on the survey instrument and introduce the potential for researcher bias (Snowden 2006). By using SenseMaker©, expert opinion and researcher bias was minimized because the study began by asking the participant an open ended question about an important sales call and for them to write (anonymously) about what happened in the call. The open qualitative framework adopted enabled the participant to write whatever they wanted without any constraints or bias. As far as the researcher is aware this form of pre-hypothesis research design has not been used before to explore and identify anticipatory emotions in B2B salespeople. To that extent the research design and methodology is unique and contributes a new approach to undertaking exploratory research. The other important aspect of significance was the application of complexity theory and Complex Adaptive Systems (CAS) theory to sales call dynamics. The application of complexity theory provided a uniquely different view of the B2B sales call which resulted in new knowledge and insights about how the sales call can unfold. In particular, the salesperson's sensitivity to initial conditions or in other words their pre-call appraisals and pre-call volitional responses which impact on the affective state of the salesperson prior to attending the call. As far as the researcher is aware, the application of Complexity theory and Complex Adaptive Systems theory to B2B sales call dynamics has not been done before and to that extent represents a unique and useful approach to the study of B2B sales call dynamics.

## 1.6    Research Design and Methodology

The following is a brief overview of the methodological approach adopted in this study. A more detailed discussion regarding methodology including the dominant paradigms underlying this approach may be found in Chapter 3: Methodology.

The research design and methodology used in this study is unique when compared to most research approaches that have been used in previous B2B sales research. The first part of the collection instrument used for this study was qualitative, utilizing a pre-hypothesis research approach where participants were first requested to provide a narrative about an important B2B sales experience.

The study then proceeded to ask participants questions in relation to their narrative and for them to self-code their narrative by selecting a movable 'ball' between three choices offered to them in each of six dynamic triads. The triad choices were formulated following a review of the sales literature and in accordance with the needs of the research objectives. The study was of a pre-hypothesis form because the narrative provided by B2B participants was of an open architecture format where participants were free to cite any B2B sales experience in their own words and without restriction of any kind. Following the collection of the narrative the study then became quantitative in nature and by self-coding their own narratives, participants effectively contextualised and provided 'hypotheses' to their narrative.

The study then adopted a hierarchical approach to determine which of the 134 narratives collected were most suited to answering the research questions. The approach adopted was in the first instance related to the selection of the anticipatory emotions provided by participants. The narratives containing the anticipatory emotions were analysed and the self-coded triad strengths were then considered to ensure that those narratives selected for further analysis were of sufficient relevance and importance to answer the research objective. Once the selection was made, the related narratives were then analysed and interpreted and a qualitative approach adopted utilizing inductive content analysis, thematic analysis, coding and the development of themes for further analysis (Owen 1984). The themes developed were then categorized and combined and then analysed and discussed as negative affect and positive affect themes. In essence, this study adopted a hybrid qualitative / quantitative research methodology.

## 1.6.1    Ontology and Epistemology

This study sought to explore and interpret the lived emotional experiences of B2B salespeople. The lived emotional experiences of the B2B sales participants were provided in the form of narratives which essentially described their constructed realties of the subjective events of what happened on a B2B sales call (Blois 2003). Constructivist ontology was the most suited approach for this study because it was necessary to explore the lived experiences of B2B salespeople with minimal researcher bias.

As previously mentioned, the narratives provided by the participants are their constructed realities or in other words their interpretation of the sales call events, feelings, thoughts and actions that they understand to be true and correct. An interpretivist epistemology was therefore the most appropriate paradigm for this study (Gioia and Pitre 1990). By establishing the need for constructivist ontology and an interpretivist epistemology it was then possible to design the study by taking in to account the nature of the philosophical paradigms chosen.

## 1.7    Data Analysis

Qualitative and quantitative data were collected for this study.  Qualitative data was in the form of narratives provided by the B2B sales participants and then analysed by adopting content analysis and thematic coding techniques (Owen 1984). At different stages of the analytical process, quantitative data was used to narrow down the number of narratives most suited for analysis.

The quantitative data used was the triad strengths resulting from participants self-coding their narratives. By adopting this approach it was possible to distil from a total of 134 narratives, 21 negative affect and 21 positive affect narratives which represented the most common anticipatory emotions experienced by participants. The raw data was imported into MS Excel® for further manipulation and sorting in order to identify the narratives with the most common characteristics.

## 1.8    Operational Definitions

The operational definitions in Table 1.1 outline key terms and their meanings within the context of this thesis. In general, these definitions reflect the meanings of these terms commonly found within the relevant literature. However a few key terms were not clearly defined within the existing literature and in these cases online dictionary definitions have been used, as indicated.

**Table 1-1:    Operational Definitions**

| Term | Definition |
|---|---|
| **Adaptive selling** | The altering of sales behaviours during a customer interaction or across customer interactions based on perceived information about the nature of the selling situation. |
| **Affective trait** | The tendency to respond to specific classes of stimuli in a predetermined, affect-based manner. |
| **Afraid** | The feeling of fear or worry about what might happen. |
| **Anticipatory emotions** | The emotions experienced when anticipating an imminent event e.g.: a sales call. |
| **Anxious** | An uncomfortable feeling of nervousness or worry about something that might happen in the future. |
| **Appraisal *(c)** | The cognitive evaluation and interpretation of a phenomenon or event. |
| **Apprehensive** | An anxious expectation, worry, general uneasiness, or dread about a situation, event, or the future in general. |
| **Business to Business (B2B) market** | The market that exists for sales organisations that sells products or services to other businesses for resale or for their own use in the business or as a component of a product they produce. |

| Term | Definition |
| --- | --- |
| **Business to Consumer (B2C) market** | The market that exists for sales organisations that sells products or services to consumers or non-business end users. |
| **Chaos theory *(a)** | A branch of mathematics that deals with complex systems whose behaviour is highly sensitive to slight changes in conditions, so that small alterations can give rise to strikingly great consequences. |
| **Cognitive control *(c)** | The process or stage of mental activity that controls other mental activity. |
| **Complex adaptive processes** | Acts of communication, relations of power and the interplay between people's choices arising in acts of evaluation. |
| **Complex Adaptive Systems (CAS)** | An entity consisting of many diverse and autonomous components or parts (called agents) which are interrelated, interdependent, linked through many (dense) interconnections, and behave as a unified whole. |
| **Complexity theory** | The study of complex phenomena that appear in systems that are characterised by non-linear interactive components, emergent phenomena, continuous and discontinuous change and unpredictable outcomes. |
| **Concerned** | Worried about a future event. |
| **Conversation analysis** | The study of the way in which people use talk-in-interaction to create, manipulate and transform organisational reality. |
| **Determined** | The desire to do something very much and not allowing anyone or any difficulties to stop you. |
| **Dyad** | A polarity scale used to give weight between two labels. |
| **Emergence** | Refers to the arising of novel and coherent structures, patterns and properties during the process of self-organisation in complex systems. |
| **Excited *(b)** | Very enthusiastic and eager. |
| **Fear** | An unpleasant emotion or thought that is experienced when you are frightened or worried by something dangerous, painful or bad that might happen. |
| **Filter** | One of the three choices on a triad selectable by participants to self-code their narrative and signify the 'strength' of their choice |
| **Goal directed behaviours *(c)** | All behavior oriented toward attaining a particular sales goal. |
| **Hope *(b)** | An anticipatory feeling of expectation and desire for a particular thing to happen. |
| **Lacking confidence** | A person who is not self-assured in trusting their abilities, capacities and judgements. |
| **Lens** | A metaphor, widely used in management writing to indicate a specific point of view with the implication that there are also other points of view that may be appreciated with a change of lens. |
| **Narrative** | Small fragments or conversations. |
| **Negative affect** | A dimension of subjective distress and un-pleasurable engagement that subsumes a variety of aversive mood states including anxiety, anger, contempt, disgust, guilt, fear and nervousness. |
| **Nervous** | Worried and anxious about the future. |

| Term | Definition |
| --- | --- |
| **Non-linearity** | When one thing does not clearly or directly follow from another. |
| **Optimism** | The positive outlook that things occur for the best and that individual's hopes or goals will eventually be satisfied. |
| **Positive *(d)** | Full of hope and confidence. |
| **Positive affect** | A dimension reflecting one's level of pleasurable engagement with the environment often reflecting one's enthusiasm, energy level, mental alertness, interest, joy and determination. |
| **Positivist/ positivism** | A research paradigm with the view that the facts of the world exist to be studied and justifies the scientific method. |
| **Rumination *(d)** | The act of thinking carefully and worrying for a long period about something. |
| **Sales call** | A face-to-face meeting between a salesperson and a B2B customer or prospective customer for the ultimate purpose of generating a sale. |
| **Salesperson effectiveness** | The degree in which call objectives are perceived to be achieved during sales calls. |
| **Salesperson performance** | A measure of a salespersons overall achievement of organizationally determined objectives. |
| **Self-efficacy** | An individual's capacity to bring about a desired result. |
| **Self-organization** | The ability of an event (sales call) to spontaneously organise itself around its intended purpose and within accepted rules without the need for it to be specified. |
| **Sense-making Item** | Anything that helps people make sense of the world they live in. |
| **Sensitivity to initial conditions** | Very simple or small stimuli or events can cause very complex behaviours, outcomes or events. |
| **Strength** | Pertaining to the measure of degree (extent) between triad choices within a total strength of 100. |
| **Stimuli** | Any external input to the human body from the five senses – smell, touch, sight, sound and taste that arise a response from within. |
| **Story** | Small fragments or conversations. |
| **Triad** | A visual method of illustrating three aspects within a domain of interest. |
| **Volitions** | The act of making a conscious choice or decision before taking action. |
| **Worry** | Thoughts about problems or unpleasant things that might happen in a way that makes you feel unhappy and frightened. |

**\*Sources:**

(a) http://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/english/

(b) http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/

(c) http://psychologydictionary.org/

(d) http://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/

## 1.9    Research delimitations and limitations

### 1.9.1    Delimitations of scope

This research was restricted to B2B salespeople. The vast majority of research in the past has been conducted in the B2C environment where salespeople sell direct to end users or consumers (Lichtenthal and Venkatapparao 2009). The relative lack of research in the B2B sales environment and the paucity of research on anticipatory emotions in B2B sales, suggested that more research was required in this area.

The research focused on B2B salespeople conducting *face to face* sales calls and did not include telephone, telemarketing, on-line sales or any other form of non-face to face selling. The reason for this is that the nature of the research was to investigate the anticipatory emotions of B2B sales people before the sales call and face to face sales calls provide a more valid approach to answering the research questions and in capturing the full emotional experiences of sales people.

The study utilized a research instrument which required participants to *anonymously* recall and briefly write about an important sales experience and to then answer some questions about their experience. Given that research into emotions and the feelings of people can be a sensitive issue it was felt that by providing the opportunity for anonymity would encourage more accurate and complete sales experiences without the need for 'holding back'. The sales narratives collected, reveal sensitive emotional feelings and are likely to contribute to increased content validity.

The study was conducted *on-line* using a web based data collection instrument. The advantage of using a web based solution is the ability to collect sales experiences from participants from a broad geographic reach. Collecting sales experiences from a diversity of cultures and countries provided an opportunity for extended analysis in the way of identifying potential differences in emotional feelings in B2B sales people and in different circumstances.

### 1.9.2    Limitations of research

### 1.9.2.1    Anonymity

Given that the research was *anonymous* there is always the potential for participants to falsify data. It is understood that this could always be a possibility but no more so than by using any other form of data collection method. Indeed, there were no incentives offered to potential participants to complete the survey, thus limiting attempts to falsify data in order to obtain any incentive offering (John, Loewenstein and Prelec 2012). In order to identify the possibility of participants providing false data, sales narratives were assessed for plausibility

and consistency and compared with other data collected, and assessed by the researcher by using their extensive knowledge and experience of the industry.

## 1.9.2.2 Response rate

Originally it was thought that by using LinkedIn® as an online data source, a good number of responses would be possible from a diverse range of geographic areas, however, the response from LinkedIn® members to participate in the online survey was minimal and very disappointing. A very small percentage of members replied to email requests.

Large sales based organisations in Australia were also identified and executives at those organisations were contacted. One of the organisations was Telstra. One reply was forthcoming requesting further information. Once the information was provided and it was clear it required participants to complete a survey, there was no further interest in participating in the research.

The CEO's of past employer organisations of the researcher, both in Australia and in the United Kingdom, did not reply to any invitations to participate in the study, however, employees of those organisations were individually approached and a few obliged by completing the survey.

As a result of the aforementioned difficulties the number of responses received for this project was 134, less than what was hoped for but nonetheless acceptable for this type of study.

## 1.9.2.3 Sample size

Because of the need to understand the individual experiences and emotions of the participants, a pre hypothesis research design was used as opposed to a purely quantitative or qualitative design and as such this study contains both qualitative data and quantitative data. As the researcher was interested in the personal anticipatory emotions of each sales person and the cause of those emotions, 134 participants was an adequate number to achieve the projects research objectives and to answer the research questions (Glaser and Strauss 1967; Mason 2010; Ritchie, Lewis and Elam 2003).

Traditionally, limitations may exist to the extent of *generalizability* of the findings of 134 participants for a study; however the research design of this study was exploratory and guided by the nature of the research objectives and questions. Further, a purely quantitative statistical research design is traditionally more interested in correlation factors and to a lesser extent causation factors as was sought by this study.

## 1.10 Organisation of the study/thesis

This thesis consists of five chapters. Each chapter is briefly outlined below.

**Chapter 1 – Introduction**

Chapter 1 is a general introduction to the study and presents the research object and associated research questions. It briefly discusses the contributions the study makes which is then followed by a list of operational definitions. The chapter then concludes with a section which discusses the delimitations and limitations of the research project.

**Chapter 2 – Literature Review**

Chapter 2 presents a review of the extant literature in the specific fields of B2B sales, emotions theory, and chaos and complexity science.

**Chapter 3 – Methodology**

Extensively discusses both ontological and epistemological considerations and justifies the approach adopted for this study. It then goes on to compare and discuss Positivist and Interpretivist approaches to research. This is followed by a discussion of Logic theory including deductive, inductive and abductive logic. Following this is a discussion concerning pre-hypothesis research and the reasons why it was used for this study. The next stage of the section talks about SenseMaker©, the web-based software application used for the collection and analysis of the data. A description then follows of the pilot study and interviews that were conducted prior to the study being implemented in order to assist with the design of the SenseMaker© collector instrument. Finally there is a discussion about Chaos and Complexity theory and how it can be used to describe sales calls as Complex Adaptive Systems and emotions as emergent phenomena.

**Chapter 4 –Findings and Analysis**

Chapter 4 presents a detailed description of the hierarchical process adopted to reduce the amount of narratives collected to a useable and relevant set of data which were then used to arrive at the findings. The relevant data is then interpreted and presented as findings and an analysis follows. The analysis extends the initial narrative interpretations in Appendix 4 and describes the process that was used to code, reduce and consolidate the data to arrive at the various themes used for the analysis. An analysis and synthesis of the findings is then presented for selected themes and discussed as positive and negative themes.

As this study was exploratory and adopted an interpretivist paradigm, an initial interpretation of the findings is included in Appendix 4. This was necessary because the findings are in fact an initial interpretation of the qualitative data collected and are integral to the task of answering the research objective and associated questions.

**Chapter 5 – Discussion and Conclusion**

Chapter 5 takes the findings and analysis data from Chapter 4 and discusses them in relation to each of the research questions. Negative and positive affect are discussed in turn. The final result culminating in answers to the research questions and a conceptual model being presented based on the findings and analysis of the data. This is then followed by a discussion about the implications of the study, from a theoretical, methodological and managerial perspective. Study limitations and suggestions for future research are then presented. Finally the conclusion brings together the outcomes of the study in summary form.

# Chapter 2    Literature Review

## 2.1    Introduction

Chapter Two provides a review of the literature most relevant to this study and has been a source for the definitions of many of the key concepts used. The findings from the literature review also assisted in the preparation of the theoretical argument presented in Chapter Three – Methodology. In order to obtain an understanding of what research had already been done, a literature review was conducted across a number of disciplines. The broad disciplines reviewed were:

- Sales literature - B2B sales effectiveness
- Psychology literature
- Emotions literature - Anticipatory emotions

This research aims to achieve an insight into how anticipatory emotions in B2B sales organisations, impact upon salesperson effectiveness. The literature to date has taken a positivist approach to the study of emotions with the majority of research focusing on emotional labor, emotional intelligence and emotional contagion. A significant percentage of this research has been conducted in the B2C market and describes emotions as linear, manageable events which can be manipulated and controlled.  They do not offer plausible explanations about the unpredictable and emergent nature of emotions.

By their very nature, sales calls cannot be perfectly pre-determined and to that extent are unpredictable and emerge in real time and therefore cannot be perfectly managed as the current literature suggests. An understanding of complexity theory and the application of a myriad of complexity metaphors (Burrell and Morgan 1994) can be used to describe organisations, and enable organisations to be viewed through a different 'lens' and in doing so, provide a new way in which to view organisational life.

Complexity theory is the study of dynamical systems  which have emergent properties (Rickles, Hawe and Shiell 2007) and are characterised by non-linear events which invariably lead to unexpected events and outcomes.  The nature of organisational life is inherently non-linear. The diversity of humans and the way they think, communicate and act contribute to the nonlinearity of everyday life. Authors applying complexity theory to organisations in an attempt to better understand them, often refer to theories of Complex Adaptive Systems (CAS) because they are better suited to understanding the ever changing, turbulent organic nature of contemporary organisational environments (Stacey 2003b; Stacey and Griffin 2005). On the one hand the current literature on emotions in organisations are described as linear, predictable and manageable events, particularly if the writings describing emotional

labor, emotional intelligence and emotional contagion are to be believed, yet on the other hand it is blatantly clear that both internal and external organisational environments are highly volatile and nonlinear, being acted upon by the diversity of nonlinear human activity and processes. This discrepancy in organisational emotion theory remains unaddressed and it is the purpose of this research to minimize the existing gap in the literature and to offer new insights by applying CAS principles to the study of anticipatory emotions and the role they play in B2B salesperson effectiveness.

This chapter reviews the literature on complexity theory and considers Complex Adaptive Systems theory from a sales call perspective. There was evidence emerging from the literature that complex adaptive systems theory could be a means to better understand the dynamics of organisational life  (Stacey 2003b; Stacey and Griffin 2005), especially given that emotions are emergent events and sales calls are themselves non-linear and largely unpredictable (Rickles, Hawe and Shiell 2007).

## 2.2   The Sales Literature

The majority of research conducted in the sales area has predominantly been in the B2C market.  Why this has been the case is not fully understood, particularly when purchase order values in B2B sales are significantly higher, sales cycles considerably longer and there is a greater need for relationship selling as a means to achieving customer loyalty and repeat business (Bagozzi 2006).

According to Andersen and Kumar (2006) trust plays an important role in buyer-seller relationships and is more of a determinant of salesperson effectiveness in B2B than in B2C environments. This is due to the greater need for the B2B salesperson to develop long term relationships that will hopefully result in buyer loyalty and repeat business. Emotions shape behaviours which are continually being formed and evaluated during buyer-seller exchanges (Andersen and Kumar 2006) and over time, can influence the degree of trust between buyer and seller.  Interestingly, Arino, dela Torre and Ring (2001) suggest that trust can promote flexibility and adaptability which in turn can strengthen the relationship between buyer and seller. There are some similarities between this view and the model of *adaptive selling* put forward by Weitz, Sujan and Sujan (1986) which requires a B2B salesperson to alter their behaviour during a sales call based on perceived information obtained during the sales call. Perceived information during a B2B sales call encounter is usually an interpretation of signals in the form of emotional cues from the other, or an interpretation of words which according to Andersen and Kumar (2006), determines whether the behaviour is framed as positive or negative.

The work of Arino, dela Torre and Ring (2001) suggests that it is important to develop trust in a B2B sales relationship early, so that flexibility and adaptability are achieved sooner than later. This then raises the question as to how trust can be established early in the relationship and whether anticipatory emotions established as a result of past sales experiences can impact on this. If Andersen and Kumar (2006) are correct, affective states influence trust building in B2B sales environments. Following this line of argument, a salesperson's affective state can be influenced by their anticipatory emotions which may affect the level of trust developed and ultimately their effectiveness in the sales call. Some of the factors affecting salesperson effectiveness will now be discussed.

## 2.3 Sales performance and effectiveness

Much of the sales literature over the past 50 years or so has not been able to agree on definitions of sales performance or sales effectiveness (LaPlaca and da Silva 2016). In its most basic form, sales performance is often equated to 'getting the order' or 'achieving sales target'. Others relate sales performance to measures of organisational requirements that are in addition to 'getting the order' and include time management, administrative duties, the number of calls in a week or month, relationship quality or the number of prospects in a sales pipeline (Jiang et al. 2016). Sales effectiveness is even more obscure with some authors relating it to the ratio of sales leads to closed sales, the salespersons degree of flexibility in the call, timekeeping and general selling behaviours (Guenzi, Baldauf and Panagopoulos 2014). Some of the more popular, if not older but important models will now be discussed.

### 2.3.1 Walker Churchill and Ford expectancy perspective

The Walker, Churchill and Ford (1979) model suggests that direct relationships exist between five sets of variables: personal, organisational and environmental factors, motivation, aptitude, skill level and role perceptions and sales behaviours and their performance. Behaviour according to Walker, Churchill and Ford (1979) is defined as what people do (the tasks they expend effort on) in the course of working. Performance they claim represents behaviour that has been evaluated in terms of its contribution to the goals of the organisation. Effectiveness on the other hand is described as referring to some summary index of organisational outcomes for which an individual is at least partly responsible. The early work of Walker, Churchill and Ford (1979) offered no empirical evidence of correlations between sales behaviours, sales performance and sales effectiveness. Research by Behrman and Perreault (1982) have attempted to identify indicators of sales effectiveness from a behavioural perspective and found that sales performance was dependent upon five factors: sales objectives, technical knowledge, providing information, controlling expenses and sales presentations. Many of these factors represent the sales behaviours defined by

Walker, Churchill and Ford (1979) and suggest that sales behaviours influence *sales performance* and *salesperson effectiveness* but interestingly they do not specifically mention emotional aspects of behaviour.

## 2.3.2    Weitz contingency perspective

The Weitz Contingency Framework (1981) is another important perspective that has examined sales performance and sales effectiveness.  The model is built around the need for sales people to be adaptable during sales calls.  Adaptive selling is referred to as the altering of sales behaviours during a customer interaction or across customer interactions based on perceived information about the nature of the selling situation (Weitz, Sujan and Sujan 1986).  In other words, it is the ability of a salesperson to adapt their sales approach to changing customer needs, reactions and emotions which may emerge during the sales call.

According to Weitz (1981), sales effectiveness is a function of a salesperson's resources, the nature of the buying task, the customer-salesperson relationship and the  interactions among these variables.  The interactions among the variables (sales call dynamics) are determined by interactive behaviours between the salesperson and customer (Verbeke 1997), or as Stacey (2003b) suggests, the complex responsive processes that are taking place between the salesperson and the customer.

The concept of complex responsive processes suggests that sales calls emerge from moment to moment and are shaped by the social interaction, conversation and flow of emotions between seller and customer (Stacey 2003b).  Knowles, Grove and Keck  (1994) are of the view that salespeople must be able to identify signals often expressed as emotional cues in both themselves and their customers (emotional intelligence) and to regulate their own emotions when necessary (emotional labor) whilst at the same time being careful not to display any negative signals which the customer may perceive (emotional contagion).

All of these demands require a salesperson to be many things to many people and are indicative of the principles of Weitz's contingency perspective.  These multiple demands and the experiences during sales calls often result in post call cognitive evaluations which may create certain anticipatory emotions in the salesperson and result in subsequent adjustments to their sales behaviour, to be enacted in future sales calls.  The same cognitive process applies to the customer, of course, which further adds another level of complexity to the encounter the next time the two meet.

Most of the research on emotions in sales environments has concentrated on emotional intelligence (Deeter-Schmelz and Sojka 2007; Manna and Smith 2004; Rozell, Pettijohn and Parker 2004, 2006).  Emotional intelligence (EI) is an important theory but on its own does not provide a sufficient understanding of the many variables and complexities faced by

salespeople during sales calls. For example, EI advocates what to do and what not to do during interaction with others but it does not explain the 'before' and 'after' emotions that can be experienced or the impact they have. The theory simplistically suggests that emotions are identifiable, visible and manageable events, which sometimes they are, but at other times they are not (Lazarus 2006).

Anticipatory emotions are the subject of interest in this study. Do they exist? What are they? Do they impact on salesperson effectiveness and if so how? There is research (Plank and Reid 1994; Walker, Churchill and Ford 1979; Weitz 1981) suggesting that sales performance and salesperson effectiveness is linked to a salesperson's adaptability during sales calls. What happens during a sales call and the cognitions following the sales call can form important anticipatory emotions and can influence the salespersons effectiveness on future sales calls. Unfortunately the various themes of emotion presented in the management literature to date have not effectively articulated a persuasive explanation of how the dynamics of emotions can impact upon a salesperson's effectiveness.

## 2.4    The emotions

Emotions are extremely complex, short-lived psychological-physiological phenomena that represent efficient modes of adaptation to changing environmental demands (Levenson 1994; Zajonc 1994). The interest in emotions research has been growing steadily over the past few decades and has seen a broader acceptance and increased legitimacy in emotions being an inevitable part of organisational life (Fineman 1996).

The literature on emotions in organisations is diverse with some popular themes centered on emotional intelligence (Ashkanasy 2002; Deeter-Schmelz and Sojka 2003; Grandey 2007; Manna and Smith 2004; Rozell, Pettijohn and Parker 2006; Salovey and Mayer 1990) and emotional contagion (Barger and Grandey 2006; Doherty 1997; Hatfield, Cacioppo and Rapson 1994; Pugh 2001). Both of the themes adopt a functionalist approach and over simplify the emotions (Lazarus 1994; Izard 1991; Frijda 1986) in an attempt to reduce it to manageable components.

The shortfall with much of the research to date is that it has not considered emotions, as complex, emergent, socially interactive and socially constructed phenomena; phenomena that cannot be easily simplified into discrete entities, described, and universally applied and managed (Dimitrov and Wright 2001). Equally the role of anticipatory emotions has not been considered at all in the theories of emotional intelligence and emotional contagion. This is particularly evident in the sales environment where theories of emotional intelligence and emotional contagion have had limited success in explaining variations in salesperson performance and effectiveness.

## 2.4.1　Popular theories of emotion

Emotion is a complex multidimensional concept with debate continuing about its nature and origins (Plutchik 1980). Two very broad theories of emotion exist in the literature; the universalist theories of basic emotion and the componential theories of emotions. The universalist theory essentially derived from Charles Darwin suggest there are 'basic emotions' which are common to all humans across all cultures. It is believed that the basic emotions are genetically passed on and are endemic to the human species. The other broad group of emotions – the componential theory consist of clusters of three different elements which are usually grouped as either physiological, cognitive or behavioural (Larrington 2001). The evolutionary basis for basic emotions was founded upon the work of Darwin (1872) who focused on emotional expressions in humans and animals. Underpinning Darwin's emphasis on expressions was a theory of survival that suggested that emotional expressions were social signals which indicated a potential need for the subject to adapt to the current situation or environment. His theory recognizes a state of action readiness.

The second tradition is a purely physiological approach to emotions advocated by James (1890), who claimed that emotions were the identification of feelings of bodily changes in the autonomic nervous system which are interpreted and then displayed as particular emotions. James' theory was challenged by Cannon (1927) who believed that a different sequence of events occurred. He argued that emotions were first experienced and then physiological changes followed. The challenge by Cannon created a flurry of activity in emotions research which saw the development of a number of cognitive theories of emotion, including a two factor theory proposed by Schachter and Singer (1962). Schachter and Singer (1962) claimed that emotions were not singular in cause but were a combination of physiological and cognitive processes. In other words emotions were about the sensations of changes in the body as well as thoughts, interpretations and evaluations.

There is still debate, however, about how emotions develop (Ekman and Davidson 1994; Plutchik 1980). The current trend is to view emotions as cognitive appraisals and this has resulted in a plethora of management articles on emotional intelligence (Grandey 2007; Elfenbein 2006; Hafey 2003; Manna and Smith 2004; Rozell, Pettijohn and Parker 2006) and emotional contagion (Barger and Grandey 2006; Doherty 1997; Hatfield, Cacioppo and Rapson 1994; Hennig-Thurau et al. 2006).

Some management writers, notably Stacey (2003b), argue that organisations are the product of cognitive complex responsive processes of social interaction and relating which occurs all day, every day, in business environments. A number of other management writers who subscribe to the complexity paradigm (Griffin, Shaw and Stacey 1999; Hammond and Sanders 2002; Smith and Rupp 2003) believe organisational communications can be

explained by the principles of self-organisation. Hammond and Sanders (2002) view all social environments as self-organising where there is always a degree of tension between the known and the unknown with one of the functions of the communications process being uncertainty reduction and a tendency towards self-organisation and a state of stability. Smith and Rupp (2003) claim that when people come together in social acts, they interact according to a set of rules which ultimately leads to an inherent self-organisation of exchange but no one knows at the time what that order of exchange will be until it emerges and unfolds.

Griffin, Shaw and Stacey (1999) support this view by saying that each participant in a social act responds to others in their particular way and in so doing evokes unknown responses from others. In other words we invoke emotions in others through our social interaction and the evaluation and meaning those interactions have for us – many of which are formed as a result of our past experiences, but we can never be sure of the 'immediate future' during the interaction because the 'future' is inherently unpredictable due to the nonlinearity ever present.

The sales call is an emotion charged social interaction that is complex, unpredictable and non-linear requiring high levels of selling skills. The sales literature supports this notion to some extent and advocates the view that salespeople need to be flexible and employ adaptive selling techniques if they are to meet the needs of customers and ultimately meet their call objectives (Deeter-Schmelz and Sojka 2003; Bodkin and Stevenson 1993b; Weitz 1981; Knowles, Grove and Keck 1994).

The sales literature only loosely makes the connection between the concept of adaptive selling and the study of emotions by simply drawing upon the more popular themes of emotions in the management literature (Bodkin and Stevenson 1993b; Williams and DeSteno 2009), namely emotional intelligence and emotional contagion and in doing so approaches research on emotions from a linear, predictable and overly simplistic position. Understanding emotions from the complexity paradigm using narrative data analysis software such as SenseMaker© (Snowden 2007) allow the creation, indexing, and filtering of sense making data. The application of systems theory in the form of Complex Adaptive Systems (CAS) theory has been used by a number of researchers to provide a way of understanding the complex nature of organisational life (Stacey 1996; Eidelson 1997; Bergmann Lichtenstein 2000; McDaniel 2007; Palmberg 2009).

## 2.4.2    Emotional Contagion

True and genuine emotional contagion is considered sub-conscious and automatic (Hatfield, Cacioppo and Rapson 1994; Zajonc 1985) and is likely to occur unknowingly during a salespersons interaction with customers (Lord, Klimoski and Kanfer 2002). The concept of emotional contagion was first advanced by Hatfield, Cacioppo and Rapson (1994) to explain

how the dynamics of conversation can be impacted upon through various non-verbal cues often expressed as visible emotions. The notion is that facial reactions and expressions can sub-consciously transmit one person's emotions to another, usually in the form of mimicry or synchronization (Hatfield, Cacioppo and Rapson 1994; Neumann and Strack 2000). Genuine emotional contagion happens without prior thought or intention, as a result it emerges spontaneously and is interpreted by the recipient unknowingly and reciprocated unknowingly.

Accompanying this concept is a theory of individual differences which identifies a person's ability to either 'infect' another person or to become 'infected' by another person's emotions. As the theory has developed, it has taken a new direction from being sub-conscious and automatic to being planned and managed.

In a sales encounter, the social interaction of one participant provides a cyclical input to the emotional system of the other person (Gross 1998b) which in turn can create affective psychological states and subsequent behaviours. The cyclical inputs are emotional cues learned from our past experiences during social interaction. Based on this principle is the argument that salespeople can manipulate the sales encounter by creating certain visible emotional signals in themselves with the view of 'infecting' the customer with a similar affective state (Barger and Grandey 2006; Hennig-Thurau et al. 2006; Pugh 2001; Parr 2002).

The process involved is not that simple according to Lazarus (2006) who claims that even if we think we understand what has generated an emotion in another person, the process involved can be obscure particularly with respect to the deeper inner most origins of the emotion. To Lazarus (2006) emotions reflect the way we believe things are going either for or against us, or in other words, the progress we are making towards a particular goal, they are not simply events which lend themselves to manipulation that easily. This suggests an evaluative stance which confirms human interaction as primarily one of cognitive evaluations of events (Stacey and Griffin 2005) that are created during the social interaction in the present. If emotions can be manipulated to an extent that influences the positive evaluation of events during a sales call, then emotional contagion may have relevance to anticipatory emotions because the success of the salesperson in influencing the affective state of the customer in the desired manner, can impact upon the outcome of the call and determine the reflective thoughts of the salesperson after the sales call and their subsequent future anticipatory emotions. Whilst this sounds feasible it is not clear how or what manipulation should occur during the sales call and if Lazarus (2006) and Stacey and Griffin (2005) are correct, those manipulations will need to affect evaluations by the customer in a way that suggests progress towards their particular goals or needs.

Keeping in mind that the whole process is cyclical, anticipatory emotions could impact upon customer affective states through genuine emotional contagion processes if those emotions are carried forward into a future sales call (Neumann and Strack 2000), either consciously or

sub-consciously. Whether the effects of emotional contagion are advantageous to the sales call or not would depend upon the valence of the anticipatory emotions and how they are perceived impacting upon the customer's evaluations, and in particular their evaluation of their progress towards their goals. If a salesperson is apprehensive about the pending sales call for some reason, it is possible they will experience *negative affect* and pass that 'vibe' to the customer during the call (Barsade and Gibson 2007; Neumann and Strack 2000). The consequence of this is unknown but would nevertheless serve as an emotional input to the customer's evaluative assessment of the salesperson. The customers assessment could in turn be 'picked up' by the salesperson via emotional cues (Rozell, Pettijohn and Parker 2006) and in so doing create a complex spiral of emergent events.

The effectiveness of the salesperson is contingent upon many factors some of which are unknown and only emerge at the time of the sales call. Small signals in the form of emotional cues from the customer or the salesperson, can take the call in an unplanned direction and ultimately impact on a *salesperson's effectiveness* (Knowles, Grove and Keck 1994). Some authors, notably (Stacey 2003b) argue that through the application of Complex Adaptive Systems (CAS) theory there is a better chance of understanding call dynamics which may offer new insights to salesperson effectiveness.

Many of the emotional cues in sales calls are subconscious, having been learnt from the past, stored in memory and then acted out in future exchanges. Having an understanding of emotional cues and knowing what to do about them are what emotional intelligence theorists promote as directly impacting upon salesperson effectiveness (Deeter-Schmelz and Sojka 2003; Hafey 2003; Rozell, Pettijohn and Parker 2006).

### 2.4.3    Emotional Intelligence

Emotional Intelligence is an 'abilities' model developed by Salovey and Mayer (1990). Originating in 1920, the idea of a 'social intelligence' was first suggested by E. L. Thorndike. However it was not until Daniel Goleman's 1996 book *Emotional Intelligence: Why It Can Matter More Than IQ,* that the concept of Social Intelligence was reinvented under the name of Emotional Intelligence and eagerly embraced by management writers, authors and researchers. The construct is based on the idea that individuals have the ability to learn emotional intelligence competencies (Goleman 1996) regardless of their individual characteristics. Broadly the competencies include the ability to understand, assimilate, perceive, express and to regulate emotions in one's self and in others (Goleman 1996; Salovey and Mayer 1990).

The concept of emotional intelligence is similar to the other two popular themes of emotion previously discussed. All themes have a positivist view of the world with functionalist epistemologies (Morgan 1980). They all subscribe to the idea that emotion is a discrete

entity with identifiable characteristics that can be managed by following a set of universal guidelines. Reductionist approaches to the study of emotions are unlikely to reveal a full understanding of all the variables because emotions and sales calls are complex emergent phenomena created through social interaction with meanings assigned through the cognitive appraisals and evaluations that an individual makes (Denzin 1983; Stacey 2003b; Lazarus 2006).

Sales calls have unknown outcomes. Sales call participants have expectations of call outcomes often in the form of call objectives or customer needs but there can be no certainty that expectations will be met. It is the evaluation of the likelihood or otherwise of achieving the expectations or goals that contribute towards the emotions of the sales person and the customer, so any management of emotions through emotional intelligence competencies, would require the sales person to be flexible in their approach in order to take the sales call into directions that are likely to meet the needs and goals of the customer first and foremost, even if it takes the salesperson 'off track' initially. The sales literature advocates that an *adaptive sales* approach should be adopted by salespeople if they are to be more effective (Morgan and Stoltman 1990; Weitz, Sujan and Sujan 1986). It would appear that the concept of emotional intelligence is reflected in *adaptive selling* theory because it suggests a salesperson competence in being able to perceive, express, understand and regulate emotions in accordance with changing customer needs, reactions and emotions.

Emotional contagion and emotional intelligence are themes in the management literature which are limited in their ability to explain how emotions impact on a salesperson's effectiveness. They are simplistic and reductionist management theories which are not capable of adequately explaining the complex dynamics of emotions (Lazarus, Averill and Opton 1970). To that extent, there is a gap in the literature in this area, and a paradigm shift is necessary if the impact of emotions on salesperson effectiveness is to be better understood.

## 2.5    Emotions as evaluative events

Emotions in human beings are a result of the need for survival and are a consequence of many thousands of years of evolution. Emotions serve to inform us about our environment – what is a threat and what is not (Darwin 1965 reprint). Cognitive evaluation is a part of the emotion process because we must cognitively appraise a situation before we can know what a threat is and what is not. In the distant past most perceived threats would have been to our safety and wellbeing, but in today's civilised world there is less of a need for our emotions to inform us of these issues. Human emotions still signal environment states and action readiness, but our evaluations and appraisals of events are more aligned with complex social needs inherent in our private lives and work environments (Grandey 2007; Hennig-Thurau et al. 2006).

In the workplace, a salespersons emotional state can be a major determinant of sales success or failure and can have longer term impacts on the salespersons health and have negative implications for other salespeople on the team through effects of emotional contagion (Barger and Grandey 2006). With so many variables at play and a general lack of understanding of the role of emotions in sales calls, it is surprising that there has not been more research conducted in this area and in particular as it applies to B2B sales call effectiveness.

There are a number of theories of emotion explained in the introductory part of this thesis, but for the purposes of this research a theory of goal-based action and accompanying appraisal processes will be employed (Baumeister et al. 2007) because salespeople are goal driven and have sales objectives to achieve and it is through the appraisal of their progress towards goal success or goal failure that emotions emerge.

Emotions can influence many aspects of salesperson behaviour and indirectly, sales call effectiveness. Brown, Cron, and Slocum (1997) demonstrated that the personal stakes salespeople have in achieving their objectives elicit anticipatory emotions that form from an evaluation of the likelihood of achieving or failing to achieve (Scherer 1988).

In the sales literature, research conducted by Bagozzi, Baumgartner, and Pieters (1998) reveal that emotion itself, does not directly cause behaviour but instead there are a number intervening factors which can influence behaviour. In a sales situation, when a salesperson thinks about the consequences of achieving or not achieving a sales goal, they appraise the situation and the potential consequences. The cognitive process generates anticipatory emotional responses which can have a positive or negative affect on the individual depending upon whether the appraisal is about goal attainment or goal failure (Castelfranchi 2005; Mellers and McGraw 2001). Either way, the anticipatory emotions trigger behavioural intentions to do something in order to maximise desired outcomes (Baumeister et al. 2007).

Research conducted by Brown, Cron, and Slocum (1997) found that anticipatory emotions were much stronger or intense than non-anticipatory emotions. This suggests that salespeople can anticipate stronger feelings before an event happens than what they ultimately experience when it happens. If an appraisal results in an evaluation that suggests goal failure, negative anticipatory emotions are produced (Bagozzi, Baumgartner and Pieters 1998). If the appraisal results in a positive evaluation, positive anticipatory emotions are produced. The shift from anticipatory emotions to goal directed behaviours are what Bagozzi, Baumgartner, and Pieters (1998) term volitions which are both directive and motivational in nature. Brown, Cron, and Slocum (1997) in their research developed a conceptual model supporting the views of Bagozzi, Baumgartner, and Pieters (1998) (Figure 2-1).
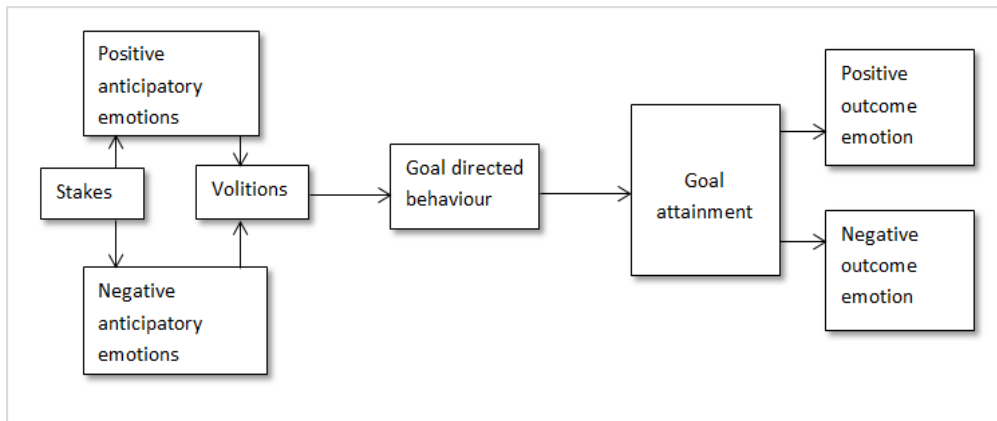
**Figure 2.1:    Conceptual model as proposed by Brown, Cron, and Slocum (1997)**

As far back as the 1960's, Vroom (1964) established that people who develop expectancies related to the outcomes of their behaviour are more likely to behave in a manner that drives them towards their desired goals.  Goal setting theory suggests that behaviour is purposeful and influenced by the person's goals (Locke and Latham 1990).   Unfortunately not all perceptions result in desirable behaviour, for example, when anticipations of sales performance goals are perceived to be unachievable, the salesperson may experience negative psychological affects which in turn can initiate undesirable emotional reactions and performance (Stein, Trabasso and Liwag 1993). Research undertaken by Cron, Slocum, and Vande Walle (2005) claim that vulnerable people can be prone to rumination tendencies which can in turn interfere with their ability to effectively problem solve, particularly when faced with negative or difficult situations. In the psychology literature rumination is conceptualised as a cognitive style that is marked by inflexible and repetitive patterns of thought, which interfere with active problem solving and successful emotion regulation. (Nolen-Hoeksema, Wisco and Lyubomirsky 2008).   Martin and Tesser (1996) refer to rumination as having recurrent thoughts that manifest as a result of the discrepancy between one's current position and desired goal. Ruminative thoughts are often associated with past negative experiences, particularly failures, losses and embarrassing situations. The ruminating usually takes the form of recurrent silent conversations about what happened, how it happened and why it happened (Fresco et al. 2002). Verbeke and Bagozzi (2000) claim that ruminating reinforces a salesperson's fear and reduces feelings of being able to deal with similar situations in the future. According to Nolen-Hoeksema (1991) the main reason why people ruminate is to learn how to avoid future feelings of negative emotion but it is a false belief if the ruminating activity actually reinforces excessive cognitive thoughts about what went wrong if Verbeke and Bagozzi (2000) are correct.

## 2.5.1     Appraisal theory and goal directed behaviour

If salespeople are to be effective and their performance maximised they often need to overcome the effects of negative events that can manifest at any time before, during or after a sales encounter.

According to the literature, perceived progress towards the achievement of sales goals results in positive affect and a perceived lack of progress towards the achievement of goals in negative affect (Stein, Hernandez and Trabasso 2010). Brown, Westbrook, and Challagalla (2005) have observed that a salesperson's call effectiveness is impacted upon by the salespersons ability to self- regulate their behaviour and their ability to cope when they perceive that progress towards goal achievement is unlikely.

As early as 1996, Weiss and Cropanzo (1996) put forward the idea that a negative event can interfere with goal directed behaviour and subsequently impact on performance.   According to Weiss and Cropanzo (1996) much of the appraisal process that occurs in a sales situation is controlled by the autonomic nervous system (ANS) and is automatically initiated via the five senses, with little awareness of the process by the salesperson. The negative affect caused by the ANS can be viewed as primitive evolutionary signals that tell the salesperson that the call is not progressing in the desired direction and that a change of tactic is needed.

According to Stein, Hernandez, and Trabasso (2010)  the affective responses to the ANS signals occur rapidly upon evaluation, and are followed by  emotional responses and volitional plans of action to deal with the changed situation.  The appraisal activity or evaluations can be considered 'natural' to the extent that they have an evolutionary basis and happen automatically. What was important in this study was to identify and investigate what emotions and volitions followed the salesperson evaluations because they are what precede goal directed behaviour and impact upon their call effectiveness.  Brown, Cron, and Slocum (1997) claim that the emotions experienced by B2B salespeople, play a critical role in motivating goal directed behaviour. These findings are important and are directly related to the research questions for this study; determining what emotions are experienced, why they are experienced and how they impact on salesperson behaviour.

Salesperson appraisals before a call result in affective responses which are anticipatory in nature and occur based on past experiences and what they have been told about the customer. It is the initial affective responses that occurred before the call following evaluation that are important in this study and the ability of the salesperson to regulate and cope with the emotions induced following the appraisal.

The simple act of appraising a situation is in itself insufficient motivation for goal pursuit, there is an interim process of volitional intention to act which needs to be considered.

(Bagozzi, Baumgartner and Pieters 1998; Brown, Cron and Slocum 1997; Cron, Slocum and Vande Walle 2005; Frijda, Kuipers and ter Schure 1989).

In B2B sales, most goals or call objectives are established before attending the call. In other words the salesperson anticipates that the call will proceed in a manner that will lead them towards achieving their call objectives. As mentioned earlier a salesperson's goals can be many different things. They may simply be to obtain a meeting with a customer or a return appointment with the same customer. Whatever the objectives or goals, the salesperson will have expectations of achieving them or at least making good progress towards achieving them (Cron, Slocum and Vande Walle 2005). If the goals or objectives of the salesperson following appraisal or evaluation are deemed to be obstructed or perceived to be unachievable, then negative affect is likely to be experienced by the salesperson. All sales call experiences, good and bad, are automatically stored in long and short term memory and recalled when faced with a similar situation in the future (Clore and Ortony 2010).

## 2.5.2    Emotion and memory

Some researchers, notably  Bower (1981) and Forgas (1991) consider emotions to be 'memory units'  created from past learning experiences which are retrieved from short and long term memory and used as a reference for  the initiation of current action strategies. Ledoux, cited in Clore and Ortony (2010) says emotion is memory, suggesting that individuals are rarely confronted with a blank mind about past experiences, and that emotion laden experiences appraised in the past are reinstated from short and long term memory when circumstances present themselves.  In B2B sales, salesperson memory is continually updated with new learned sales experiences and when a new appraisal takes place, the updated memory information is recalled. If the recalled emotional data represents a difficult or negatively based outcome from the past, the salesperson's emotional response may be to ruminate about the past experience which could initiate negative affect feelings of anxiety, worry, apprehensiveness and a lack of confidence.  According to Tenenbaum et al. (2009) individuals experiencing negative affect, are pre occupied with their problematic situation so much so that they are less able to adopt flexible action strategies and as a result their performance declines.

## 2.5.3    Cognitive control, coping and flexibility

The concepts of cognitive flexibility and control, self-regulation and coping are inter-related and are not standalone phenomena. They are embedded in complex dynamical processes of affect and are activated when a person perceives the need to change directions or adapt to their current environment (Folkman and Moskowitz 2004). For the purposes of this research cognitive flexibility and control, self-regulation and coping will all be referred to in a similar

vein, in that they are all a means of communicating the complex adaptive processes which form part of the adaptation process.

The ability to make necessary adjustments to one's goals and directions when faced with changing demands is referred to as 'cognitive flexibility' by Genet, Malooly, and Siemer (2013). Research by Genet, Malooly, and Siemer (2013) suggests that deficits in cognitive flexibility can explain individual differences in those who regularly underperform. This is important when understanding salesperson effectiveness because a salesperson that ruminates about past experiences and has a tendency to worry may have impaired ability to cognitively de-couple emotionally from perceptions of negative appraisals. Being able to re-appraise a situation and adopt new strategies to attain desired call objective outcomes is important if salesperson effectiveness is to be maximised (Ochsner and Gross 2005a). Cognitive re-appraisal research conducted by Gross (1998a) and Dandoy and Goldstein (1990) have shown that when re-appraisal takes place, there is a decline in the experience of negative emotion and associated expressive behaviour.

Important early work on cognitive re-appraisal by well-known psychologists Lazarus and Alfert (1964), describe cognitive re-appraisal as a form of active cognitive process that involves construing an emotion eliciting situation in a way that changes its emotional impact. Herwig et al. (2007) consider cognitive re-appraisal as an antecedent strategy likely to reduce both the behavioural and emotional aspects of future negative emotions.

Tenenbaum et al. (2009) confirms that past experiences stored in memory and the individuals coping strategies are of critical importance to the quality of actions taken when faced with a difficult and changing situation. An inability to cope with the changed circumstances can affect the ability of salespeople to be flexible and to consider alternative approaches to the emerging situation.

The ability for a salesperson to effectively cope with a changed situation enables them to address emergent problems as they occur, relieve stress and to stay focused on objectives (Brown, Westbrook and Challagalla 2005). Interestingly though, Folkman and Moskowitz (2004) claim that a particular coping strategy may be effective in one situation but not in another. Coping strategy to that extent will be contingent on context, duration and the perception sensitivity of the salesperson (Carver and Connor-Smith 2010). According to Bonanno and Burton (2013) an increased perception sensitivity of a changing situation by a salesperson can increase their flexibility in being able to self-regulate or cope with the changing situation. Individual personality or personality traits with respect to perception sensitivity may have an impact and may be an opportunity for further research.

## 2.5.4    Negative Affect

The concepts of worry and rumination are discussed extensively in the psychology literature but there is no agreement on definitions for either term (Harrington and Blankenship 2002). Research to date has been across a number of disciplines with no general agreement on measurement, antecedent factors or even on conceptual understandings.

Harrington and Blankenship (2002) have highlighted that it is not only a lack of agreement on definitions but the array of different terms used to describe the overlapping concepts as well. Martin and Tesser (1996) in their work refer to 'rumination' as one of a number of terms under an umbrella of general intrusive thoughts. Sarason, Pierce, and Sarason (1996) use the term 'cognitive interference' and Thomsen (2006) emphasises the need for further differentiation  of terms following a review of 100 experimental, cross-sectional and longitudinal studies in the psychology literature.  Given the complexity and general lack of agreement in the literature, it is appropriate that for this research project the negative affect terms identified in Table 5.1 be collectively discussed as 'negative persistent thinking' to enable an exploratory and inductive analysis of the findings to assist in discovering in what ways emotions impact on salesperson call effectiveness.

In this research, there is a dominance of reference to worry, being anxious, being nervous and concerned and apprehensive. All these emotions are anticipatory in nature and are in response to thoughts about what 'might' happen in the sales call. Van Boven and Ashworth (2007) and Brown, Cron, and Slocum (1997) claim that the greater the uncertainty of future events, the more intense the emotion during periods of anticipation.

Elster and Loewenstein (1992) go so far as to say that it is likely that people will be more cognitively stimulated or aroused at times of anticipation because of the pending perceived threat of the unknown. These thoughts are consistent with the evolutionary principles of emotion which serve to prepare people for action readiness to either approach or avoid a pending event  (Frijda, Kuipers and ter Schure 1989; Lazarus 1991).

In the case of a B2B sales call, the anticipation of what might happen is caused by expectations established from learned past experience with the customer or from what the salesperson hears from others, but in any event, the salesperson cognitively constructs a mental picture of what could happen which is based on past experiences recalled from memory. Frayne and Geringer (2000) in their research support this view by claiming that outcome expectancies or anticipations do in fact influence goal attainment, further Carver and Scheier (1998) suggest that anticipation of goal success or failure is likely to directly influence a person's volitions and actual goal attainment. The extent to which this impacts on their call effectiveness depends on their ability to cope or possess sufficient cognitive flexibility to regulate their thoughts and volitions (Beckwe et al. 2014).

Kircanski et al. (2015) cluster rumination and worry together to the extent that they share the core features of unpleasantness, repetitiveness and demonstrate a general sense of lack of control of the situation. Whilst some researchers identify rumination as more about a means of responding to past events through self-talk in the form of questions to oneself about 'why did I do that' or 'if only I had have ….' Such persistent thinking about past events and the possible causes and consequences of what happened (Nolen-Hoeksema, Wisco and Lyubomirsky 2008) can cause the salesperson to 'worry' about what might happen on future calls with that customer, or potentially even a different customer. Worry focuses more on future threat or the anticipation of what might happen (Borkovec et al. 1983). The fine line between where worry begins and rumination ends becomes even more blurred when considering the B2B sales call.

Rumination is after all worry, even though the literature draws a distinction between them based on whether the thoughts are about past or future events. In B2B sales one of the most important tasks of a salesperson is to obtain repeat business. The nature of B2B sales is about repeat visits and relationship building with the intention that the customer will order again in the future. If B2B sales people rely on repeat visits what they ruminate about from one sales call can effectively become worry for the next call. To this extent both worry and rumination are important to consider together when exploring the affective responses of B2B salespeople and in particular their anticipatory emotions.

According to Jones et al. (2013) it is when negative thoughts become repetitive and persistent that potential problems emerge especially when gaol directed behaviours are negatively impacted. Wanke and Schmid (1996) argue that rumination is linked to a perceived lack of control, especially with respect to the achievement of goals. Martin and Tesser (1996) consider the perceiving of goal failure as an antecedent to rumination and is linked to impaired cognitive flexibility especially when the ruminator cannot let go of their current volitions in order to reappraise the situation. In the case of B2B sales, anticipation of problems based on hearsay or past experience, can initiate worry and other negative affect including apprehension and anxiety. The temporal distance between worrying and rumination and the call being made, can impact on the salesperson's cognitions and emotion intensity (Van Boven and Ashworth 2007) which may then increase rumination if the worry is about the achievement of an important goal.

Interestingly Papageorgiou and Wells (2003) have discovered that when a person has positive beliefs that ruminating and worrying can help them understand what went wrong, or understand themselves better, they may in fact maintain and increase the ruminating. The psychological research literature has established that worry and rumination can be a predictor of anxiety (Harrington and Blankenship 2002). Findings in the literature indicate that worrying excessively, has the potential to create high levels of anxiety which can

impact on self-confidence and cognitive processes including coping ability which can then impact on goal achievement (Dickson, Ciesla and Reilly 2012; Valenas and Szentagotai 2014).

Dugas et al. (1998) have put forward the view that worry is related to an intolerance of uncertainty. In this research salespeople reported worry as one of the main anticipatory emotions experienced, in other words their anticipatory thoughts were focused on the uncertainty of what would happen. Indeed, from the findings of this research it is very clear that in many instances salespeople worry about what might happen in calls.

This research indicates that many sales people have sound resilience and after initially experiencing negative affect and after reappraising the situation were able to successfully continue with the call. Abraham (2004) has stated that resilience is a strong attribute of positive affect, often in the form of confidence; the question here is whether resilience is a result of the salespersons ability to demonstrate cognitive control and improved coping skills following reappraisal and subsequent feelings of positive affect.

The literature to date has not investigated the role general negative affect might play in B2B sales environments and certainly not as anticipatory emotions and their potential impact on sales call effectiveness.

## 2.5.5    Positive affect

The influence of positive affect on work performance is well established in the literature (Ashby, Isen and Turken 1999; Clore and Huntsinger 2009; Erevelles and Fukawa 2013; Fredrickson 1998; Krishnan, Netemeyer and Boles 2002; Stajkovic and Luthans 1998; Verbeke, Belschak and Bagozzi 2004). Even so, relatively little empirical research has been conducted on positive emotions when compared to the amount of research conducted on negative emotions (Fredrickson 1998). There are a number of reasons for this relative lack of focus on positive affect, one reason is because there are more negative emotions than positive emotions (Fredrickson 1998) and the practicing field of psychology has primarily focused on solving 'problems' associated with negative affect which often result in undesirable behavioural conditions. Another plausible reason put forward by Fredrickson and Cohn (2010) is their belief that positive emotions are more difficult to operationalise, they are more diffuse and they have a broader focus usually at a global level. Negative emotions on the other hand are more causality based and have potentially significant impacts on outcomes and behaviours that can negatively impact on performance. The literature on negative affect is therefore better established, comprehensive and supported by many theoretical models and empirical results.

Positive affect, according to Watson, Clark, and Tellegen (1988) represents the extent that people feel enthusiastic, active and alert. It has been linked to improved cognitive flexibility and assists with more creative problem solving (Ashby, Isen and Turken 1999). A number of researchers including Smith and Ellsworth (1985) and Shaver et al. (1987) have concluded that positive emotions are relatively undifferentiated in their appraisal and action tendencies. For this reason, this research will consider the positive emotions under a general umbrella category of generalised positive affect and will be discussed in relation to the sales and psychology literature, particularly in regards to salesperson feelings of general positivity represented by emotion feelings of confidence, optimism, hope, positiveness, excitement, determination and self-assuredness.

## 2.5.6    Self-efficacy, confidence and optimism

Whilst the construct 'self-efficacy' was not measured per se in this study, there is a large amount of research making a direct link between self-efficacy and confidence and optimism (Krishnan, Netemeyer and Boles 2002; Lee and Gillen 1989; Perry 2011; Pettijohn, Schaefer and Burnett 2014). Lee and Gillen (1989) refer to empirical work by Barling and Beattie (1983) who demonstrated a positive relationship between self-efficacy and sales performance. Supporting this is Krishnan, Netemeyer, and Boles (2002) who demonstrated a direct positive effect between self-efficacy and performance. They go on to say that having confidence in one's ability is positively related to a salespersons performance. Indeed Stajkovic and Luthans (1998) describe confidence and self-efficacy as; the individual's conviction about his or her abilities to mobilize the motivation, cognitive resources and courses of action needed to successfully execute a specific task within a given context. This definition can also apply to 'determination' and 'self-assuredness', two other broadly based positive affect emotions identified in this study.

Seminal work on self-efficacy by Bandura and Adams (1977) indicates that self-efficacy refers to one's belief in one's capability to perform a particular task and that employees who have successfully performed in the past are more likely to have greater confidence to complete a task in the future and higher self-efficacy than those who have been unsuccessful (Bandura 1997). Other work by Bandura (1986) identified four contributing characteristics of self-efficacy; successful performance (competence leading to confidence and optimism), vicarious experience, verbal persuasion and arousal. Perry (2011) encapsulated the four characteristics as simply; a self-perception of one's belief in one's ability, in other words one's self-confidence and optimism or overall feelings of positivity. A salesperson's self-confidence is a belief that they can and will succeed in a sales call. Bandura (1986) stated that individuals who possess a high sense of self-efficacy are more likely to respond to events in an energising way which in turn is likely to influence goal achievement. Lewin and

Sager (2010) highlighted the importance of self-efficacy in sales environments because they are usually comprised of many adverse challenges which salespeople must contend with and yet remain committed.

The coping strategies employed by salespeople when faced with adverse challenges, is dependent upon the salespersons self-efficacious belief – the stronger the belief the more effective the coping strategy (Bandura 1991). Empirical research conducted by Krishnan, Netemeyer, and Boles (2002) found that confidence was positively related to a salesperson's performance and indirectly to the amount of effort expended. Similar findings have been put forward by Stajkovic and Luthans (1998).

There is significant support in the literature for the belief that self-efficacy (confidence and optimism) is strongly associated with salesperson performance (Brief and Aldag 1981; Brown, Cron and Slocum 1998; Hartline and Ferrell 1996; Lubbers, Loughlin and Zweig 2005; Luthans, Zhu and Avolio 2006; Wang and Netemeyer 2002). Based on this, I will now move on to review the literature on other aspects of positive affect, namely the construct of 'hope'.

## 2.5.7    Hope

As is the case with many of the emotion terms, there is very little agreement on the definition of 'hope' in the literature. The connection between hope and improved work performance is well established in the literature (Luthans et al. 2005; Peterson and Byron 2008; Youssef and Luthans 2007). Erikson (1964) has referred to 'hope' as a thought or belief that allows individuals to maintain progress towards goals. Snyder, Irving, and Anderson (1991) describe 'hope' as a positive motivational state that is based on volitions of goal achievement and the flexibility to change directions in order to achieve goals.

Within the literature pertaining to 'hope' there are two broad theoretical approaches. The first is a cognitive approach which is goal-directed thought. It results in positive emotions representing perceived success and motivating volitional actions leading to the achievement of goals or at least goal directed behaviours (Snyder 2002; Snyder et al. 1991). In other words the salesperson is motivated towards the achievement of sales goals because of the thought of achieving those goals. The other theoretical approach to 'hope' is articulated by Averill, Catlin, and Chon (1990) who through their research discovered four 'rules', based on appraisals of future events. The first rule is that following appraisal, there is a perceived likelihood that the goal is achievable. Second that people hope only for things that are personally and socially acceptable. Thirdly that the future outcome is important and finally the person hoping for the outcome is in a position to take action to achieve the outcome. Three other interesting findings by Averill, Catlin, and Chon (1990) are that hope is difficult to regulate and control, that hope is a non-rational thought because it can overestimate a person's chances of achieving the

outcome and finally and most importantly, hope motivates behaviour. This final observation is supported by Snyder (2002) who claims hopeful individuals plan for contingencies when appraising events that present potential impediments to goal achievement (Snyder 2002), so much so that they find the challenge motivating (Snyder, Cheavens and Michael 1999). It has been discovered that individuals with lower levels of 'hope' tend to disengage from their goals and lack the motivation and flexibility to pursue alternate ways to overcome challenges (Anderson 1988; Michael 2000; Peterson and Byron 2008; Snyder 1999). When this happens there is the potential for goal directed behaviours to be impaired and ultimately impact negatively on call effectiveness. Peterson and Byron (2008) in particular, found salespeople with higher levels of hope had higher job performance and effectiveness.

Hope and optimism are commonly referred to interchangeably in the literature (Gottschalk 1974; Maier, Petterson and Schwartz 2000) and whilst there are some differences depending on whether the cognitive approach is embraced (Snyder 2002; Snyder et al. 1991) or the appraisal/rule based approach (Averill, Catlin and Chon 1990) for this research the two emotions will be referred to in general terms as positive affect with respect to B2B sales effectiveness.

Much of the research on cognitive affect has been conducted in the field of psychology and almost exclusively in the area of negative emotions. As previously mentioned, it is because negative affect is most often related to harmful psychological states of individuals which can negatively impact on their daily lives. The study of positive emotions on the other hand, has been rarely researched (Fredrickson 1998) partly because of the difficulty for it to be operationalised (Fredrickson and Cohn 2010) but equally because there are less pressing psychological demands for research in this area. In view of this situation the literature has a paucity of research findings on positive emotions in general and more importantly with respect to this research in the areas of positive affect as anticipatory emotions and their impact on sales call effectiveness.

## 2.6    Chaos and Complexity Theory

Volatility, uncertainty, ambiguity and business complexity is the new world we live in (Bennett and Lemoine 2014). So how can we make sense of this new world? Somewhat abstract in form, complexity theory has become recognised as a means of explaining what traditional methods of science have had difficulty explaining. The traditional methods of understanding complex phenomena in our world have been reductionist approaches that take the path of linear, cause and effect, positivist principles. Complexity theory works on the concept of systems theory, self-organisation and the emergence of new phenomena to ensure adaptation between parts of the system. Equally important is the characteristic of non-linearity – the disproportionality between system inputs and system outputs often referred to as system sensitivity where small things at the input can result in large changes at the output. It is through

the application of complexity theory and Complex Adaptive Systems (CAS) theory that the researcher hopes to explore and discover new insights to B2B sales call dynamics and anticipatory emotions which will lead to new knowledge about sales call effectiveness.

## 2.6.1    History and background

The most basic and fundamental principles of 'chaos' had its beginnings in mathematics and essentially describes the study of complex non-linear dynamical systems (Levy 1994). Some researchers credit the earliest work to mathematicians Jacques Hadamard in 1898 and Henri Poincare in the early 1900's. The majority however credit Edward Lorenz, a meteorologist, who accidently and unknowingly discovered what is now known as Chaos Theory during the 1960s (Burns 2002; Levy 1994; Phelan 1995; Smitherman 2004). Lorenz had developed a simple meteorological computer based model using mathematical concepts and differential equations to simulate weather conditions. He discovered that a very small difference in the initial weather parameters that he input into his computer model, led to unusually large changes in weather predictions (Smitherman 2004). A similar discovery was later termed 'Chaos' by Li and Yorke (1975)  and established one of the key principles of chaos theory - and that is the ability to show that a basic initial set of deterministic relationship parameters can produce outcomes that are patterned yet unpredictable (Levy 1994).

It is argued that the concept of complexity theory was developed from the initial principles of chaos theory. Both rely on non-linear relationships and lend themselves to the principles of systems theory developed by Bertalanffy (1968). The literature suggests that the majority of authors use the terms 'chaos', 'complexity' and complex adaptive system (CAS) interchangeably, and it appears the reason for this is because the principles are thought to be similar and there is still a lack of understanding about the differences.  Certainly from a social science and organizational perspective, complexity theory offers a new way of thinking about organizations' and a shift away from the positivist, reductionist approaches of the dominant Newtonian research paradigm (Brodnick and Krafft 1997; Goldspink and Kay 2001; Zimmerman, Lindberg and Plsek 1998). Chaos and complexity theory can be classified as post-positivist which is a term that is broadly associated with criticisms of positivism (Morcol 2001).

Complexity theory adopts metaphoric language to help explain its principles and this has assisted with the understanding of organization from a complexity perspective. Burrell and Morgan (1979) believe metaphors are a new way of seeing organisations and argue that metaphors and words are lenses in which we see and interpret our experiences and can assist in communicating a relatable new world.  Ortony (1993) has the view that metaphors provide an opportunity to reconceptualise organizational problems by enabling creative insight. In support Weick (1989) puts forward the idea that metaphors are one of a few tools that can create compact descriptions of complex organizational phenomena.

As mentioned, articles written from a complexity theory perspective are rich in metaphors and to some extent abstract, requiring the reader to change their thought paradigm and to view 'things' through an entirely different lens (Eidelson 1997). Changing thought paradigms can be difficult for those 'locked' in to functionalist thinking (Burrell and Morgan 1994). A number of authors have gone to great lengths when utilising complexity metaphors in their research and writings (Hiett 2001; Phelan 2001) to ensure that readers understand the required paradigm shift. Nevertheless the complexity metaphor and all associated terminology lends itself more appropriately to understanding the complex social aspects of organizational life, particularly aspects of interpersonal communication and sense making and their underpinning driver: emotions.

Rickles, Hawe, and Shiell (2007) describe Complexity Theory as the study of dynamical systems and the emergent properties that can evolve from relatively simple interactions between the subunits or agents of the systems, with which it interacts. The main characteristics of complexity include the following:

- Non-linearity
- Emergence
- Self-organisation
- Sensitivity to initial conditions (small changes can result in large effects)

A review of the literature identified authors who refer to Complex Adaptive Systems (CAS) when using complexity theory to study and describe organizations (Palmberg 2009; Baskin 2008; Stacey and Griffin 2005; Stacey 2003b; Ortegon-Monroy 2003; Suchman 2002; Goldspink 2000; Lissack 1998; Eidelson 1997). The most probable reason CAS has become popular in the literature is that they are better suited to the study of organization because of the turbulent and complex organic nature of contemporary organizational environments.

If we were to consider human life as humans know it, from a positivist view point, we would describe it as a collection of interconnected parts making up a whole, essentially made up of molecules of various chemicals and substances. Under this approach the component parts can be isolated, identified and described. Under a complexity theory or CAS perspective, we would acknowledge the existence of the component parts (systems) and the molecules making up human life but there would also be an acknowledgment that through the interconnectedness and the auto-catalytic processes between molecules, new dimensions and capabilities of the whole would emerge (Allen and Strathern 2003). In other words, once there is human life, it cannot be explained simply by reducing it to its component parts – human life is a complex outcome of the component parts and the interactions between those component parts (systems) which themselves are forever being reformed into newer dimensions and capabilities (Morcol 2001). CAS theory is an appropriate lens for the study of organisation because organisations are made up of many component parts, not least of all

human beings, social processes and a myriad of internal and external systems components, all interacting and reforming the organizational realities of those involved (Baskin 2008; Goldspink 1998; Palmberg 2009).

## 2.6.2    Complexity, emotions and organizational narratives.

According to Lazarus (2006) emotions are best studied as narratives, however, he makes it clear that even if we think we know the causes of emotion in ourselves and others, there can be a great deal of obscurity deeply underlying the source. Whatever the source, it seems that the actual felt emotion is a result of cognitive appraisals or evaluations of an event which can present themselves as unpredictable, emergent outcomes - either positive or negative, and have varying degrees of intensity (Bagozzi 2006). Interestingly Frijda (2010) states that regardless of the complexity or underlying source of the emotion, many emotions are automatically or non-consciously formed giving rise to apparent non-linearity and potential confusion as to why one has said or acted  the way they have. This situation creates a great deal of uncertainty in the interpersonal communication which effectively is the basis for the re-negotiation of each participants perceived reality of events that are unfolding or emerging at the time, and in this case the B2B sales call (Stacey 2003a).

The application of CAS theory to the study of organisations and in particular the dynamics of conversation and emotions have been the work of a number of researchers (Baskin 2008; Hammond and Sanders 2002; Stacey 1996, 2003b; Stacey and Griffin 2004; Suchman 2002). Most have referred to CAS principles to help explain their theories, however, a number of other terms have emerged to more precisely describe the processes involved. Even though the terms Complex Responsive Processes (CRP), Storied Spaces and other terms have been used, they are all forms of CAS with similar characteristics.

## 2.7   The Application of Complexity Theory to Organisational Dynamics

To understand organisational life, including the dynamics of B2B sales calls, requires a reconceptualization of what the practice of management is and a willingness to be open minded to alternative thinking and ways of exploring organisational practices (Stacey 2007). Organisational interconnectivity both at the macro and micro level have reached new heights of complexity as a result of increasing world and market volatility, uncertainty and ambiguity (Vuca  2016). The B2B sales call is no different; characterised by nonlinear interactions, interdependencies and ambiguity. As has already been discussed in an earlier part of this literature review, emotions are emergent processes resulting from the subjective evaluations a salesperson makes when appraising the unfolding events in a call (Scherer

1993). The subjective evaluations the salesperson makes before and during calls are the important aspects of this study. The application of complexity theory and in particular Complex Adaptive Systems theory to the anticipatory emotions of B2B salespeople, may provide a new perspective to B2B sales call dynamics and new insights to how their anticipatory emotions might impact on their call effectiveness. The following section will explore these aspects further by reviewing the literature pertaining to complex adaptive systems and their application to B2B sales call dynamics.

## 2.7.1    Complexity theory

According to Smitherman (2004) further research in the area of mathematical complex patterning resulted in the development of Complexity theory which has commonly been applied to the field of natural science and more recently to the social sciences. In particular, the concept has been broadened to include the concept of Complex Adaptive Systems (CAS) theory (Palmberg 2009), bringing with it a rich source of metaphors and a new way of understanding organizations.

Complexity theory itself is the study of pattern recognition and their relationship to various 'system' components and the resultant transformation of itself in the form of new patterns and relationships (Phelan 2001). The new emergent forms are non-deterministic and rely on system feedback and non-linear relationships of component parts. The emergent forms have the ability to continuously interact and spontaneously self-organize into new patterns over time.

According to Valle (2000) Complexity can be characterized by:

1. Numerous but independent interacting elements or agents;
2. Dynamic and persistent responses by these elements to other agents;
3. The ability to adapt itself to new emergent situations to ensure survival;
4. A set of local rules that apply to each influencing agent and
5. A continuing progression in complexity so that over time the system itself becomes larger and more sophisticated.

A key aspect of Complexity Theory is the phenomena of emergence (Hodgson 2000). Complex systems can collectively generate complex behaviour when independent components interact and spontaneously organise and reorganise themselves into even more elaborate systems over time. In more recent times, these behavioural characteristics have been referred to as Complex Adaptive Systems (CAS) (Eidelson 1997; Palmberg 2009).

Much of the literature relating to Chaos, Complexity and Complex Adaptive Systems often uses all three terms and concepts interchangeably; this has been partly due to the lack of agreement on definitions for each and a lack of defined functional principles (Rickles, Hawe and Shiell 2007). For the purposes of this research project, Chaos will not specifically be referred to as it is mostly applicable to the pure sciences of mathematics and computer

modelling. The term Complexity will be used, however, in a broad sense referring to the general principles as described above with reference to Complex Adaptive Systems or in particular, Complex Adaptive Processes (Stacey and Griffin 2005) especially when referring to the B2B sales call and the general social interactions and communication processes that takes place on a daily basis between people in organisations.

## 2.7.2    Complex Adaptive Systems (CAS)

Complex Adaptive Systems (CAS) are dynamic processes which have the ability to adapt in, and evolve with, a changing environment (Chan 2001).  A CAS has certain characteristics that make it what it is. In the literature a number of authors have contributed to the study of CAS theory (Baskin 2008; Bergmann Lichtenstein 2000; Eidelson 1997; Palmberg 2009) and there is increasing agreement on the characteristics which are illustrated in Figure 2-2.
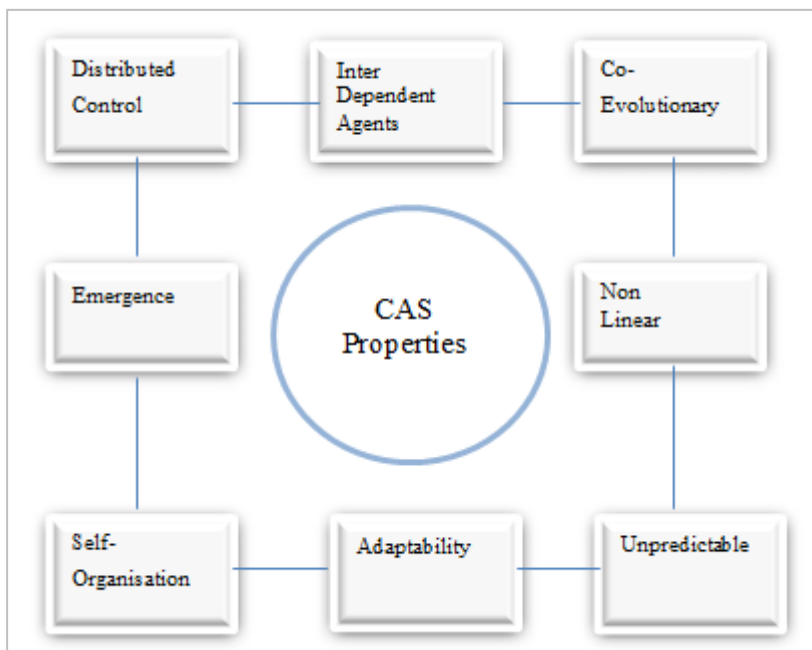


**Figure 2.2:    The properties of a Complex Adaptive System (CAS)**
Adapted from Palmberg (2009)

According to the literature, the notion that organisations can be viewed as Complex Adaptive Systems is not new and has been applied extensively to Strategic Planning (Downs, Durant and Carr 2003; Griffin, Shaw and Stacey 1999; Phelan 1995; Stacey 1995). One of the characteristics of a CAS is that agents will be a part of multiple systems with many variables shaping their activities and in so doing, are reshaping their realities and future activities in an iterative manner (Palmberg 2009). The degree of complexity within these systems and subsystems provide a diversity of possibilities - all subject to individual interpretation and the nuances of communication (Stacey 2003a).

Organisations consist of people, actors or agents, who act out assigned roles within the boundaries of an organisations culture, systems and rules. There are many variables to take into account, some known, some unknown, and many unexpected. The complex adaptive responses of actors within the organisation can indeed be considered complex, simply because of the inherent organisational uncertainty, as well as the diversity of past experiences of all actors and the many roles each must play.

From the perspective of a salesperson, every call is an unknown to a large extent, even if call objectives are set, there is no knowing what the customer will say, whether the call objectives will be achieved or in what direction the call will go and what outcomes will emerge from the call. Certainly the call will have an orderly format and each participant in the call will have a broad expectation of what will occur, but no person can ever know exactly what will happen.

Some of the variables may include the level of trust and the relationship between the sales person and the customer (Jiang et al. 2016), the policies and procedures of each organisation, the flexibility of each participant, the communication skills of each, the emotional state and mood of each person, the stage of the sales cycle, whether it is a repeat call or a new customer and the specific call objectives to name a few. Given the diverse range a variables that can impact on a sales call, it is clear that a sales call is subject to system variables that are both internal and external to both the salesperson and customers organisations. The sales call and indeed all activities being undertaken in an organisation can be considered social acts of relating, interpreting and sense making with each actors choices impacting and reshaping the future responses of both (Stacey 2007).

'The call' as it is represented as its emergent self, is a product of the dynamics and forces at play during the acting out of the call. The call is inseparable from the CAS because together they unfold or emerge in real time.

To further illustrate in relation to the literature, a narrative of a sales call is provided below. In this particular call, it can be seen how the properties of a CAS are evident in the call.

**Self –Organisation, Distributed Control, Interdependent and Adaptability**

Sales call conversation organised around the customer's complaint. Each contributing to the emergence of the call and adapting to the needs and dynamics at play

**SENSITIVITY TO INITIAL CONDITIONS**
Prepare for the worst

**NON-LINEARITY and UNPREDICTABILITY**
Uncertainty
Emotions - worry

**EMERGENCE AND NON-LINEARITY**
Significant problem

"A customer once called with a complaint about one of the products we supplied them. It was a part that performed a critical function and whilst not expensive was critical to their production. Before calling on the customer I looked back over their sales history and confirmed there had been no faulty products in the past. They had been a customer for around 3.5 years. I dropped around not knowing what to expect. I was feeling very worried that there may have been more to it, so I prepared myself for the worst. When I got to see the customer he was not looking all that happy. We sat down and he explained that the faulty part had cost his company 3 hours downtime which amounted to many thousands of dollars in lost time. I was very apologetic and assured the customer that our products were of a very high quality but there was always the chance of a rare failure. The customer understood and everything seemed OK. I suggested to the customer that I could come back and spend time with him and identify a list of critical parts that he used and arrange for spares to be stocked on his premises so that should a failure occur then they could minimize the downtime. The customer was very happy with this".

**Figure 2.3:    An example of a sales call as a Complex Adaptive System (CAS)**

With reference to the literature and the basic characteristics of a CAS as presented by Palmberg (2009) in Figure 2.3, it can be seen that the above narrative can be mapped to the basic characteristics  of a CAS. This will now be further explored by reviewing the literature and applying CAS characteristics to B2B sales calls.

## 2.7.3    The sales call from a Complex Adaptive Systems (CAS) perspective.

The discovery of Chaos and Complexity Theory and more recently, Complex Adaptive Systems (CAS) theory has challenged the dominant Newtonian scientific and reductionist ways of thinking. This new approach makes use of metaphors to create new realities and to help cope with ambiguity often present in complex situations. Indeed, according to Morgan (1983) metaphors are a "basic structural form of experience, through which human beings engage, organize and understand their world."

The use of complexity metaphors requires the use of a vocabulary where 'new' language changes the way we think about organizational problems (Burrell and Morgan 1994). The application of complexity metaphors provides the opportunity to describe and to view events from a different perspective and provide the potential for the creation of new realities particularly with respect to B2B call dynamics and call effectiveness.

Wheatley (1992) refers to a statement made by Einstein: no problem can be solved from the same consciousness that created it. This statement suggests that one must change their dominant thinking paradigm in order to see things differently and discover new insights. The

application of complexity metaphors to organizations and in particular the B2B sales calls can provide the opportunity to view call dynamics and the responsive processes that take place during a sales call, through a different 'lens'. To better understand sales calls as CAS, the characteristics illustrated in Figure 2.2 will now be discussed in turn.

## 2.7.3.1 Interdependent agents

Agents are the living parts or the dynamic components of a system (Vuca 2016). In the case of a B2B sales call the agents consist of the salesperson and the customer(s). Each agent is interdependent upon the other – the sales person depends on the customer for an order or the purchase of goods and / or services from them. The customer is dependent upon the salesperson and their organization for the supply of goods and services. Each agent comes together in a sales call with a general idea that each will have a role to play in the form of customer and supplier. Whilst the meeting of the agents is most often planned, their interaction and responses to each other are largely unpredictable.

## 2.7.3.2 Co-Evolutionary and Adaptable

Systems co-evolve in response to changes in their environments (Kauffman 1993). Co-evolution is a term used in complexity theory that aptly describes a process of mutual adjustment by interdependent agents to their changing surroundings (Kim and Kaplan 2006). The concept of autopoiesis (Maturana and Varela 1980) provides an understanding of how interdependent systems co evolve and adapt for the mutual benefit of both. Luhmann (1986) has applied this concept to social systems and describes them as entities of communication that produce and reproduce recursively. In other words, the components of social systems are communication which Mingers (1994) refers to as social autopoiesis. In the case of the sales call, the salesperson and the customer have an interdependent relationship and are indeed a product of social interaction and communication. It is in the interests of both to co-operate, be flexible and adaptable to the unfolding events that emerge during the call. In so doing, the relationship and the overall direction of the call, self-organise towards an ideal outcome which would be to the mutual benefit of both and in this case the salesperson obtaining an order and the customer's needs being satisfied. It is unlikely that this process would happen during a single call. B2B sales often require the building of trust, potentially long sales cycles and the establishment of longer term relationships with customers and repeat visits (Jiang et al. 2016).

## 2.7.3.3 Non-Linearity and Unpredictability

It is not possible for a sales person or customer to predict how a sales call will unfold. The very nature of human interaction is non-linear to the extent that effective communication relies on interpretation and understanding of all aspects of communication. It is unlikely that all communication can be 100% effective. Human beings interpret events and make sense of their

world through their own viewing lenses, leading to the interpretation and creation of their constructed reality. Interpretations can be dependent upon situation context, culture, attitudes, beliefs and a host of other influencing factors, all of which can potentially result in misunderstandings and incorrect interpretations. As a sales call unfolds and the interchange of interpersonal communication and sense making takes place, unpredictable events and directions emerge resulting in new realities for the salesperson and the customer which further shape the sales call and communication exchange. The renegotiated realities of the events during the call unfold in real time albeit in an orderly, self-organising manner. It is the co-evolutionary, emergent nature of the sales call that makes it non-linear and unpredictable.

## 2.7.3.4 Self-Organisation and Distributed Control

Self-organisation is an emergent process (phenomenon) which spontaneously aligns multiple components of a system, in order to meet the needs or goals of that system (Bergmann Lichtenstein 2000). A number of the principles of self-organisation have been a result of work performed by Prigogine and others (Nicolis and Prigogine 1977; Prigogine and Stengers 1984). Whilst this phenomenon is not fully understood, there is much evidence of its existence. One of the most commonly described examples of self-organisation is the schooling of fish into an orderly form, shown in Figure 2.4 The new collective form acts as one entity but is made up of multiple independent parts. The formation of the new entity appears to automatically develop without any formal direction or guidance from any of its individual component parts.



**Figure 2.4:** **Schooling fish, example of a Self-Organising phenomenon.**
Source: www.wired.com

Self-organisation has been described by Humphrey (2000) as the process whereby a group of people organise themselves in pursuit of a common cause. Similarly Yates, Garfinkel and Walter (1987) describe self-organisation as an emergence of order to deal with social complex systems. Both of these descriptions are relevant to the B2B sales call; both the sales person and the customer have a mutual interest and common goal, they are therefore interdependent, flexible and adaptable during the call and evolve together through the unfolding uncertainty of the exchange. From the time the salesperson and the customer meet

there are orderly patterns or rules of engagement that both agents will follow and comply with. This overall pattern of self-organisation may take the form of turn taking when communicating, not interrupting the other whilst speaking, smiling at appropriate times and even the order of events that occur during the call including the initial greeting and hand shaking, the introductory opening of the call, the finalization of the call and the farewell.

Each agent has equal control at all times during the call. Both agents jointly create the unfolding events which make the call what it is. The opportunity to shape the call is equally distributed amongst agents. Interestingly, these events sub-consciously and automatically happen. One does not say to the other when it is their turn to speak or what should happen next – the event self-organises as a result of dynamical processes and the desire to pursue common goals or outcomes (Lazarus 2006; Suchman 2002).

### 2.7.3.5    Emergence

Emergent phenomena are unexpected outcomes that appear or present themselves as a result of small changes to deterministic, non-linear system events (Bergmann Lichtenstein 2000; Hodgson 2000). In complexity theory, emergence describes novel outcomes that are unexpected. In other words, systems comprise of component parts that cannot be reduced to constituent parts - there is always more than the sum of the constituent parts (Hodgson 2000).

According to Dimitrov and Wright (2001) emotions are emergent phenomena that have the capacity to self-organise and the most effective way to explore and understand emotions is through narratives and stories of human experiences. It follows that the collection of narratives for this study is an appropriate method to understand the emotions of B2B salespeople when conducting sales calls. In a sales call, there can be many reasons for unexpected emergent outcomes. A salesperson may have a well-planned call with call objectives clearly defined and an understanding of how the call will broadly unfold. When the sales call gets underway, unexpected comments or actions from the customer may surprise the salesperson, taking their focus away from their initial call objectives (Suchman 2002). This is a common occurrence in B2B sales, and the sales literature discusses the need for salespeople to be 'adaptable' (Baskin 2008; Goff 1994; Morgan and Stoltman 1990; Predmore and Bonnice 1994). Simple misunderstandings during the call can cause unexpected emergent outcomes that can impact on the effectiveness of the call.

As this study is particularly interested in the anticipatory emotions of B2B sales people, it is critically important to acknowledge that emotions are indeed emergent phenomena in their own right (Scherer 2009). What is said and how things are said during a sales call can elicit emotional responses which can have significant implications for the call. The aroused emotional feelings emerge unexpectedly and often as a result of a relatively small event in the form of a comment or signal picked up by the recipient (Knowles, Grove and Keck 1994;

Mankelwicz and Kitahara 2010). Certainly any emotions felt prior to the call by the salesperson may cause emergent and unexpected outcomes, either positive or negative, during the call.

## 2.8    Emotions as emergent processes

As much as it may seem otherwise, emotion is not something we experience in isolation. It, and the understanding arising from it, occurs within chaotic dynamics of social complexity (Dimitrov and Wright 2001).

Emotion is a vital part of life for all human beings. It is an area of discussion that has seen much controversy as to what emotions are and how they form. Much of the literature and history of emotion has been discussed earlier in the Literature Review section of this thesis.

To briefly recap, emotion can be cultural, cognitive, physiological, psychological or a combination of any of them. The majority of the literature in the past two to three decades has focussed mainly on Emotional Contagion and Emotional Intelligence (Elfenbein 2007; Grandey 2007; Hatfield, Cacioppo and Rapson 1994; Leban and Zulauf 2004; Neumann and Strack 2000) all of which have found relevance and keen followings in their application to Management, and more specifically leadership, organisational culture, productivity, employee well-being and customer service.

Given the abundance of research on emotions over the past five decades, there is still no agreed upon definition or agreement as to what they are or how they develop (Ekman and Davidson 1994; Plutchik 1980). The other issue is that all the models and 'theories' mentioned earlier consider emotions as manageable events to the extent that they can be manipulated and controlled.  This suggests that all aspects of a sales call can be identified and known which also suggests that they are linear with cause and effect relationships. They do not offer plausible explanations about the unpredictable and emergent nature of emotions.

One exception to this is Scherer (2009) who has expressed the view that emotions are emergent processes that manifest themselves in response to subjective evaluations or appraisals of the importance of events presenting themselves at the time.  This has implications in B2B sales and in particular the impact on the effectiveness of calls resulting from the anticipatory emotions or subjective evaluations the salesperson makes about what 'might' happen during the call.  Frijda and Scherer (2009) have collated a series of emotion features which they claim are of general importance and which seem to be reasonably well accepted by most researchers. Their work has resulted in them establishing three key features of emotion;

The first concerns theories of what are termed 'basic' emotions which was originally put forward by Charles Darwin  (1872). Darwin's theory was that particular types of events would initiate specific affect regimes that correspond to one of the basic emotions.

Depending on which particular basic emotion is elicited will depend on the expression and physiological responses enacted. These 'basic' emotions are believed to be genetically passed on and are endemic to all human species. The 'basic' emotions put forward by Ekman (1992) are based on Darwin's original work and consist of: Happiness, Surprise, Fear, Anger, Disgust and Sadness. The idea that these emotions were the only ones identified as basic emotions is now being questioned as to their correctness in the current times, given that a lot more has been learnt about emotions over the years (Barrett 2011; Prinz 2004).

The second category is known as the constructivist emotion theories based on the work of James (1890) which were later modified by Schachter and Singer (1962). This theory was based on the human body perceiving bodily changes and the labelling of those changes and feelings as particular emotions. The third category is known as 'appraisal' theories or cognitive theories. The cognitive or appraisal theories can be traced back to Aristotle, Descartes and Hume and have been presented as emotion theories by Arnold (1960) and others (Lazarus 1966; Lazarus 1991).

Section 2.8 described emotions as emergent processes. As previously outlined, emergence is a characteristic of complexity theory and more particularly, Complex Adaptive Systems (CAS). The application of CAS principles and theory to B2B sales calls can provide new insights to sales call dynamics as will be discussed in the next section.

## 2.9 How the application of CAS theory can explain the dynamics of B2B sales calls

According to Lazarus (2006) emotions can be viewed as cognitive, motivational and relational and as a process; relational because emotion (feelings) is what arises between a person and their environment and in the case of B2B sales calls, interactions with other people. The other important premise put forward by Lazarus (2006) is that as a consequence, 'we' continually appraise or evaluate events and assign meaning to those events which in turn, shapes our emotions and responses. Each salesperson's reality results from these processes of individual and collective aggregations of themes which we give meaning to and which are co-existent in the making of the moment (Stacey, Griffin and Shaw 2001; Suchman 2002). The other aspect of emotions that Lazarus (2006) considers integral to emotions is the concept of coping which he sees as an important factor in a person's ability (salesperson) to manage or deal with demands to adapt to a sales situation, particularly as a result of evaluations or appraisals and the subsequent emergence of emotions. In other words a salesperson's ability to cope and regulate their responses is seen as a mediator of their displayed emotional feelings.

The act of appraising or cognitively evaluating call events enables relational meaning to be formed, which includes an interpretation of the significance of an event to the individual. The perceived significance of an event can vary between salespeople for a number of reasons not least of all the personality characteristics of the individual. The resultant emotion is a product of the appraisal process which includes a relational meaning assigned to the event which can be interpreted as harm, a potential threat, challenge or benefit to the appraiser (Lazarus 2006).

The above three features of emotion previously described by Frijda and Scherer (2009) suggest that emotions are based on an individual's subjective evaluation or appraisal of the significance of events for their wellbeing and goal achievement. The anticipatory emotions of a B2B salesperson may be a result of cognitive appraisals about how things will go in the call with the customer. The thoughts may have their origins in what happened on the last call with the customer or some event that may have happened since the last call. Perhaps a delivery went wrong or a purchased product has not performed as expected, whatever the cause of the anticipatory appraisal process, the thoughts and feelings of the sales person before the call will be evaluated in terms of whether it could harm, be a potential threat, challenge or even be of benefit to the salesperson during the call with the customer. The anticipatory emotions and how they may impact on the effectiveness of the sales call will be discussed in the results and discussion chapters of this thesis.

With so many dynamics at play leading up to and during B2B sales calls, it seems appropriate that CAS theory would offer a valid means of looking at call dynamics in a way that takes in to account the complex, diverse and unpredictable forces that make a sales call what it is. Certainly when reviewing Table 2.1 below, the global characteristics of a CAS when compared and applied to the dynamics of a B2B sales call and all the associated emotional perturbations and idiosyncrasies of the people involved, suggest that B2B sales calls are indeed complex adaptive systems. Table 2.1 was constructed following a review of the literature (Dimitrov and Wright 2001; Fischer and Manstead 2010; Kemper 1978; Lazarus 2006; Salovey et al. 2010; Stacey 2003a; Suchman 2002), and illustrates and compares the characteristics of a CAS and the characteristics of a B2B sales call with an example demonstrating the connectedness or relevance to an actual sales call. By using the CAS metaphor for this study, new insights have been possible which have assisted in understanding emotions and their role in B2B sales.

**Table 2-1:    Mapping of a CAS to B2B sales calls**

| Characteristics of | | Application to B2B Sales Call | Emergent Phenomena identified in the literature by Author |
|---|---|---|---|
| CAS Sec. 2.9.3 | Typical B2B sales call | | |
| Interdependent agents Sec. 2.9.3.1 | More than one person is involved in a sales call, typically there are two. | In a sales call, each participant is an agent enacting the call together. All agents in the call are dependent on the other. One agent cannot enact the call without the other. They are interdependent agents. | "emotions can best be understood in the context of an interpersonal relationship" (Lazarus 2006, P9). |
| Co – evolution Sec. 2.9.3.2 | The sales call evolves as a result of the interactions of all agents in the call. Each agent has their own agenda and objectives. | As the sales call unfolds between interdependent agents they all 'cause' the call to be what it turns out to be. A call cannot be a call unless it is enacted and evolves from the mutual participation of agents. | "emotions are elicited and evolve in social contexts and they help us to deal with the challenges posed by our social environment" (Fischer and Manstead 2010, P464). |
| Non linearity Sec. 2.9.3.3 | Sales calls evolve in unexpected directions as a result of appraisals and emotional responses to call events. | An agent giving good or bad news invokes a cognitive appraisal of the event in the other, resulting in emotional responses which may be completely unexpected to the other. | "because of the non-linear iterative nature of human interaction, there is always the potential for small differences to be amplified into transformative shifts.."(Stacey 2003a, P330). |
| Not predictable Sec. 2.9.3.3 | The agents will have an expectation of how the call will go and what will be discussed, however due to the non-linear nature of sales calls; agents can never know exactly what will occur. | The sales person has clear, well defined call objectives. Unexpected events during the call force the sales person to abandon some or all call objectives. None of the agents could have predicted the path the call would take or what the outcome would be. | "one cannot predict what kind of experience will occur even in the nearest future, therefore one is uncertain about the emotions which could emerge out of the experience" (Dimitrov and Wright 2001, P2) |
| Adaptability Sec. 2.9.3.2 | All aspects of sales calls cannot be known ahead of time by all agents due to the non-linear, unpredictable nature of sales calls. The sales person is trained to be flexible during the call and to adapt to unexpected emergent events. | The sales person, who has to abandon their call objectives due to unforeseen events, follows the cues and responds accordingly to the other. The ability to do this is a measure of coping ability or flexibility of the sales person and their ability to be adaptable to the emerging and changing environment. | "people's abilities to adapt and cope in life depend on the integrated functioning of their emotional and rational capacities and to regulate and adapt to the situation" (Salovey et al. 2010, P535). |

| Characteristics of | | Application to B2B Sales Call | Emergent Phenomena identified in the literature by Author |
|---|---|---|---|
| CAS Sec. 2.9.3 | Typical B2B sales call | | |
| Self-organisation Sec. 2.9.3.4 | The sales call is self-organizing as each agent must respect the needs of the other agent and in so doing there is an unspoken protocol which is followed. As each agent is interdependent, they must respect the needs of the other. | During the call, agents observe an unspoken ritual which includes turn taking, pausing, listening, not interrupting and waiting for their turn to speak. These aspects happen automatically and the call co-evolves in a self-organizing way. | "organisations are self-organising patterns of conversation, of meaning, in which human identities emerge" (Stacey 2003a, P330). |
| Emergence Sec. 2.9.3.5 | Due to the non-linear and unpredictable nature of sales calls, new 'things' can emerge during a sales call. These new emergent 'things' are unexpected and can surprise agents. | The sales person being flexible and adaptable during a call may learn something new that they were not aware of previously. The need for a particular product or service, competitive information, growth plans, new business opportunities etc. These emergent 'things' may not have been known before and may have been surprising and unexpected. | "the capacity of the participants to form new associations between themes also affect the emergence of novelty" (Suchman 2002, P5). |
| Distributed control Sec. 2.9.3.4 | The sales call consists of at least two agents - sales person and customer. | Each agent participates in the sales call and the call co-evolves in response to responsive processes of each. Each agent has equal 'control' over what happens during the call or the direction the call will take. | "a large class of emotions result from real, imagined or anticipated outcomes in social relationships but often only requires action to the extent that the agent perceives the situation as being a threat and the need to exercise control" (Kemper 1978, P30). |

Table 2.1 relates the components and characteristics of a Complex Adaptive System to a B2B sales call and then describes how the characteristic is evident in a typical B2B sales call. The last column of the Table provides an example from the literature of emergent phenomena in an organisation that is characteristic of a Complex Adaptive System and then notates the supporting author.

Whilst there is nothing new about organisations being viewed as Complex Adaptive Systems and in particular when being applied to assist with Strategic Planning (Downs, Durant and

Carr 2003; Griffin, Shaw and Stacey 1999; Phelan 1995; Stacey 1995) there is no evidence in any of the literatures of Complex Adaptive Systems theory being applied to anticipatory emotions and B2B sales call effectiveness. In this respect, this research contributes to reduce this gap in the literature.

## 2.10 Summary

Chapter 2 reviewed the sales literature with respect to sales performance and effectiveness. It then reviewed literature on the theory of emotions with an emphasis on the popular theories most commonly found in the literature, namely emotional contagion and emotional intelligence. The review then presented literature on emotions as evaluative events and in particular goal directed behaviour. Emotion and memory were then reviewed as well as the literature on cognitive control and flexibility. The psychology literature was the reviewed with current views relating to emotions leading to negative and positive affect. Following this was a review of chaos and complexity theory and the how it relates to the study of organisations as complex adaptive systems (CAS). The theory of CAS was then reviewed and applied to B2B sales calls concluding with a Table mapping the stages and components of a typical B2B sales call with the characteristics of CAS. The literature review was conducted to identify what is already known in the area of anticipatory emotions in B2B sales and to identify relevant gaps in the literature to support the need for further research. Overall the literature review provided an up-to-date picture of current theories and research findings pertaining to multi-disciplinary areas of B2B sales, emotions, organisational psychology and complexity. As a result of the literature review, the following gaps were identified:

1. The current theories of emotion, including emotional intelligence and emotional contagion do not adequately explain the complex dynamics of anticipatory emotions and how they impact on B2B sales call effectiveness.
2. The research on anticipatory negative emotions and anticipatory positive emotions has not been conducted in B2B sales call environments where sales call effectiveness has been the focus of the research.
3. There is no evidence in any of the literatures of Complex Adaptive Systems theory being applied to anticipatory emotions and B2B sales call effectiveness.

In summary, the literature review did not disclose any empirical research which had been undertaken on the anticipatory emotions of B2B salespeople and the impact the anticipatory emotions might have on call effectiveness. In addition there was nothing in the literature that could be found that had applied the concepts of complex adaptive systems theory to B2B sales call dynamics.

As a result of these research gaps, the following research questions were determined:

1.  What are the primary anticipatory emotions experienced by B2B salespeople?
2.  In what ways do they perceive these anticipatory emotions impacting on their sales effectiveness?
3.  What are the key factors perceived as influencing anticipatory emotions?
4.  What insights might complexity theory provide with regards to anticipatory emotions?

As discussed in the following Methodology section in Chapter 3, it was necessary to ensure that an appropriate research paradigm and research design was chosen for answering the research questions. Constructivist ontology and an interpretivist epistemology were necessary to explore and interpret the lived emotional experiences of the B2B salespeople who participated in the study. To assist with the collection of the data, a pre hypothesis research design was preferred which led to the use of an online web based application called SenseMaker© by Cognitive Edge®.

# Chapter 3    Methodology

## 3.1    Introduction

This Chapter discusses and justifies the philosophical and methodological considerations that were necessary for this study. It also provides a detailed step-by-step process of how the data was reviewed, reduced and finally selected as the most relevant to answer the research objective:

**To what extent are anticipatory emotions perceived by B2B salespeople as impacting on their sales effectiveness?**

To answer the primary research objective it was determined that answers were needed to specific research questions about the role of anticipatory emotions on sales effectiveness:

1. What are the primary anticipatory emotions experienced by B2B salespeople?
2. In what ways do they perceive these anticipatory emotions impacting on their sales effectiveness?
3. What are the key factors perceived as influencing anticipatory emotions?
4. What insights might complexity theory provide with regards to anticipatory emotions?

In a general sense, researchers adopt quantitative or qualitative approaches to research; these approaches are often aligned to positivist or constructivist ontologies. Interestingly Guba and Lincoln (2004) suggest that either approach can be used in a research study and the decision as to which approach to use should be decided by the type and nature of the research to be undertaken. Such considerations are very important as the choice of research paradigm can impact on the methods used and the resultant knowledge produced (Hatch and Cunliffe 2006; Creswell 2009; Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill 2007; Neuman 1997).

The following discussion will consider some ontological and epistemological philosophical standpoints as well as a discussion about positivism and interpretivism research paradigms. The ensuing discussion will help explain and justify the rationale for the research design that was used to answer the research questions for this project.

## 3.2    Ontological Considerations

According to Blaikie (1993) ontology is 'the science or study of being' which forms a person's view of the nature of reality and whether that reality is an objective reality that really does exist or an interpreted subjective reality – in other words, is it something we know exists and is for real or is it what we think might exist and express in words and

images (Flowers 2009). Fundamental questions about 'being' can be viewed from two broad perspectives - a positivist viewpoint or an interpretivist (constructivist) viewpoint.

If a person was to subscribe to positivist ontology, they would have the belief that the 'world' was out there already in existence in an orderly, observable and explainable form. The reality would be considered to be independent of any subjective human interpretation of that world (Blaikie 1993). Philosophically, on the other hand if a constructivist ontology was subscribed to, the person would believe that the world was a series of signs, symbols, language and meanings with the potential for subjective, socially constructed interpretations of the world (Mertens 1998).

 Considering the research questions for this study, it is evident that the research participants will need to recount a B2B sales experience and to offer their opinions and interpretations of what happened during the sales call. Their interpretations will be their constructed reality of what happened in the sales call. Their constructed reality will have been formed as a result of the social interactions with the customer and the thoughts they had before, during and after the call. All of the factors contribute to their recalled experience of the call. No two participants in the study will have the same story to tell, however, their story may well be similar but not exactly the same as others.

For this study, the nature of reality for the B2B sales participants will be constructed ones resulting from an interconnectedness of objectivity and subjectivity. Their interpretations of events will be subjective and they will be different for each participant. Given each participant will be recounting a different socially constructed reality, it is clear that constructivist ontology was appropriate for this study.

## 3.3    Epistemological Considerations.

Epistemology is about how knowledge can be obtained to support ones ontological reality. Can knowledge about phenomena be gained and if so, how can it be obtained (Neuman 1997). The question as to whether a positivist or constructivist epistemology should be adopted depends on the ontological choice of the researcher. A positivist epistemology suggests that knowledge can only be gained by gathering facts, and by developing and testing hypotheses with the intention of refining and testing them further in order to obtain generalizability.  If a constructivist epistemology was employed, there would be an understanding that knowledge would be constructed and not discovered. The world out there would be experienced and interpreted giving way to different interpretations. Crotty (1998) elegantly quotes;

*"Truth, or meaning, comes into existence in and out of [one's] engagement with the realities in [one's] world. There is no meaning without a mind. Meaning is not discovered, but constructed. In this understanding of knowledge it is clear that different people may construct meaning in different ways, even in relation to the same phenomenon. In this view of things, subject and object emerge as partners in the generation of meaning."(Crotty 1998, 8)*

The specifics of what happened on a particular recounted sales call will be an interpretation of events, feelings, thoughts, meanings and actions by that sales person and customer. For this study the epistemological grounding for knowledge is based on subjective meaning and social interaction. Given that knowledge of the recounted sales call will be an acceptance of the interpretation of events by that sales person, it is clear that an interpretivist epistemology was an appropriate choice for this study.

Whilst this study may lend itself to a constructivist ontology and interpretivist epistemology, it is important to acknowledge that the collection of data for this study was through the collection of narratives or stories from B2B sales people. The collection of these narratives was via a purposefully designed signification framework accessible online by B2B salespeople. The collection facility and data collection application consisted of a number of modules developed by Cognitive Edge®. The initial capture of narrative data was of a qualitative open architecture design, to the extent that participants were able to write in their own words and to any extent, their account of a B2B sales experience.

Once the narratives had been collected, participants were presented with a series of questions about their story. The carefully designed questions were crafted from established theory in the sales and emotion literature and from 30+ years of sales experience of the researcher. The questions formed the signification framework or filters for the study from which research participants made choices, effectively self-signifying or contextualising their narrative.

 The self-signified narratives provided both qualitative and quantitative data. The quantitative data provided a means of measurement and impact analysis and the qualitative data component provided context and meaning to the narratives (CognitiveEdge 2014).

Given that the study has components of both qualitative and quantitative data, it is worth considering the three potential forms of reasoning or thought logic that are commonly used when developing  quantitative theories; deductive, inductive and abductive logic.  Each form of logic and their characteristics and relationship to positivist and post positivist approaches to research will be discussed in turn to justify and explain the research design that was adopted for this study.
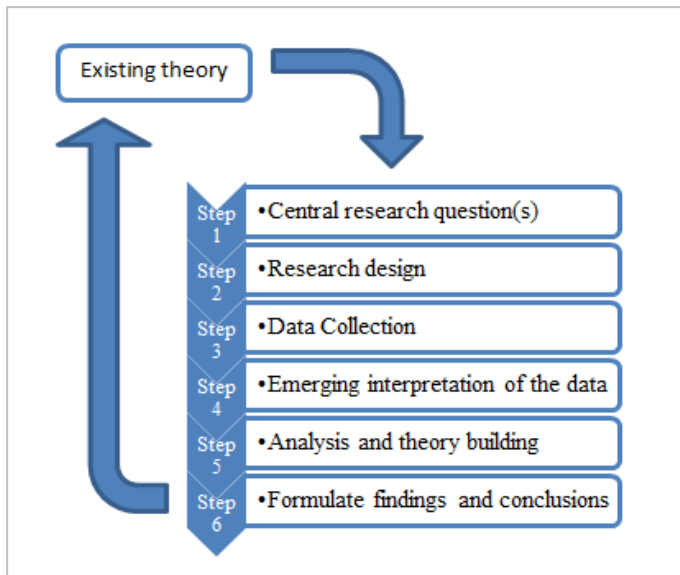
**Figure 3.1:    Positivist view of the research process**

The positivist research process shown above adopts the scientific view that facts and phenomena exist independent of the researcher and simply need to be discovered and described. Typically theories and hypotheses are tested using a deductive approach. The positivist approach is very different to the interpretivist approach shown in Figure 3.2.
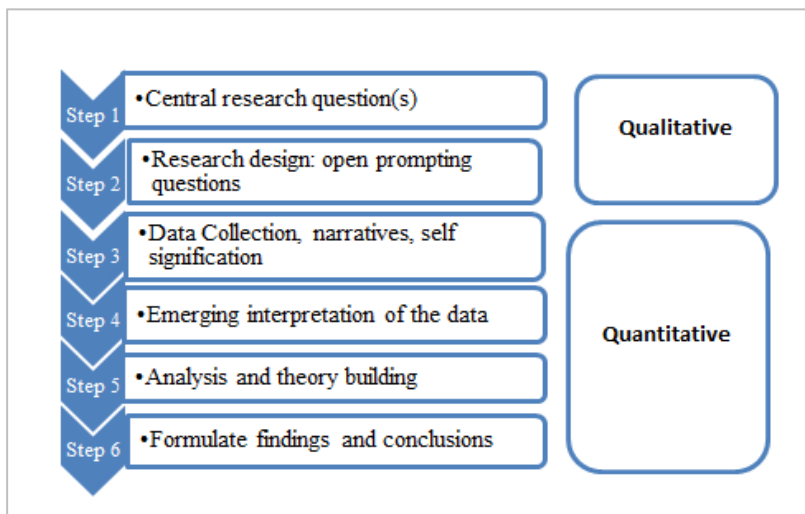


**Figure 3.2:    Interpretivist view of the research process**

The interpretivist approach is highly subjective and seeks to understand how people make sense of their subjective reality. Both approaches have their advantages as shown in Table 3.1. For this study the research objective was to explore the subjective experiences of B2B salespeople and to describe those experiences. Because of the nature of the research objective for this study, an interpretivist design was chosen using an inductive/abductive logic approach.

**Table 3-1:** **Advantages and disadvantages of Positivism and Interpretivism**

| | Positivism | Interpretivism |
|---|---|---|
| Advantages | Economical collection of a large amount of data. | Helps with understanding of 'how' and 'why' questions |
| | Clear theoretical focus for the research from the outset | Enables the researcher to be responsive to changes and emergent data which may occur |
| | Greater opportunity for the researcher to retain control of the research process | Better at understanding social processes and interactive sense making |
| | Easily comparable data | Allows for complexity and contextual factors |
| Disadvantages | Inflexible – direction often cannot be changed easily once data collection has started | Data collection can be time consuming |
| | Weak at understanding social processes | Data analysis is challenging and can be complex |
| | Often does not discover the meanings people attach to social phenomena | Researcher has to live with the uncertainty that clear patterns may not emerge and what does emerge is based on interpretations |

# 3.4   Logic

According to Peirce (1955) there are three forms of logic; deductive reasoning, inductive reasoning and abductive reasoning. In summary deduction proves that something *must* be; induction shows that something actually *is* operative; abduction merely suggests that something *may* be. He also stated that abduction is the process of forming an explanatory hypothesis otherwise known as a pre-hypothesis. This study set out with an explanatory framework. It qualitatively collected narratives from B2B salespeople and then asked participants to select from a number of dynamic triad choices by moving a dynamic 'ball' to signify the strength of their choice in answer to questions they were asked. This methodology is unique, essentially employing a pre-hypothesis research approach (Snowden 2006). When the participants moved the dynamic 'ball' they signified or coded their choice by providing contextual information to their choice. Once all data was collected the process enabled an abductive process to be employed because the choices provided by the participants were now in effect, 'informed' hypotheses which were then explored and compared to the narrative. The outcome was an abductively derived and interpreted explanation of the call event. The following explains each form of reasoning in turn.

### 3.4.1    Deductive logic / reasoning

Deductive reasoning, or deduction, begins with a general statement, or hypothesis, and examines alternative possibilities in order to reach a specific, logical outcome. The positivist approach is characterized by the testing of hypotheses based on already existing theory. It is deductive and is based on the measurement of phenomena suggesting that the world exists objectively and externally and that knowledge can only exist if it is based on the measurement of those observations. This approach also suggests that the observations or results obtained can be applied to others generally and there is likely to be cause and effect relationships which enable the prediction of future outcomes. As previously mentioned the ontological assumption of the positivist approach is that there is only one truth and that an objective reality exists independent of human perception (Neuman 1997). Characterized by the use of 'facts' this objective reality is often measured using a quantitative approach by employing surveys and questionnaires as collection instruments , which are then analysed using statistical tools.

### 3.4.2    Inductive logic

Inductive processes are systematic procedures for analysing qualitative data which are usually guided by specific objectives related to the research being undertaken. The purpose of using induction as a means of analysing qualitative data is to allow findings to emerge from recurring, significant themes in the raw data (Thomas 2006).

Inductive research is more related to an interpretivist paradigm than to a positivist one.  It is therefore a more appropriate form of investigation for this study as it moves from the specific to the general. It is considered more open ended and exploratory and has the ability to extend theories rather than simply test existing ones.  Post positivist approaches like interpretivism  (Altheide and Johnson 1994) and constructivism (Guba and Lincoln 1994a) view reality as subjective, socially constructed and created in 'real time' (Flick 1998) as a result of the interplay of experiences through social relating and other complex responsive processes (Stacey 2003b).  Research using this paradigm observes events from a 'micro' perspective where inductive reasoning (Cavana, Delahaye and Sekaran 2001) can lead the researcher to unknown destinations.

The ontological assumption is that there are multiple realities or truths that are based on one's own interpretation and construction of their reality or experiences. Typically, to obtain subjective insights to the interpreted reality of others, an open ended research approach is often preferred through a qualitative research design where stories and experiences are obtained through open ended interviews, the collection of narratives, stories and experiences or some other approach where the collection of narratives in particular contexts is possible.

### 3.4.3    Abductive logic

The principles of abduction are formulated on the premise that no priori hypothesis exists. Hypotheses are advanced following the careful scrutiny of available facts and circumstances surrounding the event (Levin-Rozalis 2004). It is a form of inductive logic or reasoning which attempts to identify patterns in phenomena which can lead to the formulation of plausible explanations or hypotheses (Peirce 1934/1960). According to Peirce (1955):

> *"Abduction is a process of drawing conclusions that includes preferring one 'hypothesis' over others which can explain the facts, when there is no basis in previous knowledge that could justify this preference or any checking done"(Peirce 1955, 151).*

When using an abductive approach the researcher looks for a pattern, an anomaly or even a missing pattern, and then investigates the situation to find plausible reasons, explanations or hypotheses for it. It is a form of evidence collection with the hope that a plausible explanation will be found. Abduction is a commonplace occurrence practiced every day by people making sense of their world. It occurs during all aspects of life and certainly in organizational life where uncertainty and unfamiliar experiences are common.

Not only does abduction seek plausibility but it often seeks coherence with prior knowledge or experience (Snowden 2010). Plausible explanations of events can be formulated through the study of a reported experience or observation (narrative), followed by some consideration and evaluation of several plausible or likely explanations. Likely explanations in this study might be found in the sales literature or even from senior sales people with many years' experience in the industry. As described in Section 3.6 of this chapter, this research project employed a software application called SenseMaker© to collect and analyse the data for this study.

 One of the powerful aspects of SenseMaker© is that it can provide the ability to identify emergent phenomena or information from the collected data as a result of its graphical processing power and representation of the data. In some studies isolated data 'incidents' may be considered 'anomalies' which would typically be ignored in traditional quantitative studies. Sometimes through abductive reasoning and analysis these outlying anomalies may be the source of new insights into the dynamics of B2B salesperson emotions and subsequently lead to the development of new theories.

Interestingly Haig (2005) asserts that abductive reasoning depends upon the reflective abilities and past experiences of the person abducting and to that extent confirms the 'subjective' nature of abduction.

## 3.5 Research design: The SenseMaker© pre-hypothesis methodology.

This study incorporated a qualitative design where participants were prompted to write openly in their words about a B2B sales experience. At the initial stage of the study the collection of the sales narrative was 100% qualitative and the participant was in no way influenced, guided or biased towards any aspects of the study and what was to follow.

The next stage of the study required the participant to quantitatively select choices presented to them about their narrative. The choices presented were based on a review of the B2B sales and emotions literature. Given that the researcher had no idea what the participants would write in their narratives, the quantitative filter choices presented to the participants were in effect, pre-hypothesis choices.

The very act of the participant choosing from the Triad options presented to them in the survey instrument, provided an opportunity for them to contextualize their narrative data and to validate the truth or otherwise of the plausible options provided. Not only did participants have a choice of options but they had the ability to select the degree of truth in their choice by moving a dynamic 'ball' positioned in the Triads, as illustrated in Figure 3.3. Should the participant feel that the choices presented were not applicable to their narrative, they had the choice of selecting NA (not applicable).

An example of a Triad used in the study, with the filter choices made available to the participant is shown below.
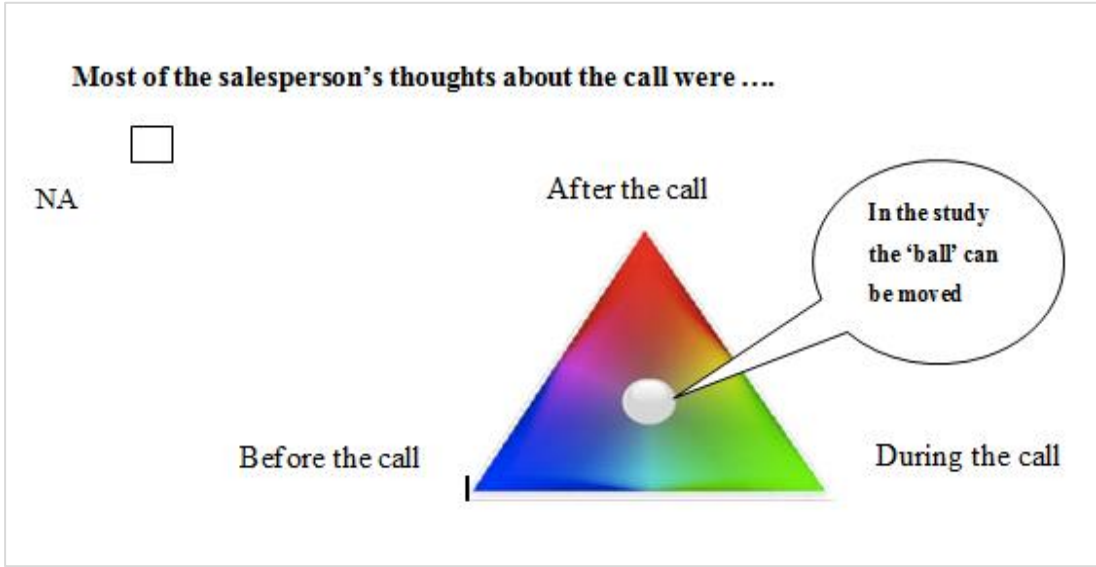


**Figure 3.3:** **Example Triad from SenseMaker© project**

Figure 3.4 below, illustrates the different stages of the study and the pre-hypothesis design which enabled the collection of contextualised data representative of the participant's B2B sales experience.
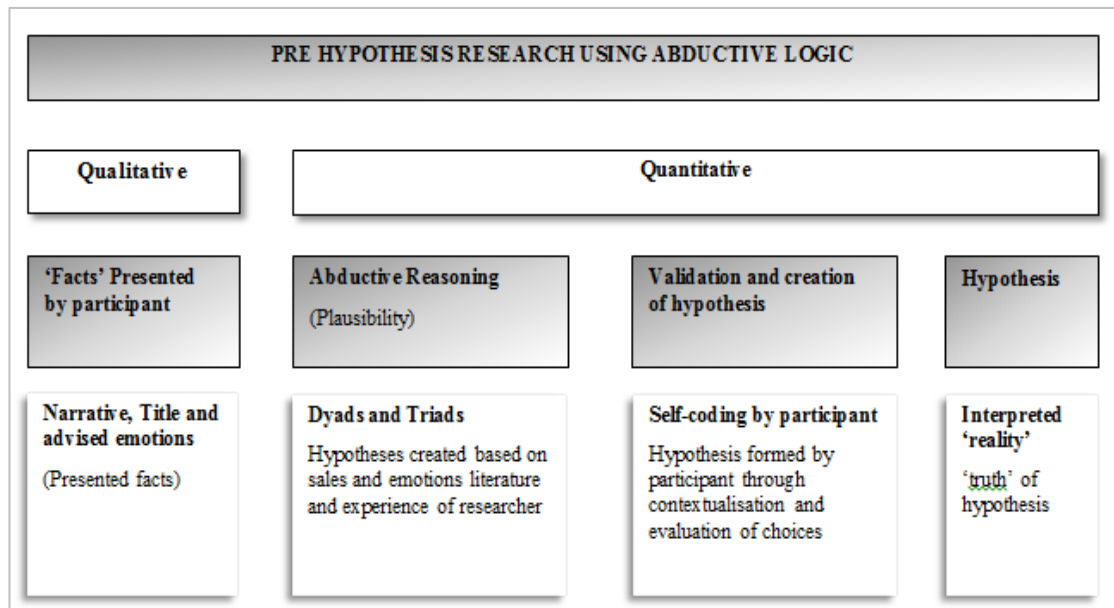


**Figure 3.4:    Pre-hypothesis research using abductive logic**

## 3.5.1    Pre-hypothesis research

Pre-hypothesis research is based on inductive and abductive research paradigms and adopts an open discovery framework and is different to the traditional hypothesis approach often used in quantitative studies to the extent that hypotheses are not pre-determined or established but instead are crafted after reviewing the initial research findings or collected data and in this case the sales narratives (Kurtz and Snowden 2003).  In a sales situation, two sales people can conduct a sales call together and yet both can have a different interpretation of the event and that is because each person socially constructs and interprets their own reality based on their interpretation of events. Each sales person experience is shaped by the context of the call and their anticipation of the call which can be the reason for multiple interpretations of the same sales call by different sales people. It is argued that it is not possible for a researcher adopting a purely positivist research approach to know all the variables faced by a sales person in all contexts of every sales call. There are always unknowns – we can never have all the facts to hand. Indeed the dynamics of a sales call evolves in real time as complex adaptive processes (Stacey 2003b) which shape events as they unfold. The salesperson will have a general idea or anticipated expectation of what will be discussed in the call, when it will be discussed and in what general direction the call will go, but they can never know exactly what will be discussed or what will happen.

There are some aspects of sales calls that are reasonably well understood and are described in the sales literature (Bodkin and Stevenson 1993b; Knowles, Grove and Keck 1994; Plank and Reid 1994; Weitz, Sujan and Sujan 1986). When stories are collected from sales people about their sales experiences, we begin with an open, unpredicted study uninfluenced by researcher bias and expressed within the context of the sales person's experience. By having the salesperson self-signify or self-index their narrative through the selection of pre-hypothesis choices presented to them, they effectively develop a hypothesis through the attachment of meaning and context to their narrative. A narrative on its own does not fully represent an experience because little context exists for the reader. Context is added through self-indexing by the participant. The self-indexing consists of metadata constructed from within the field of study and in this study it is in the form of indexes or 'choices' that the participant chooses as they progress through the study instrument answering the questions (CognitiveEdge 2006) . The indexes, filters or choices chosen by the researcher in the design of the study are pre-determined based on knowledge already gained from within the field of study. The knowledge is often based on research contained in the literature and from a wealth of personal B2B sales experience.

Following the initial capture of each salesperson's narrative, and the subsequent abductive, pre-hypothesis component of the self-signification framework of SenseMaker©, the project was then able to begin investigating the initial research objective and related research questions.

## 3.5.2    A description of SenseMaker©.

Cognitive Edge Pte. Ltd.® is a software development company founded in 2005 with its head office in Singapore. Cognitive Edge® developed SenseMaker© a software application which utilizes a pre-hypothesis research design. The data collected for this study was in the form of narratives which were indexed and self-coded by the research participants. The SenseMaker© software design enable quantitative data to be analysed, and compared with the relevant narrative to provide meaning through contextual description and explanation. A benefit of the SenseMaker© design approach is that it minimizes the risk of expert opinion or bias which can corrupt or influence original data sources.

## 3.5.3    Sense-making Items (SMI's)

Sense-making items are defined as anything that helps people make sense of the world they live in. The most common forms are often fragments of narrative rather than fully-formed stories which are representative of day-to-day discourse. Typically fragments are one or two short paragraphs or even short sentences; they are common in everyday discourse, sometimes incomplete and not always obvious as to their meaning.

Hypothesis based research approaches use questionnaires which tends to constrain the range of participant responses that can be collected (Cooper and Schindler 2005). Often when asked a question, respondents provide an answer that reflects their perceived role. When considered alongside the propensity for people to often "gift" answers, it raises questions of trustworthiness (Snowden 2001). A qualitative design on the other hand collects an experience in a narrative form. This approach ensures the collection of a story about a scenario which is in the participants own choice of words. When anonymity and confidentiality is assured, it encourages the respondent to disclose information they may not ordinarily choose to do.

Human beings are story tellers. Stories were the earliest form of knowledge transfer. Storytelling is natural and easy, and provides a rich source of knowledge in an ideal format for understanding (Clandinin 2007). SenseMaker© provides the capability for people to tell stories and then self-index or self-code their stories so that patterns can be identified in the data which can then be contextualised by looking at the narrative and choices or raw data.
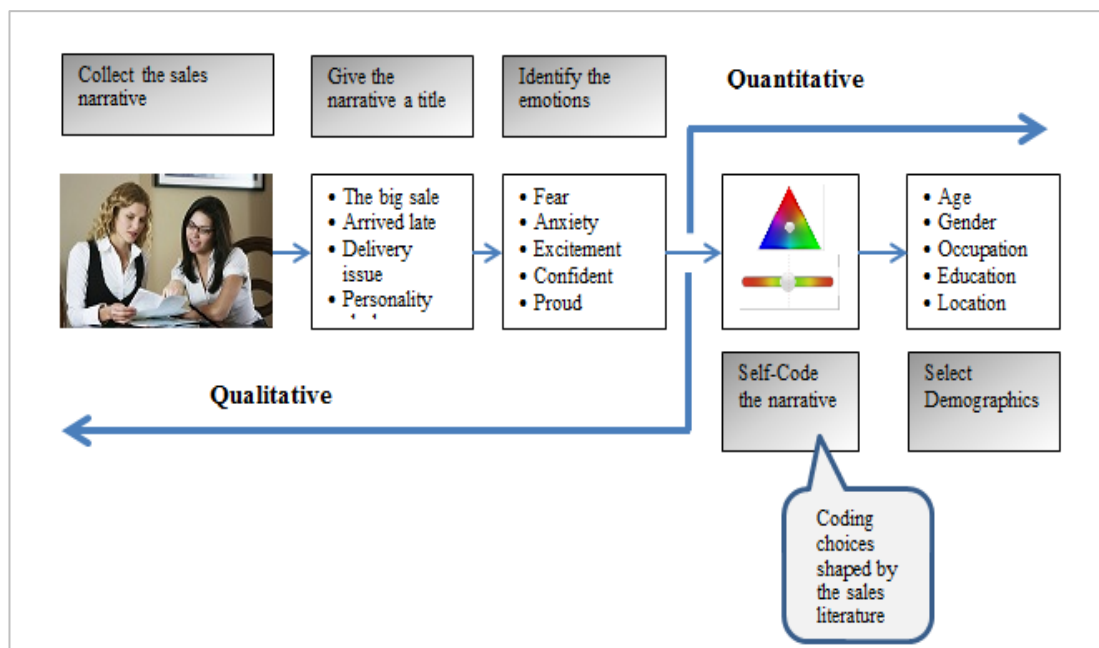


**Figure 3.5:    Conceptual overview of the SenseMaker© project.**

As can be seen from Figure 3.5, the study consisted of a combination of both qualitative and quantitative data. Of overall importance was the narrative provided by the participant because that was their recalled experience of what happened in the call. SenseMaker© provided the ability for participants to self-code their narrative at which point the data became quantitative. The quantitative data was used for data reduction purposes in relation to the research objectives and questions but narrative content analysis was ultimately used in the inductive/abductive process.

## 3.5.4 Data collection: The initial stages of the study (pilot)

In the initial stages of this study and before the use of the SenseMaker© software, semi-structured interviews were conducted with B2B sales people who were employed by two Australian organizations. The interviews were recorded on a digital recorder and transcribed. The first interviews were with two senior, long-term, B2B sales people who worked for a large national Australian organization. Interview 1 consisted of 11398 words with interview duration of 1 hour 9 minutes and 18 seconds and interview 2 consisted of 9257 words with duration of 59 minutes and 53 seconds. A copy of one of the interview transcripts can be found in Appendix 1B. The purpose of these initial interviews was to explore and learn from the participants responses and to identify appropriate types of prompting questions that could be crafted and used in the SenseMaker© research project.

Following these initial two interviews, a further three interviews were conducted with three B2B sales people working in a medium sized sales and distribution company in Western Australia. The interview questions were based on the first two interviews with some minor modifications to the questions. The three interviews were also digitally recorded and transcribed for further analysis (see Appendix 1B). The first interview consisted of 5914 words, the second interview 6254 words and the third interview 6121 words.

The analysis of the transcripts consisted of the manual identification, coding and tallying of key words, themes and specific emotions (see Appendix 1C). The approach taken was to go through each transcript and comment on sections of the text where the researcher felt there was some connection or relevance to the topic being researched. Key word descriptors were then copied and pasted into a new Table. The contents were then sorted alphabetically, and similar word descriptors grouped together so the frequency and count of each descriptor could be determined. The counts and the groups of descriptors were then looked at and then further grouped into similar or related categories which effectively created some theme categories. A number of descriptors were mentioned frequently in the counts but it was decided not to assess the usefulness on count alone, as some descriptors were too generic and vague. The more personal, individual emotions and related descriptors were chosen because the researcher believed they were more likely to provide insight to their emotions and sales call behaviour.

The findings from the analysis eventually assisted in the formulation of prompting questions and signifiers for a trial SenseMaker© study. The SenseMaker© study had to be designed with prompting questions and signifiers that were meaningful to B2B salespeople, related to sales theory and practice and would provide insight to answering the research objective and related research questions.

In addition to the interviews, a past B2B sales representative who reported to the researcher in a previous employment position was also contacted by email and asked if they would provide some narratives based on some pre-determined B2B sales scenarios (See Appendix 1D). The contact agreed and three sales scenarios were emailed to the contact for their completion and return. An example of the three scenarios and the responses provided by the contact can be found in Appendix 1E. Following the initial two sets of interviews and the feedback from the three B2B scenarios, a trial study was designed. The collection instrument was designed by the researcher using Microsoft Word, following a template design of a typical online SenseMaker© project provided by Cognitive Edge ®. The prototype design was a direct emulation of the final collection instrument layout used, including questions and all associated collection instrument components.

In order to test the survey instrument a further trial was necessary. The same B2B sales contact who reported to the researcher in a previous employment position was contacted and a meeting was arranged. At the meeting it was explained what the research was about and whether the acquaintance would be willing to participate and complete the prototype questionnaire. It was agreed and the participant suggested doing the questionnaire immediately whilst at the meeting. I agreed and suggested that I could provide clarification should any aspect of the collection instrument be ambiguous. As it turned out the overall design of the instrument was clearly understood, however, clarification was sought regarding two of the Dyad question choices. Once clarified, the questionnaire was completed and the meeting concluded.

Modifications to some of the wording in the collection instrument and the re-testing of the instrument by the researcher's acquaintance over a period of 3 months ensured that the content of the questionnaire was valid and reliable. A final draft of the revised collection instrument was emailed to the Cognitive Edge® design consultant (see Appendix 3A). After discussions over a period of 6 weeks and a number of re-designs, a final build version was agreed, signed off and sent to the Cognitive Edge® web design team.  The website was designed using the Cognitive Edge® Collector© software Version 2.5 Beta 1 and located on the Cognitive Edge® server in Singapore and made available to the researcher for testing. Following some months of testing, a number of technical design issues were found and relayed to Cognitive Edge® for correction. A copy of the suggested corrections can be found in Appendix 3A. Once thorough testing was complete, the site was made live and the URL for the site distributed for use to potential B2B participants. The semi structured interviews and the stories provided by the researcher's acquaintances in the initial development stages of the collection instrument were input and used as part of the final SenseMaker© study.

In order to market the survey to B2B salespeople the researcher used a number of awareness techniques, including having business cards printed containing the website URL – See

Appendix 2B. The cards were handed to past acquaintances, friends, relatives, business colleagues, and at networking events and handed to anyone who had experience as a B2B salesperson and who were willing to participate in the study. As time progressed it became apparent that the collection of narratives was going to be relatively slow, particularly as most people claimed they were too busy and generally did not like doing surveys.

Due to the difficulty in obtaining enough B2B participants for the study the researcher had to consider alternative approaches. Focus group meetings and general word of mouth referrals from one sales person to the next were considered. Small social gatherings were also organized by the researcher where B2B sales acquaintances, some with international sales experience, were invited to attend his home for a BBQ and to complete the online questionnaire. This method proved reasonably successful because participants were not required to access the website independently in their own time. Instead, the researcher opened the survey link and invited the attendee(s) to recall and record at least one sales experience and if possible to do more than one, by following the prompt on the final page which asked if the participant would like to do another narrative entry. For those attendees who did only one, the laptop was handed to the next person who then selected the prompt to do another and so on. This approach saved time and was in some way 'fun' for participants as it generated significant discussion later about their sales experiences. Professional on-line networking sites such as LinkedIn® were also used.

## 3.6    Data collection

The world's largest professional online networking site (www.linkedin.com) was used as a means of identifying and connecting with B2B sales professionals from around the world. LinkedIn® is a business networking site with over 300 million users in over 220 countries that provide an opportunity for users to create a professional profile and network. Members can create a list of known business contacts, and build a network. Users can invite anyone to join their network which offers an effective way for people to develop an extensive list of network contacts and participate in online interest groups catering for a multitude of interests. The target group identified in LinkedIn® as potential participants for the study were identified by two means. Firstly B2B sales people who were known to the researcher and were 'connections' in the researcher's LinkedIn network were contacted via LinkedIn® email and invited to participate in the research study. The second method involved the researcher joining nominated online interest groups within the LinkedIn® network. The interest groups identified and joined were those groups specifically catering for experienced B2B sales people.

The researcher joined 42 discussion groups on LinkedIn, as a means of inviting B2B sales people to participate in the online survey. A list of the groups joined can be found in

Appendix 2A.  Some moderators of the B2B interest groups did not allow postings inviting members to do an online survey and instead suggested that the URL link for the study be promoted on the 'promotion' section of the discussion group. Unfortunately postings to the 'promotions' section of the interest groups had a very low response rate.

Memberships to LinkedIn® groups are 'checked' by group managers and moderators and if applicants are deemed unsuitable, they are advised accordingly.  The researcher contacted many hundreds of contacts, some via on line discussion forums where the URL was posted. Others were contacted direct via email. Those who replied completed the survey and their narratives were saved in the study database. In order to find more participants, a search using Google® identified some of the largest sales organisations in the United States. Personalised written communication via email was made with appropriate senior managers of the organizations. Many personal friends, past co-workers and acquaintances who were known to have B2B sales experience were also contacted with a request to do the online survey. The researcher had one or two people from past employer companies who agreed to do the survey. One General Manager based in South Africa was interested in having his entire sales team of 19 do the survey but wanted to compare his sales team results with others within the company in other locations as well other sales people in other companies.

Initially it was doubtful that this would be possible due to the surveys being 100% anonymous however, after some consideration an idea emerged that would allow the entry of a code into an unused field of the questionnaire to identify that particular cohort of participants. The idea was discussed with Cognitive Edge®, the developer of the SenseMaker© software and it was agreed that the idea would work but a better idea was possible.  It became apparent that it was a relatively easy task to provide a unique identifying URL for each company wishing to have their sales people complete the survey. This approach was ideal for organizations wishing to have their entire sales force participate in the study and obtain relevant feedback on their sales team. The approach enabled the organization to be identified but not the individual participant completing the survey. Feedback to participating companies could be based on any number of combinations of demographic information contained in the survey. This also provided the researcher with an opportunity to 'sell' the survey to management because they were able to see direct benefit to their company and sales force.

New approaches to participate in the study were made to senior management of qualified sales organizations however; there remained some reticence to participate. Continued approaches to individuals at the researcher's workplace asking for referrals to B2B sales people, resulted in a number of participants doing the survey. Eventually sufficient responses were received to ensure viability of the study.

## 3.7    Ethical Considerations

The research undertaken for this study follows the principles outlined in the "National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Research Involving Humans" which has a number of guidelines which are in accordance with the National Health and Medical Research Council Act 1992 (NHMRC 1999).

When considering research that involves human participants, the statement identifies the ethical principles and values that should govern any intended research approach. This study was conducted in accordance with the principles outlined in the NHMRC (1999) with particular attention to the following:

1.    Integrity and respect
2.    Consent
3.    Research merit and safety
4.    Ethical review and conduct of research
5.    Anonymity

This study including the survey questionnaire was approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee at Curtin University, Western Australia – approval number GSB 03-13.

An important aspect to the study was to ensure consent was obtained from participants. A screen shot of the first part of the survey instrument seeking consent can be seen in Figure 3.6 below.
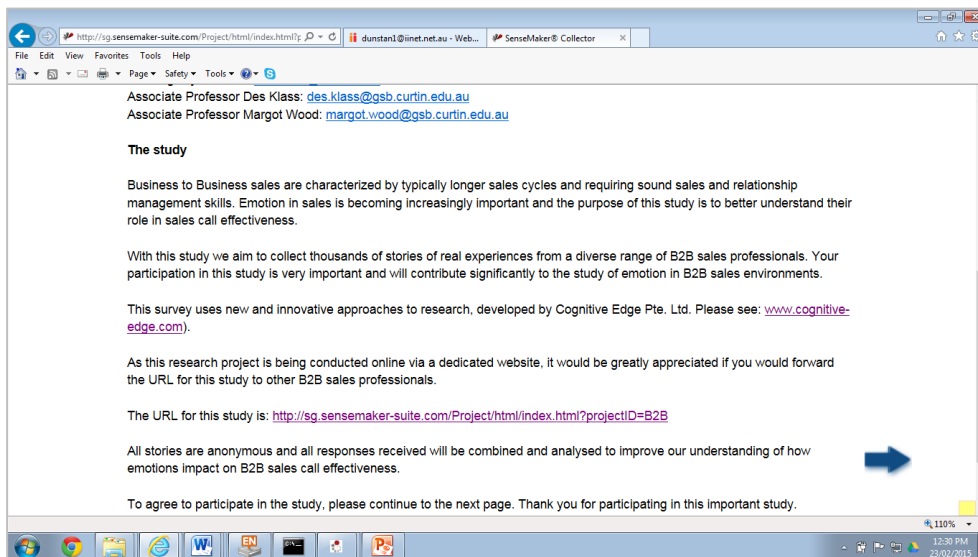


**Figure 3.6:    Agreement to participate in the study**

As can be seen in the screen image above, participants were provided with a statement advising them that if they agreed to participate in the study to continue to the next page by selecting the blue arrow prompt as shown above.

# 3.8    Trustworthiness and rigor

In qualitative research evidence of trustworthiness is essential if the research is to be believed (Anney 2015; Noble and Smith 2015). Demonstrating aspects of trustworthiness are not always an easy task partly because there is still much debate and confusion surrounding the many terms used to describe it (Koch and Harrington 1998). Quantitative studies rely on well-established measures of reliability, objectivity and validity but in qualitative studies researchers must address aspects of dependability, credibility, transferability and confirmability in order to demonstrate rigour or trust and confidence in the research (Guba 1981; Lincoln and Guba 1985; Schwandt, Lincoln and Guba 2007).

Understandably any research agenda to explore, discover, interpret and describe the lived experiences of others will face complex, context and person specific phenomena which can be interpreted in different ways. As a result, there is a need to provide sufficient evidence that the research can be trusted and readers can have confidence in the findings.

Whilst there is a clear need to demonstrate trustworthiness and rigour in any qualitative study, the criteria for ascertaining rigour must be appropriate to the research and the methods used. Interestingly, Creswell (1998) has stated that there is no consensus on which criteria to use (Elliott, Fischer and Rennie 1999; Whittemore, Chase and Mandle 2001) leaving the door open to varying interpretations of what satisfactorily constitutes rigour.

**Table 3-2:    Aspects of trustworthiness**
Adapted from Guba and Lincoln (1994b) and (Lincoln and Guba 1985)

| Lincoln and Guba (1985). Aspect | Consideration | Quantitative research | Qualitative research |
|---|---|---|---|
| Truth | Confidence in the truth of the findings | Internal validity | Credibility |
| Applicability | Applicability in other contexts or with other respondents | External validity (generalizability) | Transferability |
| Consistency | Inquiry, if replicated, will result same findings | Reliability | Dependability |
| Neutrality | Findings & interpretations are from data; not biased | Objectivity | Confirmability |

The important work of Lincoln and Guba (1985) is well regarded in qualitative research and due to its wide applicability, will be adopted for this study. Based on quantitative approaches of internal validity, external validity, reliability and objectivity, Lincoln and Guba (1985) translated the concepts for use in the field of qualitative studies and is provided in Table 3.2 above. Each aspect will be discussed in turn.

### 3.8.1     Credibility

In this study various methods were used to collect data from B2B salespeople.  Collecting data in different forms is a way of establishing confidence in the research. In this study, data was collected in the forms of narratives, narrative titles, self-coded dynamic Triad answer choices and Dyad answer choices. The data was also collected over a period of time from different B2B salespeople in different industries from around the world. In qualitative research, the term used to describe this activity is triangulation.  Denzin (2006) was responsible for identifying four basic types of triangulation as describe in the following sections.

### 3.8.1.1     Data triangulation:

In this study 134 B2B sales experiences were collected from B2B salespeople in different countries, of different ages and genders, with varying degrees of sales experience, in different industries and in various sales positions. In addition, interviews were conducted in the early stages of the study to establish aspects of the research design. The data collected was across different time, space and persons which have contributed to the study being credible (Denzin 2006).

### 3.8.1.2     Investigator Triangulation:

Investigator triangulation involves multiple researchers in an investigation. In this study there was no requirement for more than one researcher, however, because this research is based on an academic outcome for a doctoral candidate, the two supervisors of the researcher have had the opportunity to review the findings and highlight inconsistencies.

### 3.8.1.3     Theory triangulation:

Theory triangulation involves using more than one theoretical scheme in the interpretation of the data (Denzin 2006). In this study a pre-hypothesis approach was adopted which provided both qualitative data and quantitative data to be collected. Thematic analysis, data reduction, coding and theme creation, provided one means for qualitatively analysing and the interpreting the narratives (Tobin and Begley 2004).  The second theoretical scheme was possible because the participants also provided quantitative data in the form of filter strengths when choosing options presented to them in the six Triads and four Dyads in the study. This enabled a comparative view and confirmation for consistency between what was being said in the narratives and what was being self-indexed in the Triads and Dyads by the participants.

### 3.8.1.4    Methodological triangulation:

Methodology triangulation involves using more than one method to gather data, such as interviews, observations, questionnaires, and documents. As discussed above, this research used a number of methods to collect data. Firstly participants anonymously provided narratives of sales experiences. They were them asked to give their narratives a title and then record two emotions that were applicable to the story. Following this, the participants then self-indexed or coded their narratives based on the choices in the Triads and Dyads. These methods are forms of triangulation because they enable an iterative process of multiple checking and for the identification of discrepancies in data consistency (Currall and Towler 2003).

### 3.8.2    Transferability

According to Bitsch (2005) and Polit and Beck (2012) transferability is the extent that results from a qualitative study can be transferred to others. In this study, B2B salespeople were selected purposively as participants because the research objective was to explore the role of anticipatory emotions on B2B salesperson effectiveness. According to Anney (2015) purposeful selection of participants assists in establishing transferability of qualitative findings.

B2B salespeople fulfil a specific role and are subject to similar experiences as other B2B salespeople because of the nature of the role. As mentioned in a previous chapter, B2B sales are characterised by relationship selling and is highly dependent upon repeat sales where the sales cycle lead times can be long.  When the sales narratives collected for this study were analysed, very similar themes emerged. Throughout the findings and analysis sections of this thesis, actual verbatim quotations from B2B salespeople have been provided to illustrate experiences and common themes. Polit and Beck (2012) argue that the use of quotations is necessary to indicate the trustworthiness of qualitative findings.

### 3.8.3    Dependability

Koch (2006), states that a qualitative study's trustworthiness may be established if a reader is able to audit all events pertaining to a study. There are various ways to establish dependability in a qualitative study. In the literature (Clandinin 2007; Patton 1990), two methods are relatively common; the first is the use of raw data often in the form of quotations or extracts from narratives and clearly documented steps of the procedures followed. In this study verbatim narratives have been used for the study and a detailed record of the step-by-step process has been provided.

### 3.8.3.1    Raw data

The collection of data for this study was via a third party web-based software application by Cognitive Edge® called SenseMaker© Collector. The application was essentially an online repository in the form of a database where participants went to and participated in the study. All participant raw data, including narratives and self-coded data, are stored in the Cognitive Edge® database. Given the database is a third party proprietary product the researcher has confidence that the raw data supplied is as originally provided by the research participants.

Verbatim narratives and quoted extracts have been used and reproduced, extensively throughout this thesis to illustrate intended contextual meaning. Using verbatim quotes from participants can assist with demonstrating various linkages with the methodologies and processes used in the study including, why certain coding was used, why data was reduced to what it was, and how the various themes were achieved (Tobin and Begley 2004).

### 3.8.3.2    Documented procedures

According to Shenton (2004) to meet the needs of 'dependability' from an audit perspective, requires the processes used in a study to be reported in detail. The idea is that if the research processes are reported in sufficient detail, another researcher could replicate the work and confirm that the practices and methodologies employed are appropriate and effective for the purpose intended.

Chapters 3 and 4 of this thesis provide the detailed steps and procedures that were followed, in order to arrive at the documented findings. The data for the study was collected via a web-based instrument and all raw data was saved in a database. An extensive component of the research utilised an interpretive methodology which was framed around the raw data itself. Following an abductive/inductive analysis of the raw data, the findings were then compared to the literature.

### 3.8.4    Confirmability

From an audit perspective, 'confirmability' is related to establishing that the data and the interpretations of findings are derived from actual collected data (Tobin and Begley 2004). Triangulation is the single most common method of establishing that the data and findings are real and not fabricated by the participants (Koch 2006; Lincoln and Guba 1985).

As has already been mentioned in section 3.8.1.1, 134 B2B salespeople of different ages and genders, with varying degrees of sales experience, in different industries and in various sales positions participated in the study. When reviewing narratives and data across 134 different salespeople it is likely that anomalies or potentially fake stories will be discovered particularly since the researcher had 30+ years B2B sales experience themselves.

Confirmability in this study is enhanced because verbatim narratives were used for analysis, including spelling and grammatical errors.

The research instrument for this study required the participants to provide information in multiple formats. Firstly they were required to recall and write about an important sales experience. At that point in time, the participants had no knowledge of what questions would follow. The other critically important feature of the research was that participants were 100% anonymous which meant that participants could be honest when relating sales experiences and truthful when answering questions relative to the experience.

Participants were required to name their sales story, notate two emotions relative to their story and then choose options about their story that were presented to them in six Triads and four Dyads. Triangulation of data was possible because discrepancies and inconsistencies between Triad and Dyad choices and the narrative content could be identified if they existed.

It should be noted that the design of the Triad choices in particular, were such that the choices provided were intentionally 'competitive' to help force participants to make selections that represented 'thought based decisions' and not simply 'tick a box' decisions. The use of verbatim extracts from narratives throughout the thesis is indicative of the researchers desire to retain story integrity and to capture accuracy with vocabulary, feelings and context and to follow; as opposed to lead; the participants path. Some of the narratives were very short, others considerably lengthier, and collected across different time zones, different space perspectives and different demographic variables -   all of which contribute to confirmability (Patton 1990).

## 3.9 Hierarchical process leading to theme development

A highly hierarchical process was followed in order to determine the most relevant narratives that were ultimately used for theme development. The process is detailed in Figure 3.7. Data taken from SenseMaker Collector© was imported in to MS Excel® to facilitate the organisation and sorting of the data.
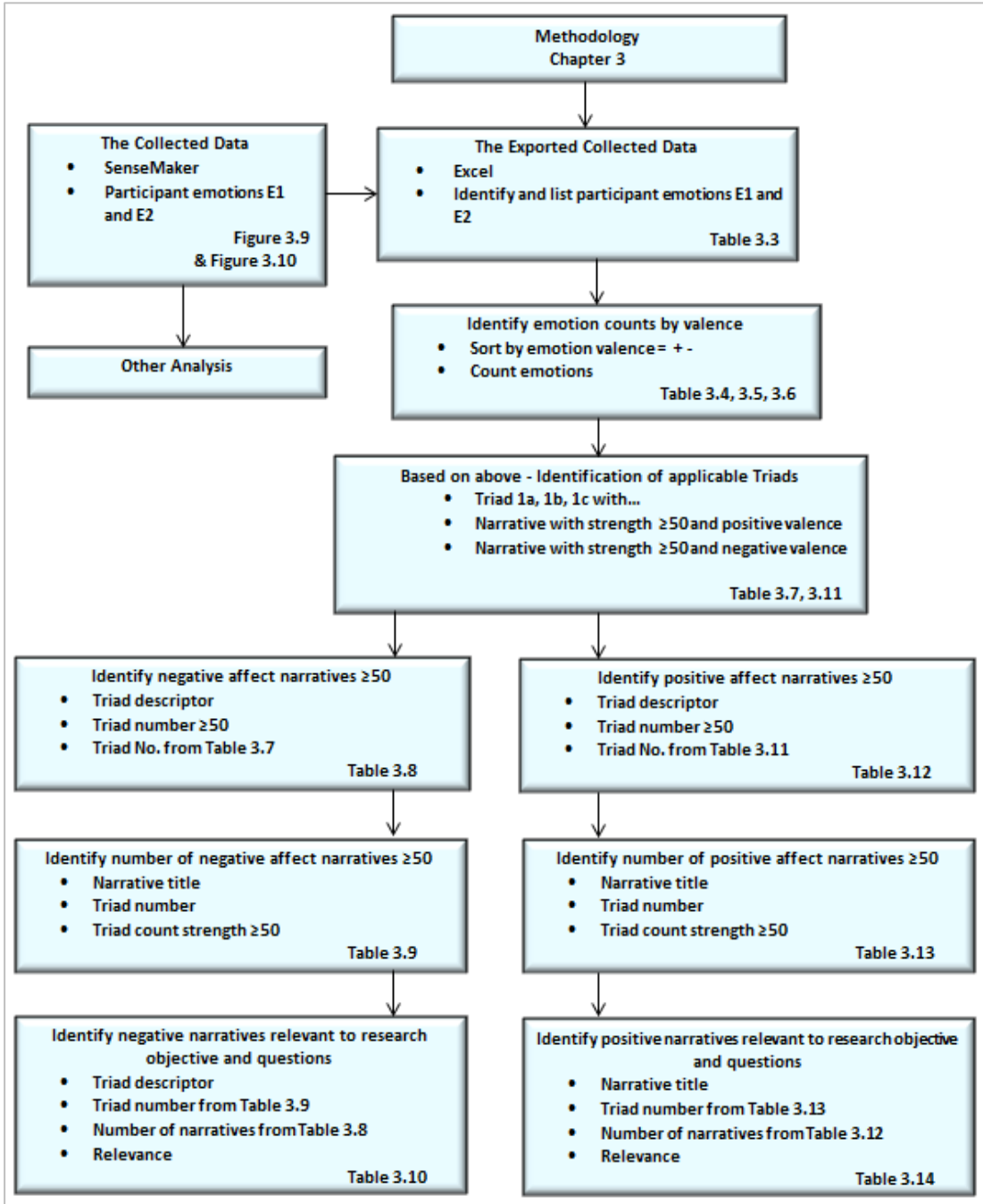


**Figure 3.7:    The hierarchical process**

## 3.10  Utilising SenseMaker©

The first stage of the collection instrument asked participants to relate a B2B sales story by writing about what happened in the space provided.   They were then asked to give their story a name or title.
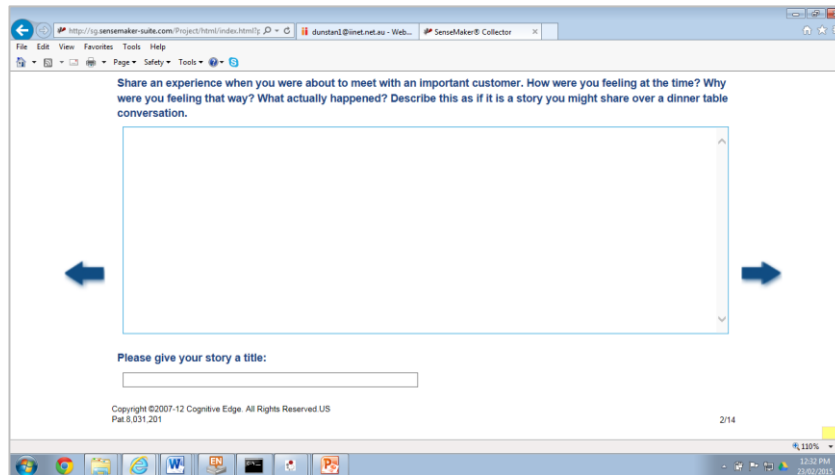


**Figure 3.8:    Participant view of the narrative prompt.**

The above image is a screen shot as seen by participants when prompted for a B2B sales experience in the online data collection instrument.  Narratives could be of any length and entirely open to the extent that a participant could write about any B2B call experience in their choice of words. The narratives collected in the space shown above have been quoted verbatim throughout the thesis.



**Figure 3.9:    SenseMaker© view of the completed narrative**

The above image is a screen shot within the SenseMaker© analysis software of the narrative collection window displayed in Figure 3.8.
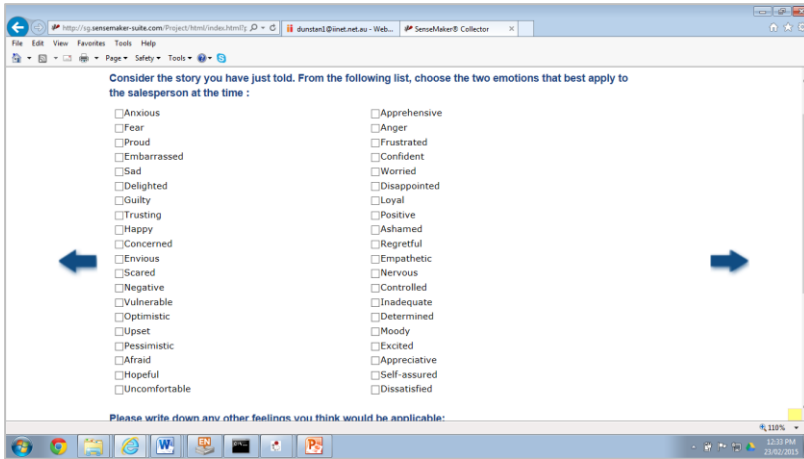
**Figure 3.10: Participant view of E1 and E2 selection choices**

The image above is a screen shot of the second page of the collection instrument which asked participants to choose two emotions they felt were applicable to the salesperson in the narrative.
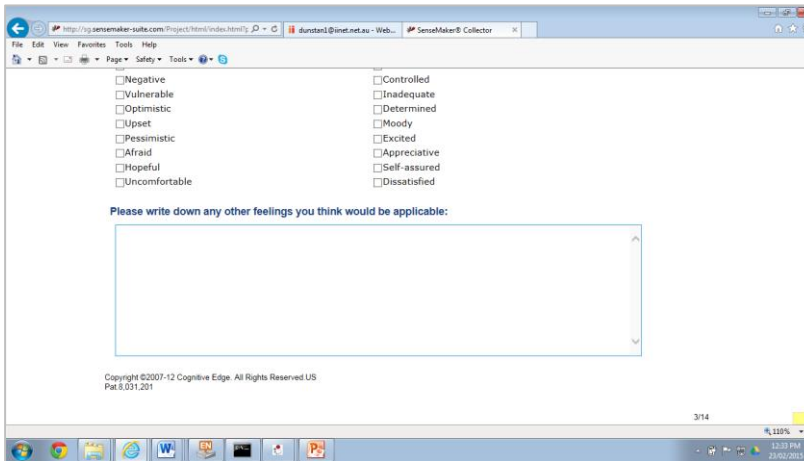


**Figure 3.11: Participant view of 'other' emotion facility**

Participants were able to record any other emotions that were not listed in a space provided as shown in Figure 3.11 above.
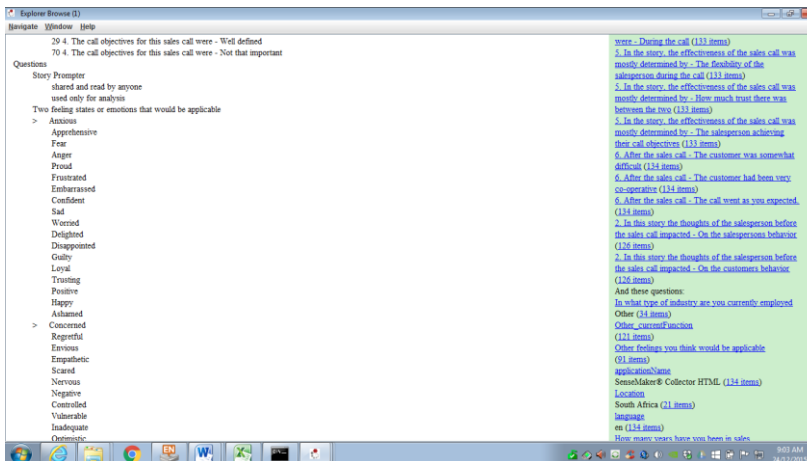


**Figure 3.12: SenseMaker© view of E1 and E2 selected choices**

The above image is a screen shot within the SenseMaker© analysis software of the narrative collection window displayed in Figure 3.11

The next stage of the study incorporated the use of six Triads each incorporating three data point choices and a dynamic 'ball' which participants were able to position within the Triad to best represent the balance or mix of the three choices. Figure 3.13 below is a reproduction of the six Triads used in the study. Appendix 3B illustrates each Triad page as seen by the participants.

### 3.10.1 Triads used in the collection instrument



**Figure 3.13: Triads used for the study**

The three choices presented to the participant in each Triad, have an index strength total of 100 so it is possible for a participant to select one choice in its entirety and that would represent 100 with the other two data point choices equalling 0 for each. Alternatively, the participant could move the 'ball' within the Triad to a point which represents a mix of values between the three choices. For example data point values of 64, 29 and 7 as shown in Figure 3.14 following. In all cases the total remains 100.
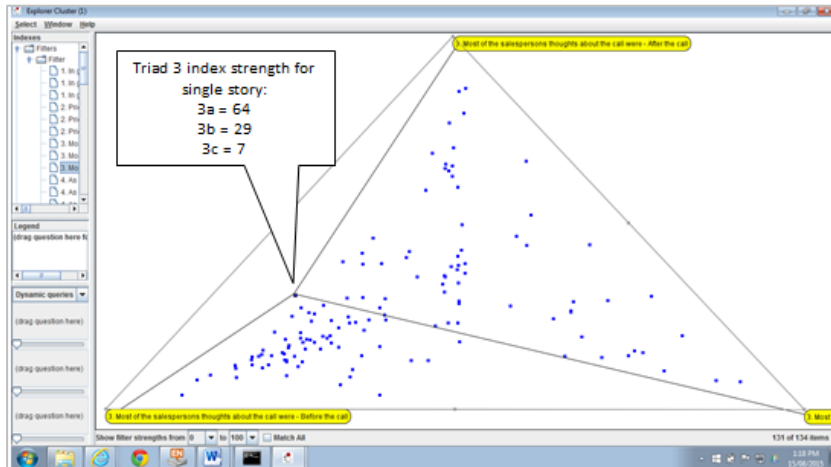


**Figure 3.14:    Example of Triad data point values**

In the above example of a narrative, the data point strengths are relative strengths only and indicate that most of the participant's thoughts about the call were before the call as opposed to after the call or during the call. In the above example, a data point strength of 64 for Triad 3a indicates that most of the participant's thoughts about the call were before the call. Observing Triad 3 it can be seen that the majority of the 134 participants scored similarly as demonstrated by the density of narratives or data point dots in Figure 3.14.

## 3.10.2   Dyads

In addition to using Triad filters, four Dyads were also used for the study.

Dyads are polarity scales used to give a weight between two labels. They are based on Aristotle's 'golden mean' (cited in Wicks, Berman and Jones 1999) which is described as the desirable middle between two extremes, one of excess and the other of deficiency. Polarities are intended to trigger deeper thinking in the respondent and are often mutual opposites - mutually negative, positive or neutral (Snowden 2007).

The Dyads used for the study are shown in Figure 3.15. The designs of the Dyad polarities were based on established concepts in the sales literature. For example, Dyad 1 was designed to establish what the participant felt was responsible for how well the call went. The options available were two simple choices:

*What the salesperson did during the call* **or** *What the customer did during the call.*

The Dyads also incorporated a moveable 'ball' which allowed the participant the opportunity to select any point between the two extremes which effectively created a continuum of strength values. One of the concepts found in the sales literature (Bodkin and Stevenson 1993a; Levy and Sharma 1994; Morgan and Stoltman 1990; Predmore and Bonnice 1994) and tested in Dyad 1 is salesperson flexibility or adaptability. Participants scoring higher towards the 'salesperson' end of the continuum would be indicating that what they did during the call was a main contributor to how well the call went. Similarly, Dyad 4 ascertains the participant's perceptions of the value of having call objectives – did they have any, were they well defined or were they perceived as not that important in that particular sales call. The results obtained were compared to other results from the same participant, particularly the anticipatory emotion choices, and in some cases provided important relationships and insights with sales effectiveness.

The Dyad results for each narrative form part of the analyses in Chapter 5.



**Figure 3.15: Dyads used for the study.**

Once the collection of data was complete the task of collating and reviewing the findings commenced. In total 134 narratives were collected for this study.

To provide a balanced view in answering the research objective below:

**"To what extent are anticipatory emotions perceived by B2B salespeople as impacting on their sales effectiveness",**

it was necessary to ensure that both positive and negative affect emotions were chosen for analysis. 21 positive affect narratives and 21 negative affect narratives were used for initial analysis based on their relevance to the research objective.

The narratives chosen for the Dyad analysis were based on the same negative and positive emotion 1 and emotion 2 (E1 and E2) shown in Figure 3.10 and 3.11 The criterion used for the Triads are described below and the data score weightings were simply the results obtained from the two Dyad choices.

The 21 positive affect and 21 negative affect narratives were chosen on the basis of:

1. The first (E1) and second (E2) selected emotions by the participants (see Figure 3.10 and 3.11, had to be both positive or both negative for each narrative collected
2. Both the E1 and E2 emotions had to be anticipatory in nature for each narrative collected
3. The strength of each of the Triad data points had to be ≥50 (see Table 3.7).

The threshold point of 50 was chosen based on a number of factors. Firstly a strength of at least 50 is indicative that the choice made by the participant is above an 'average' strength and therefore more significant to the participant when making a choice between the three data points in the Triad. Because the Triads consist of three data point choices, an 'average' strength or balance point in each Triad represents strength of 33.33 for each of the three choices. The second justification is that a suitable number of narratives were required for the study which would be sufficient for an abductive/inductive analysis to be undertaken. The purpose of using an abductive/inductive approach for the latter part of the study was to allow the findings of the research to emerge from the frequent, dominant or significant themes inherent in the raw data collected.

To assist with the collation and review of the raw data a combination of approaches were used. In the first instance, participants accessed the SenseMaker *Collector*© web site for the study and entered the raw data by following the prompts and instructions. The data was then automatically imported into the Cognitive Edge SenseMaker© application for manipulation and review. To further assist with the review, the raw data from SenseMaker© was also imported into MS Excel®.

Screen shot views of the three stages of the process are provided in Figure 3.16.
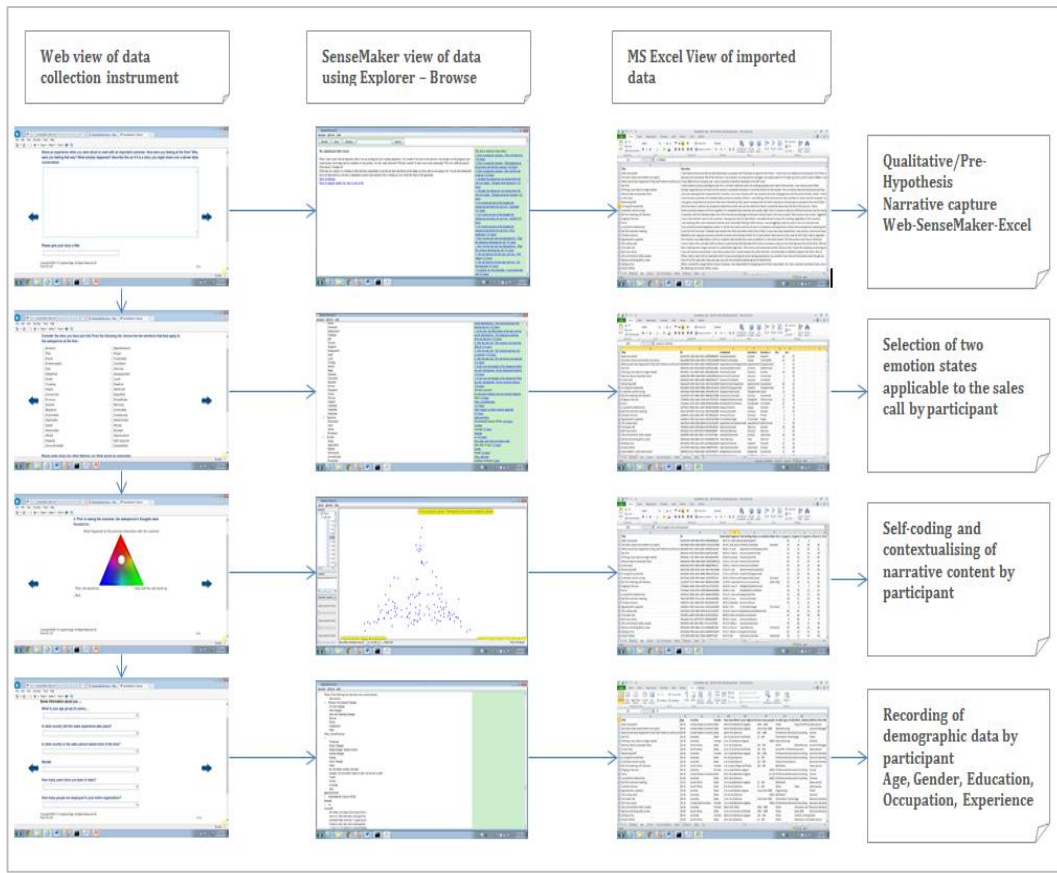


**Figure 3.16:  Screen shot of three stage process**

The participant view was the one shown in the 'web view of data collection instrument' above. The other two views were for analysis purposes by the researcher. The decision to use MS Excel® was a personal decision to provide ease of manipulation of the data and to allow for increased data and graphic presentation options for use in the thesis.

## 3.11  Narrative Patterns in the Triads

The initial detection of narrative patterns from the indexed stories was conducted using the SenseMaker© Explorer *Cluster* application. As an example, Triad 3, Figure 3.17 illustrates all 134 visual assessments of narrative patterning for the question:

**"Most of the salesperson's thoughts about the call were ……."**
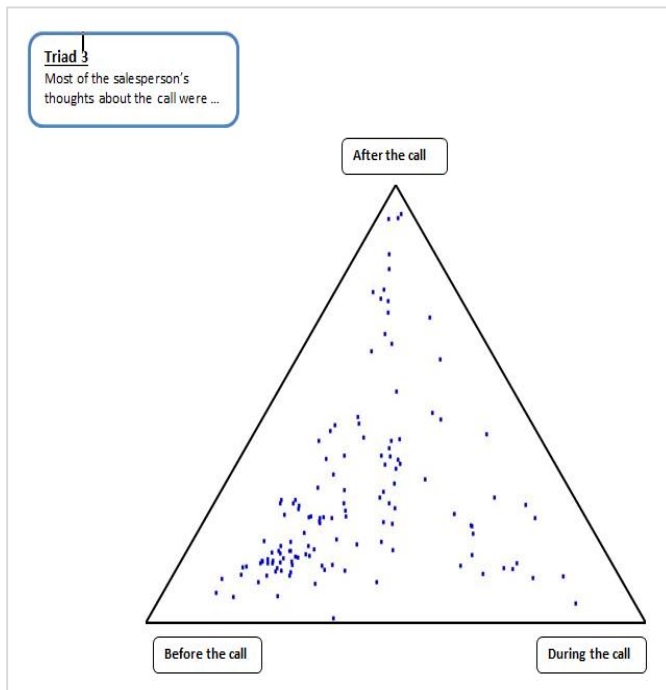


**Figure 3.17:   Example of narrative pattern for Triad 3**

It should be noted that the visual representation provided by the SenseMaker© *Cluster* application displays the data points or narratives according to their relative position to each other and within the three Triad filters. The representation is only that, the data points shown do not represent discrete values. Actual values or data point strengths are provided by the SenseMaker© statistical reports and presented later in the thesis. To assist with the visual representation of the data points within the Triad, the SenseMaker© software employs a design that incorporates a 'spring' effect developed by MIT Media Labs which pulls data points around the Triad when reconstructing them so as to provide a useable visual distribution of the data (Donath 1995). The relationship of data points is maintained as all data points move as a whole but in relation to each other when viewing in the *Cluster* application. Clusters of data points remain as clusters and outlying or weak data points remain as outliers in relation to other data points.

From initial observation of Triad 3, it can be seen that there is a concentration of stories indexed to *"before the call."* This is a favourable result initially and is relevant to the research questions and objectives of the study because it suggests at this early stage that most of the thoughts the salesperson had about the call, occurred before the call. Thoughts the salesperson was having about the call before conducting the call suggest that anticipatory emotions would most likely be experienced by the salesperson. Further investigation of each narrative provided insights to each salesperson's experience as described in Chapters 4, 5 and 6. Some of the narratives were chosen for greater in depth analysis to identify what

happened in the call and what particular experiences were related by the participant about the call experience.

It is evident through observation that there are a number of stories indexed to the filter *"before the call"* so which particular stories should be analysed? Firstly all stories are reviewed by looking at the overall 'picture' of what the research captured. This was done by using the capabilities of the SenseMaker© Explorer applications: Glance, Browse, Compare, Range, Distribute, Cluster and Graph.

In the first instance an analysis was undertaken through direct observation of the density (number) of stories coded to the particular Triad filters. Two further aspects of each narrative were then considered. The general density of the cluster of coded stories was considered important because it indicated the majority of respondents who felt that the filter description was more relevant to their story than the other two options presented. Respondents also had the option of selecting N/A – not applicable, if the three filter options did not apply to their story. Where a majority of B2B salespeople indexed similarly, those stories were investigated further.

## 3.12  SenseMaker© Explorer Browse

Once the data collection was complete and available in the SenseMaker© database, the data was reviewed to obtain an overall picture of the data. The SenseMaker© Explorer Browse function allowed an overview of the data by listing each Filter, each Question and the number of responses for each. Active links within Explorer Browse enabled further detailed investigation of the narrative data selected. The below screen shot is an image of part of the Explorer Browse information available for further analysis.
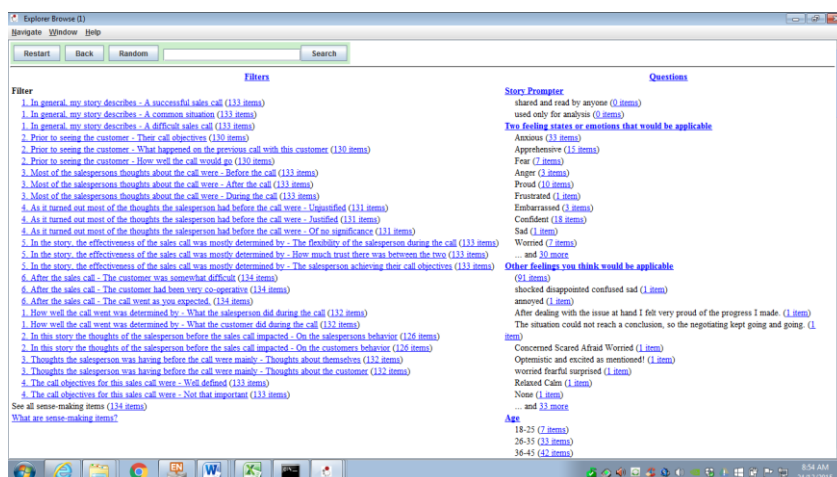


**Figure 3.18:  Explorer Browse view**

By selecting a blue hyper link as shown above for a particular narrative, a new window appears with more analysis options available for that selection. For example, the above

image of Explorer *Browse* shows that there were 134 stories indexed to Triad 1. By selecting the link the below screen appears showing each of the narratives indexed to that Filter.
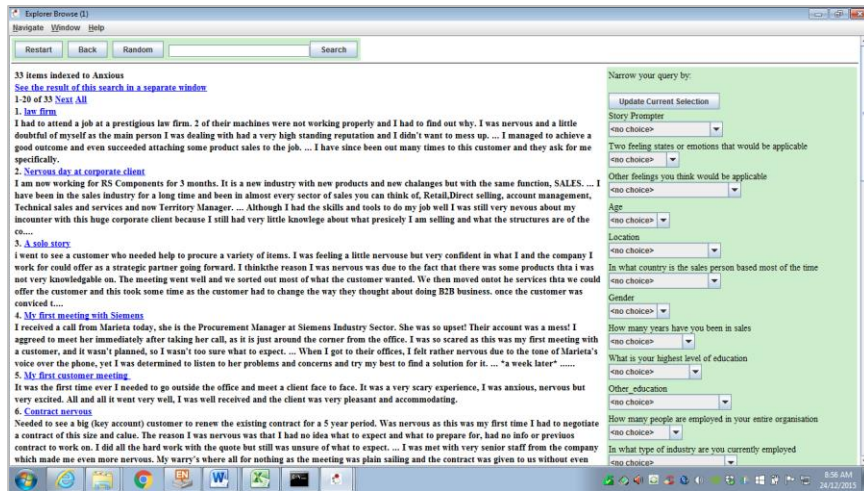


**Figure 3.19: Explorer Browse view of narratives collected**

The above screen image lists all narratives linked to the Filter in question. By selecting any narrative hyper link, a new window appears showing the full narrative enabling even further analysis as follows.
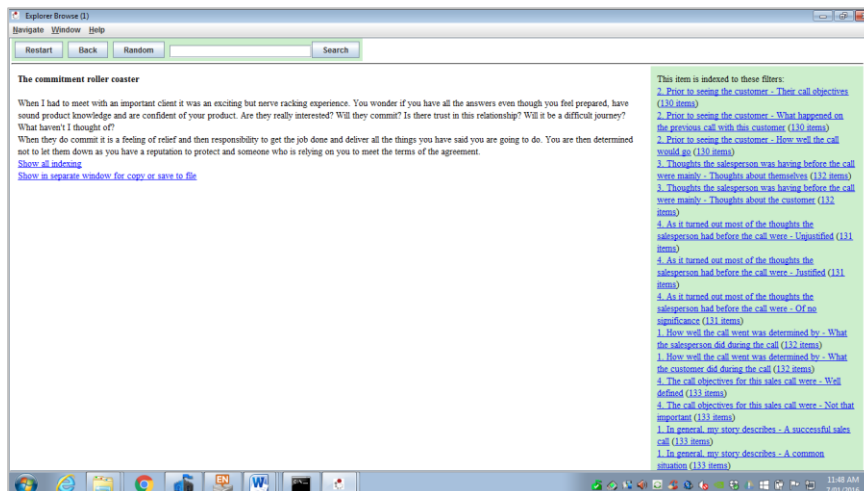


**Figure 3.20: Explorer Browse view of narrative details**

The blue hyperlinks on the right of the above screen image list all the filters that the chosen narrative is linked to. This enables the opportunity to compare various choices across the six triads for the same narrative.

## 3.13  The use of MS Excel®

In order to further the analysis capability for the study, the SenseMaker© data were imported into Microsoft Excel®.
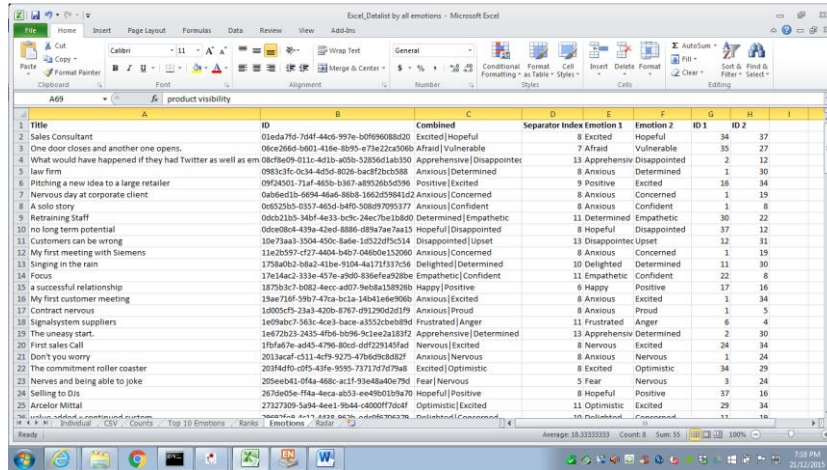


**Figure 3.21:  All narrative data displayed in MS Excel®**

The above screen image illustrates a view of the imported SenseMaker© data into Excel®. The ability to observe all data in this format and to sort the data within Excel® assisted with the analysis.

The next step in the analysis process was to sort the first emotion recorded (E1) into alphabetic order as shown in the following screen capture and then create a Table summarising the number of narratives for each E1. The same process was followed for the second emotion recorded (E2).
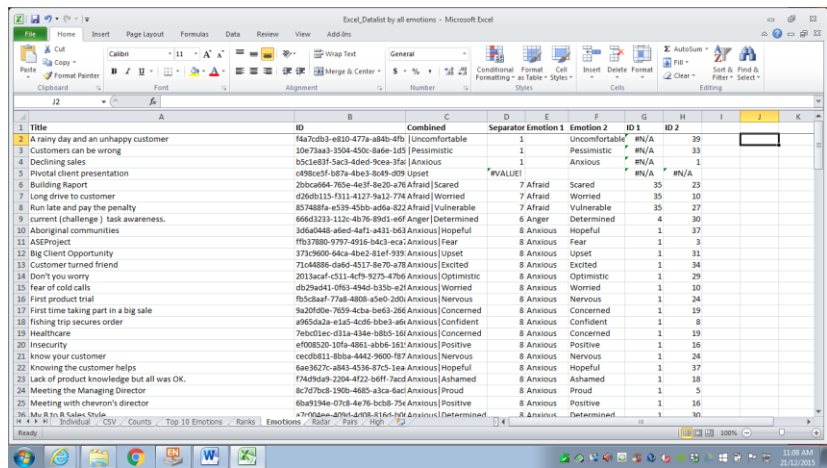


**Figure 3.22:  First emotion (E1) displayed in alphabetical order using MS Excel®.**

The above screen image illustrates the results of the 'sort on emotion 1' column within Excel®. Tallies were then made for each emotion and recorded in a Table as shown below.

**Table 3-3:    E1 and E2 emotion counts combined and sorted by total count.**

| No. | Emotion | Total Count | No. | Emotion | Total Count |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Anxious | 33 | 21 | Delighted | 4 |
| 2 | Nervous | 21 | 22 | Anger | 3 |
| 3 | Confident | 18 | 23 | Embarrassed | 3 |
| 4 | Optimistic | 17 | 24 | Vulnerable | 3 |
| 5 | Hopeful | 16 | 25 | Upset | 3 |
| 6 | Concerned | 15 | 26 | Scared | 2 |
| 7 | Apprehensive | 15 | 27 | Pessimistic | 2 |
| 8 | Positive | 14 | 28 | Trusting | 2 |
| 9 | Excited | 12 | 29 | Loyal | 2 |
| 10 | Determined | 10 | 30 | Ashamed | 1 |
| 11 | Proud | 10 | 31 | Frustrated | 1 |
| 12 | Worried | 7 | 32 | Sad | 1 |
| 13 | Fearful | 7 | 33 | Appreciative | 1 |
| 14 | Happy | 7 | 34 | Inadequate | 1 |
| 15 | Controlled | 6 | 35 | Negative | 1 |
| 16 | Afraid | 5 | 36 | Regretful | 1 |
| 17 | Self-assured | 5 | 37 | Guilty | 0 |
| 18 | Disappointed | 5 | 38 | Envious | 0 |
| 19 | Empathetic | 5 | 39 | Moody | 0 |
| 20 | Uncomfortable | 4 | 40 | Dissatisfied | 0 |
| | | *232* | | | *31* |
| **Total count** | | | | | **263** |

The above data was derived from the two emotion choices participants selected and shown earlier in Figure 3.12. Of the 40 emotion descriptors offered to participants in the survey instrument, 36 were chosen. The most frequently chosen emotion was 'Anxious' with 33 recordings for either E1or E2.

As will be discussed later in this thesis, not all emotions listed were anticipatory in nature and not all had sufficient frequency to justify further analysis. For these reasons only those narratives which contributed mostly to answering the research objective and associated research questions were used for further analysis.

The next step in the process was to allocate a valence to each emotion listed in Table 3.3 (Barrington 2006). This then allowed the selection of positive and negative affect emotions for later analysis. Table 3.4 below displays the amended data and includes the valence of the emotions collected.

**Table 3-4:    Valences of E1 and E2 emotions.**
Based on Barrington (2006).

| No. | Emotion (E1+E2) | Valence | Total Count | No. | Emotion (E1+E2) | Valence | Total Count |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Anxious | - | 33 | 21 | Delighted | + | 4 |
| 2 | Nervous | - | 21 | 22 | Anger | - | 3 |
| 3 | Confident | + | 18 | 23 | Embarrassed | - | 3 |
| 4 | Optimistic | + | 17 | 24 | Vulnerable | - | 3 |
| 5 | Hopeful | + | 16 | 25 | Upset | - | 3 |
| 6 | Concerned | - | 15 | 26 | Scared | - | 2 |
| 7 | Apprehensive | - | 15 | 27 | Pessimistic | - | 2 |
| 8 | Positive | + | 14 | 28 | Trusting | + | 2 |
| 9 | Excited | + | 12 | 29 | Loyal | + | 2 |
| 10 | Determined | + | 10 | 30 | Ashamed | - | 1 |
| 11 | Proud | + | 10 | 31 | Frustrated | - | 1 |
| 12 | Worried | - | 7 | 32 | Sad | - | 1 |
| 13 | Fearful | - | 7 | 33 | Appreciative | + | 1 |
| 14 | Happy | + | 7 | 34 | Inadequate | - | 1 |
| 15 | Controlled | + | 6 | 35 | Negative | - | 1 |
| 16 | Afraid | - | 5 | 36 | Regretful | - | 1 |
| 17 | Self-assured | + | 5 | 37 | Guilty | - | 0 |
| 18 | Disappointed | - | 5 | 38 | Envious | - | 0 |
| 19 | Empathetic | + | 5 | 39 | Moody | - | 0 |
| 20 | Uncomfortable | - | 4 | 40 | Dissatisfied | - | 0 |
| | | | *232* | | | | *31* |
| **Total count** | | | | | | | **263** |

The next step was to determine which particular emotions were most useful for later analysis. The emotions selected needed to have a sufficient frequency that would assist in the process of abduction/ induction. The results appear in Table 3.5

**Table 3-5:    E1 and E2 emotions listed by frequency**

| Emotion (E1+E2) | Valence | Total count |
|---|---|---|
| Anxious | - | 33 |
| Nervous | - | 21 |
| Confident | + | 18 |
| Optimistic | + | 17 |
| Hopeful | + | 16 |
| Apprehensive | - | 15 |
| Concerned | - | 15 |
| Positive | + | 14 |
| Excited | + | 12 |
| Determined | + | 10 |
| Fearful | - | 7 |
| Worried | - | 7 |
| Afraid | - | 5 |
| Self-assured | + | 5 |

The emotions chosen, range from 'anxious' with 33 recordings to 'self-assured' with 5 recordings. The emotions 'proud', 'happy' and 'controlled' were not considered because they were not considered anticipatory emotions ("Emotion Word List" 2016). Table 3.6 displays the final result once the non-anticipatory emotions were removed.

Table 3-6:    Selected negative and positive emotions

| Negative affect emotion | Valence | Total count |
|---|---|---|
| Anxious | - | 33 |
| Nervous | - | 21 |
| Apprehensive | - | 15 |
| Worried | - | 7 |
| Fearful | - | 7 |
| Afraid | - | 5 |
| Concerned | - | 15 |
| Positive affect emotion | Valence | Total count |
| Confident | + | 18 |
| Optimistic | + | 17 |
| Hopeful | + | 16 |
| Positive | + | 14 |
| Excited | + | 12 |
| Determined | + | 10 |
| Self-assured | + | 5 |

Table 3.6 above displays the particular emotions and valence selected for the next stage of the study which was to determine which narratives contained the emotion descriptors for both E1 and E2. In order to do this all narratives were reviewed in MS Excel® by sorting on E1 first and then sorting on E2. Each narrative was reviewed to ensure that the E1 and E2 emotions listed in Table 3.6 above were present. Those narratives not containing the emotion E1 were deleted first. The process was then repeated for the remaining narratives by sorting on E2 and then deleting those narratives not containing any emotion descriptors shown in Table 3.6. The remaining list of emotions were then saved as a new Excel® file for further review.

The next stage was to review the list of narratives containing the emotion descriptors in Table 3.6 and to delete any that did not have a Triad strength of ≥50. This was achieved by sorting on each Triad data point listing eg: Triad 1a, 1b, 1c, and recording all narratives for that Triad with strength of 50 or more and ignoring those below 50. This process was repeated for all 18 Triad data points across the 6 Triads. The number of narratives that met the criteria was recorded in a new Table as shown below:

**Table 3-7:     Number of negative narratives meeting selection criteria.**

| Triad<br>B<br>A     C | Total number of narratives with index strength ≥ 50 | Number of narratives with index strength ≥ 50 and are <u>negative</u> with E1 plus E2 anticipatory emotions |
|---|---|---|
| 1a | 43 | **7** |
| 1b | 18 | 3 |
| 1c | 25 | 10 |
| Total | 86 | 20 |
| 2a | 37 | 4 |
| 2b | 18 | **1** |
| 2c | 44 | **13** |
| Total | 99 | 18 |
| 3a | 69 | **14** |
| 3b | 17 | 4 |
| 3c | 18 | 2 |
| Total | 104 | 20 |
| 4a | 16 | 6 |
| 4b | 66 | **8** |
| 4c | 23 | 7 |
| Total | 105 | 21 |
| 5a | 17 | 4 |
| 5b | 55 | **6** |
| 5c | 24 | 4 |
| Total | 96 | 14 |
| 6a | 21 | 7 |
| 6b | 64 | **13** |
| 6c | 20 | 4 |
| Total | 105 | 24 |

The number of negative narratives meeting the selection criteria of strength ≥ 50 and containing E1 and E2 anticipatory emotions reduced significantly as can be seen; for example Triad 1a has 43 narratives coded with a strength of ≥ 50 but only 7 of those contain a negative anticipatory emotion.  The process adopted is a form of open coding of the data because criterion have been identified, named and grouped according to the selection criteria (Strauss and Corbin 1990).

The next stage of the process was to list the Triad question related to Table 3.7 and review the narratives connected to each to evaluate the contribution that each would make towards answering the research questions and ultimately the research objective.

**Table 3-8: Negative affect narratives and corresponding Triads**

| Triad no. | Triad Descriptor | Number of negative affect narratives ≥50 | Most related to the research objective |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1a | In general my story describes a successful call | 7 | ✓ |
| 1b | In general, my story describes a common situation | 3 | |
| 1c | In general, my story describes a difficult sales call | 4 | |
| 2a | Prior to seeing the customer , the salesperson's thoughts were focused on their call objectives | 1 | |
| 2b | Prior to seeing the customer, the salesperson's thoughts were focused on what happened on the previous interaction with the customer | 1 | ✓ |
| 2c | Prior to seeing the customer, the salesperson's thoughts were focused on how well the call would go | 13 | ✓ |
| 3a | Most of the salesperson's thoughts about the call were before the call | 14 | ✓ |
| 3b | Most of the salespersons thoughts about the call were after the call | 3 | |
| 3c | Most of the salespersons thoughts about the call were during the call | 0 | |
| 4a | As it turned out most of the thoughts the salesperson had before the call were unjustified | 5 | |
| 4b | As it turned out most of the thoughts the salesperson had before the call were justified | 8 | ✓ |
| 4c | As it turned out most of the thoughts the salesperson had before the call were of no significance | 3 | |
| 5a | In the story, the effectiveness of the sales call was mostly determined by the flexibility of the salesperson during the call | 3 | |
| 5b | In the story, the effectiveness of the sales call was mostly determined by how much trust there was between the two | 6 | ✓ |
| 5c | In the story, the effectiveness of the sales call was mostly determined by the salesperson achieving their call objectives | 4 | |
| 6a | After the sales call the customer was somewhat difficult | 5 | |
| 6b | After the sales call, your thoughts were that the customer had been very co-operative | 13 | ✓ |
| 6c | After the sales call the call went as you expected. | 0 | |

Table 3.8 lists each Triad by number, the Triad descriptors and the outcome indicating those contributing most to the research objective. The results from this process together with the narrative titles appear in Table 3.9.

**Table 3-9:    Negative affect narratives with corresponding data point strengths.**

| No | Narrative Title | Triad and self-coded strength ≥50 | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | 1a | 2b | 2c | 3a | 4b | 5b | 6b |
| 1 | Customer turned friend | 57 | | 52 | | | 53 | 83 |
| 2 | Don't worry unnecessarily | 56 | | 63 | 73 | | | 71 |
| 3 | Don't you worry | | | 86 | 91 | | | 86 |
| 4 | Healthcare | 51 | | 56 | | | | 69 |
| 5 | Important customer | | | | 77 | | | |
| 6 | Journey | | | | 54 | 71 | | |
| 7 | Learning from the customer | | | 60 | 74 | | | 66 |
| 8 | Lost sales not my fault | | | 64 | 73 | 81 | 60 | |
| 9 | Lots on concern but no issue. | | | | 77 | | | 67 |
| 10 | Meeting clients | | | | | | 55 | 57 |
| 11 | Meeting turn around | 91 | | | | 54 | 81 | |
| 12 | Nerves and being able to joke | | | 68 | | | | 59 |
| 13 | Nervous day at corporate client | | | | | | 55 | |
| 14 | Perseverance and tenacity | 52 | | | 66 | | | 64 |
| 15 | Product failure | | | 67 | 75 | 77 | | 78 |
| 16 | Save face | | | 61 | 69 | 66 | | |
| 17 | Success with a grumpy receptionist | | | 62 | 64 | 50 | | 59 |
| 18 | The evil emperor. | | | 72 | 70 | 82 | | |
| 19 | Too relaxed | 53 | 54 | | 80 | 77 | 75 | |
| 20 | Unnecessary fear | 72 | | 56 | 76 | | | 75 |
| 21 | Whatever it takes! | | | 77 | | | | 77 |
| **Total narratives from previous Table** | | **7** | **1** | **13** | **14** | **8** | **6** | **13** |

The above Table lists all the negative affect (E1 and E2) narratives and their corresponding Triad data point strengths. Each narrative was evaluated for suitability in contributing towards answering the research objective and research questions. To assist with this, a snap shot view of each of the participant's demographics is provided in Appendix 4A, together with an initial evaluation of the narrative which lists the key relevant terms mentioned in the narrative. As mentioned, the initial evaluation and interpretation of the narratives was conducted in order to identify the most suited narratives and to reduce the large number of narratives to a manageable number and to that end, a final list of narratives was developed. An example of the first narrative listed in the Table above and shown in Appendix 4A: *Customer Turned Friend;* is re-produced below to illustrate the type of information collected following the initial evaluation and interpretation of the narrative and how it was deemed to be a contributor to answering the research objective.

**Sample Narrative from Appendix 4A: <u>Customer Turned Friend</u>**

| Emotion 1 (E1): | Nervous |
|---|---|
| Emotion 2 (E2): | Anxious |
| Other feelings: | |
| Age: | 36-45 |
| Location: | Australia |
| Gender: | Male |
| Experience: | 11 to 15 years |
| Triads applicable to this narrative | 1a, 2c, 5b, 6b |
| Self-coded strength : This story describes a - successful sales call | 1a=57 |

**Narrative:**

> *"I was to do a call to a university to meet with a visiting professor of micro electronics. On the way to the call I was feeling <u>**nervous**</u> meeting with a professor from Germany. <u>Upon arrival I was **pleased** to meet a very likeable person</u> who was easy to talk to and who was genuinely interested in my products. We talked about the computer terminals I was selling and he told me he would be placing an order for some. The order cam through and was valued at just under $100 000. Our <u>relationship was very good</u> and I ended up inviting the visiting professor to my rural property for a BBQ and to see some Australian Wildlife we had on the property. We keep in contact to this day even now he has retired and returned to Germany. This was an unusual customer relationship that turned from customer to friend".*

**Key attributes interpreted from the narrative**:  Nervous, anxious, pleased, surprised.

**Initial interpretation**: Because the customer had not been met before, the salesperson was worried about meeting them to the extent they were feeling nervous. When the salesperson eventually met with the customer they were pleased with what they discovered; that the customer was likeable and easy to talk to. The nervousness and worry the salesperson was feeling turned into surprise and pleasure once they met with the customer. They became long term friends and still keep in contact. It could be argued in this sales narrative that the salesperson was anxious and nervous and the worry they were experiencing was not really warranted as it turned out.

<u>Note</u>: In this example the emotion terms listed above under the heading "**Key attributes of the narrative"** are the coding categories used and which formed the basis for the theme development for the findings and analysis. These coding categories can be found with every narrative initially analysed in Appendix 4B.

The narratives applicable to negative affect were reviewed first and were then followed by a review of the positive affect narratives. The final outcomes of the negative affect reviews are re-produced in Table 3.10.

**Table 3-10:   Results of negative affect narrative data**

| Triad | Triad descriptor | Number of narratives with strength ≥50/21 | % | Relevant to the research objective |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1a | In general my story describes a successful call | 7 | 33 | Yes |
| 2b | Prior to seeing the customer, the salesperson's thoughts were focused on what happened on the previous interaction with the customer | 1 | 4 | No – only one narrative |
| 2c | Prior to seeing the customer, the salesperson's thoughts were focused on how well the call would go | 13 | 62 | Yes |
| 3a | Most of the salesperson's thoughts about the call were before the call | 14 | 66 | Yes |
| 4b | As it turned out most of the thoughts the salesperson had before the call were justified | 8 | 38 | Yes |
| 5a | In the story, the effectiveness of the sales call was mostly determined by the flexibility of the salesperson during the call | 3 | 12 | Yes |
| 5b | In the story, the effectiveness of the sales call was mostly determined by how much trust there was between the two | 6 | 28 | Yes |
| 5c | In the story, the effectiveness of the sales call was mostly determined by the salesperson achieving their call objectives | 4 | 16 | Yes |
| 6b | After the sales call, your thoughts were that the customer had been very co-operative | 13 | 62 | Yes |

When reviewing Table 3.10, the number of narratives for Triads 5a, 5b, and 5c were relatively low, but were included in the Table because the question for that Triad directly asked participants what they felt mostly contributed to the sales call being effective. The question asked was;

"In the story, the effectiveness of the sales call was mostly determined by…"

The responses to this question were evenly distributed so it was not possible to identify one aspect in particular that participants felt contributed to the calls effectiveness.

Triad 2b was also not included because there was only one recorded narrative that met the selection criteria. The process was repeated for the positive affect narratives.

**Table 3-11:  Number of positive narratives meeting selection criteria.**

| Triad B<br>A    C | Total number of narratives with index strength ≥ 50 | Number of narratives with index strength ≥ 50 and are <u>positive</u> with E1 plus E2 anticipatory emotions |
|---|---|---|
| 1a | 43 | **12** |
| 1b | 18 | 2 |
| 1c | 25 | 1 |
| Total | 86 | 15 |
| 2a | 37 | **9** |
| 2b | 18 | 3 |
| 2c | 44 | 5 |
| Total | 99 | 17 |
| 3a | 69 | **8** |
| 3b | 17 | 1 |
| 3c | 18 | 6 |
| Total | 104 | 15 |
| 4a | 16 | 2 |
| 4b | 66 | **11** |
| 4c | 23 | 6 |
| Total | 105 | 19 |
| 5a | 17 | **3** |
| 5b | 55 | **5** |
| 5c | 24 | **4** |
| Total | 96 | 12 |
| 6a | 21 | 2 |
| 6b | 64 | **11** |
| 6c | 20 | 4 |
| Total | 105 | 17 |

The number of positive narratives meeting the selection criteria of strength ≥ 50 and containing E1 and E2 anticipatory emotions reduced significantly as can be seen; for example Triad 1a has 43 narratives coded with a strength of ≥ 50 but only 12 of those contain a negative anticipatory emotion.  As previously mentioned, the process adopted is a form of open coding of the data because criterion have been identified, named and grouped according to the selection criteria (Strauss and Corbin 1990).

The next stage of the process was to list the Triad question related to Table 3.11 and review the narratives connected to each to evaluate the contribution that each would make towards answering the research questions and ultimately the research objective.

**Table 3-12:    Number of positive affect Triads**

| Triad no. | Triad Descriptor | Number of positive affect narratives ≥50 from Table 3.11 | Most related to the research objective |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1a | In general my story describes a successful call | 12 | ✓ |
| 1b | In general, my story describes a common situation | 2 | |
| 1c | In general, my story describes a difficult sales call | 1 | |
| 2a | Prior to seeing the customer , the salesperson's thoughts were focused on their call objectives | 9 | ✓ |
| 2b | Prior to seeing the customer, the salesperson's thoughts were focused on what happened on the previous interaction with the customer | 3 | |
| 2c | Prior to seeing the customer, the salesperson's thoughts were focused on how well the call would                        go | 5 | |
| 3a | Most of the salesperson's thoughts about the call        were        before        the        call | 8 | ✓ |
| 3b | Most of the salespersons thoughts about the call        were        after        the        call | 1 | |
| 3c | Most of the salespersons thoughts about the call        were        during        the        call | 6 | |
| 4a | As it turned out most of the thoughts the salesperson had before the call were unjustified | 2 | |
| 4b | As it turned out most of the thoughts the salesperson had before the call were justified | 11 | ✓ |
| 4c | As it turned out most of the thoughts the salesperson had before the call were  of no significance | 6 | |
| 5a | In the story, the effectiveness of the sales call was mostly determined by the flexibility of the salesperson during the call | 3 | ✓ |
| 5b | In the story, the effectiveness of the sales call was mostly determined by how much trust there was between the two | 5 | ✓ |
| 5c | In the story, the effectiveness of the sales call was mostly determined by the salesperson achieving their call objectives | 4 | ✓ |
| 6a | After the sales call  the customer was somewhat difficult | 2 | |
| 6b | After the sales call, your thoughts were that the customer had been very co-operative | 11 | ✓ |
| 6c | After the sales call the call went as you expected. | 4 | |

Table 3.12 lists each Triad by number, the Triad descriptors and the outcome indicating those contributing most to the research objective. The results from this process together with the narrative titles appear in Table 3.13.

**Table 3-13:   Positive affect narratives with corresponding data point strengths.**

| No. | Narrative Title | Triad and self-coded strength ≥50 | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | 1a | 2a | 3a | 4b | 5a | 5b | 5c | 6b |
| 1 | Arcelor Mittal | 76 | 58 | | 65 | | | | 73 |
| 2 | Be Honest | 92 | | | 89 | | | 93 | 92 |
| 3 | Coffee lover | 53 | | 64 | 65 | | 70 | | 61 |
| 4 | Cracking a New Market | | | | 71 | | | | |
| 5 | First contact | | 58 | | | | | | |
| 6 | First meeting | 60 | | | 56 | | | | 54 |
| 7 | Fishing trip secures order | 67 | | 66 | 73 | | | | 62 |
| 8 | Focusing on the game | 65 | 68 | | | | 65 | | |
| 9 | Little things can build the relationship | | 66 | 65 | 68 | | | 75 | |
| 10 | My B to B Sales Style | | 79 | | | 83 | | | 88 |
| 11 | Never be too confident | | | 83 | | | 64 | | |
| 12 | New service | 80 | | 73 | 77 | | | 65 | 76 |
| 13 | Out for dinner to get to see the customer | 54 | 51 | | 56 | | | | |
| 14 | Pitching a new idea to a large retailer | | 64 | 72 | | | 75 | | 63 |
| 15 | Planning is everything | 67 | | | | | | | |
| 16 | Sales Consultant | 95 | | | 92 | 92 | | | 89 |
| 17 | Selling to DJs | 62 | | 70 | | | | 67 | 78 |
| 18 | Sign on the dotted line please | | 73 | | | | | | |
| 19 | The ADD VP | | 88 | | 76 | 91 | | | |
| 20 | The commitment roller coaster | | | | | | 63 | | 54 |
| 21 | Together we succeed | 68 | 52 | | | | | | |
| **Total narratives from previous Table** | | **12** | **9** | **8** | **11** | **3** | **5** | **4** | **11** |

The above Table lists all the positive affect (E1 and E2) narratives and their corresponding Triad data point strengths. Each narrative was evaluated for suitability in contributing towards answering the research objective and research questions. To assist with this, a snap shot view of each of the participant's demographics is provided in Appendix 4A, together with an initial evaluation of the narrative which lists the key relevant terms mentioned in the narrative. As mentioned, the initial evaluation and interpretation of the narratives was conducted in order to identify the most suited narratives and to reduce the large number of narratives to a manageable number and to that end, a final list of narratives was developed. An example of the first narrative listed in the Table above and shown in Appendix 4A: *Arcelor Mittal;* is re-produced below to illustrate the type of information collected following the initial evaluation and interpretation of the narrative and how it was deemed to be a contributor to answering the research objective.

**Sample Narrative from Appendix 4B: Arcelor Mittal**

| | |
|---|---|
| Emotion 1 (E1): | Optimistic |
| Emotion 2 (E2): | Excited |
| Other feelings: | |
| Age: | 36-45 |
| Location: | South Africa |
| Gender: | Male |
| Experience: | 16 to 20 years |
| Triads applicable to this narrative | 1a, 2a, 4b, 6b |
| Self-coded strength : This story describes a – successful sales call | 1a=76 |

**Narrative:**

*"My Meeting with xxxx buyers. I was scheduled to meet with xxxx buyers, I was **excited** and **postive** to meet these buyers. Upon meeting them they were very hesutant of xxxx and there had been afew past issues that put them off about xxxx, I assured them I would sort out any issues and would be their contact point for business. It took a bit of time to win their confidence and now since I have they are buying a lot more and view xxxx in different light".*

**Key attributes of the narrative:** Excited, positive, optimistic, confident.

**Initial interpretation:** In this call there was reluctance on the part of the customer to purchase from the salespersons company xxxx because of past issues. The salesperson was positive and optimistic and over a period of time was able to convince the customer that he would personally sort any issues out and be their point of contact should there be any problems. The salesperson developed confidence in the customer and approached the challenge in a positive and enthusiastic manner. The salesperson had extensive past experience of 16-20 years which would have assisted the salesperson achieve the positive outcome.

**Table 3-14:   Results of positive affect narrative data**

| Triad | Prompting Question | Number of narratives with strength ≥ 50/21 | % | Relevant to the research objective |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1a | In general my story describes a successful call | 12 | 57 | Yes |
| 2a | Prior to seeing the customer, the salesperson's thoughts were focused on their call objectives | 9 | 41 | Yes |
| 3a | Most of the salesperson's thoughts about the call were before the call | 8 | 36 | Yes |
| 4b | As it turned out most of the thoughts the salesperson had before the call were justified | 12 | 54 | Yes |
| 5a | In the story, the effectiveness of the sales call was mostly determined by the flexibility of the salesperson during the call | 4 | 18 | Yes |
| 5b | In the story, the effectiveness of the sales call was mostly determined by how much trust | 5 | 23 | Yes |

| Triad | Prompting Question | Number of narratives with strength ≥ 50/21 | % | Relevant to the research objective |
|-------|--------------------|-----|-----|-----|
| | there was between the two | | | |
| 5c | In the story, the effectiveness of the sales call was mostly determined by the salesperson achieving their call objectives | 4 | 18 | Yes |
| 6b | After the sales call, your thoughts were that the customer had been very co-operative | 11 | 50 | Yes |

Tables 3.10 and 3.14 represents the narratives in the study which had either two negative affect emotions or two positive affect emotions E1 and E2 with self-coded strengths of ≥50. Even though the number of narratives for Triads 5a, 5b, and 5c were relatively low for both negative and positive affect narratives, they were included in the Table because the question for that Triad directly asked participants what they felt mostly contributed to the sales call being effective. The question asked was;

*"In the story, the effectiveness of the sales call was mostly determined by…"*

Again, the responses to this question were evenly distributed so it was not possible to identify one aspect in particular that participants felt contributed to the calls effectiveness.

In this study, the narrative itself was ultimately important because it expressed the actual experience of the salesperson in that call, in their chosen words. Triad filter choices offered to the participant were designed to be purposefully abstract and represent competing choices and to that extent present themselves as difficult choices. Any narrative of any index strength can potentially contain rich information about a sales experience and could be relevant to the study. Because an abductive/inductive approach was employed in this study, it was appropriate to use narratives which were coded with the most frequently used emotion descriptors. This provided the ability to use abductive/inductive logic in a meaningful way.

This study set out to explore and interpret the lived emotional experiences of B2B salespeople and to gain insights as to how those experiences, positive or negative, might impact on their call effectiveness. A structured, narrowing down process was absolutely necessary in order to reduce the data to manageable amounts and to identify the most suitable experiences to analyse. At this point it is appropriate to re-visit the research questions for this study:

1. What are the primary *anticipatory emotions* experienced by *B2B* salespeople?
2. In what ways do they perceive these *anticipatory emotions* impacting on their *sales effectiveness*?
3. What are the key factors perceived as influencing anticipatory emotions?
4. What insights might complexity theory provide with regards to anticipatory emotions?

Tables 3.10 and 3.14 list the narratives which contain E1 and E2 anticipatory emotions and with a self-coded strength of ≥50. These are the narratives of most relevance to answer the research objective and questions. In order to answer the research questions and to answer the overall research objective, each narrative was listed and reviewed and a process of clustering and theme development was undertaken.

## 3.14  Theme Development

An abductive/inductive content analysis approach was adopted for this study because there was no established theory explaining which categories would be most suitable for theme formulation (Zhang and Wildemuth 2009).

The theme development stage of the study involved the identification of key words, phrases and story lines either evident or interpreted in the narratives identified for analysis. The key words and key identifying attributes of each positive and negative narrative were taken from the interpretations shown in Appendix 4 which were then clustered and grouped into identifiable themes.

A combination of open coding, axial coding and thematic analysis was employed (Strauss and Corbin 1990). The themes were examined and re-examined to identify if there were any links and if so what the phenomena was that linked the themes together.

Thematic analysis was also employed as a second process to help confirm and identify concepts and themes in the narrative data that may have been missed in the first stages of clustering and theme development (Owen 1984). Essentially thematic analysis consists of three contributory components:

- Recurrence – concepts that are repeated using similar words or phrases
- Repetition – an idea exists across narratives using the same wording
- Forcefulness – the emphasis applied to an idea that reinforces the idea

In the final stages of theme development, Tables of negative affect and positive affect were developed based on coding and clustering principles put forward by Owen (1984) and Strauss and Corbin (1998). The most recurring and repetitive themes emerging from the narratives in Appendix 4 were listed as headings in the Tables against the title of each narrative. As the review of the narratives progressed in an iterative manner, new themes were added as they were discovered.  The final compilation resulted in 21 negative and 21 positive narratives as summarised in Appendix 4. The final column in cluster themes shown in Appendix 4A; 'Unnecessary' was included because as the clustering process advanced it became apparent from the content and coding of the narratives that salespeople were experiencing negative affect but as the call progressed in became evident that their concerns were not warranted and the concerns they were having did not eventuate as they expected.  Once a point of 'saturation'

was reached and it became apparent that no additional data was contributing to any existing or new categories (Glaser and Strauss 1967) the individual emotion themes were finally grouped into broad categories of 'negative affect' and 'positive affect'.

To summarise, Figure 3.23 illustrates the coding process which was followed.
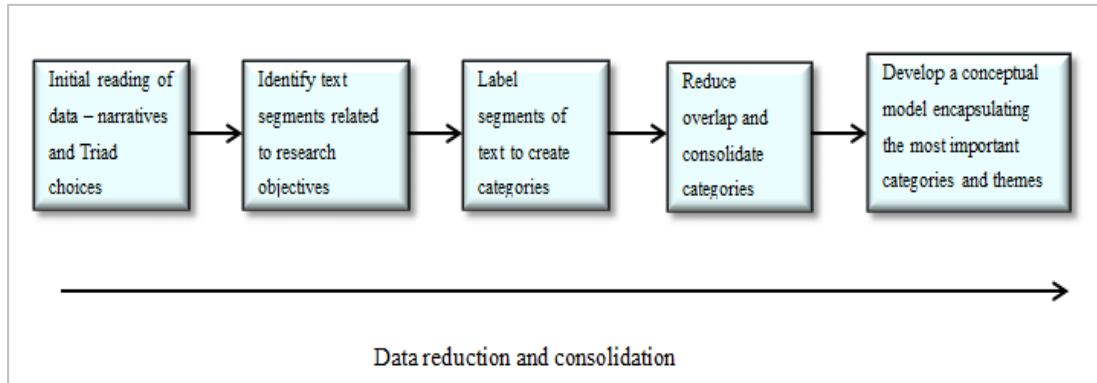


**Figure 3.23: The coding process. Adapted from (Creswell 1994).**

# 3.15 Summary

This chapter described in detail the full methodological approach used for the study. It began by describing and justifying the philosophical standpoint for the study with particular emphasis on both ontological and epistemological considerations. Based on the nature of these and the type of data required for this study it was decided that a constructivist ontology and interpretivist epistemology was required.

The chapter then went on to consider aspects of logic, including deductive, inductive and abductive theories of reasoning. A discussion of SenseMaker and the research design for this project was then presented, including the concept of pre-hypothesis research. A description of how the data was collected, including details of the pilot study followed. Next was a statement concerning the potential ethical issues surrounding the study and issues of compliance. A section detailing aspects of trustworthiness and rigor followed.

The next part of the chapter was a description of how SenseMaker was used which included screen shots of what the participant saw in the survey instrument and the view the researcher saw when using the SenseMaker software for analysis. The constructs of the Triads and Dyads used in the study were then explained. The next part of the chapter detailed the process and steps followed using SenseMaker and Excel to eventually arrive at the narratives and cluster themes to be used for later analysis.

# Chapter 4 Findings and Analysis

## 4.1 Introduction

The purpose of this Chapter of the thesis is to present and analyse the findings of the research following a detailed and methodical coding process described in Chapter 3. By following the regimented process, a total of 42 narratives were grouped into a total of fourteen categories (Appendix 4, Pages 316 & 339). Based on the literature review findings it was established that there was little agreement on the definitions and meanings of various negative emotion feelings. So much so, that some authors grouped similar emotions together and referred to them as a class of emotion exhibiting similar constructs (Harrington and Blankenship 2002; Kircanski et al. 2015; Martin and Tesser 1996; Sarason, Pierce and Sarason 1996; Thomsen 2006).

Emotions of positive affect have been said to be diffuse and difficult to operationalise (Fredrickson and Cohn 2010). Smith and Ellsworth (1985) and Shaver et al. (1987) all agree that positive emotions are relatively undifferentiated in their appraisal and action tendencies. For these reasons, the negative emotions identified in the study were grouped as general negative affect and the positive emotions as general positive affect. The two broad classes of affect are then discussed with respect to the narratives and the respective Triad results as shown in Tables 3.10 and Table 3.14. reproduced below:

| Triad | Triad descriptor | Number of narratives with strength ≥50/21 | % | Relevant to the research objective |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1a | In general my story describes a successful call | 7 | 33 | Yes |
| 2b | Prior to seeing the customer, the salesperson's thoughts were focused on what happened on the previous interaction with the customer | 1 | 4 | No – only one narrative |
| 2c | Prior to seeing the customer, the salesperson's thoughts were focused on how well the call would go | 13 | 62 | Yes |
| 3a | Most of the salesperson's thoughts about the call were before the call | 14 | 66 | Yes |
| 4b | As it turned out most of the thoughts the salesperson had before the call were justified | 8 | 38 | Yes |
| 5a | In the story, the effectiveness of the sales call was mostly determined by the flexibility of the salesperson during the call | 3 | 12 | Yes |
| 5b | In the story, the effectiveness of the sales call was mostly determined by how much trust there was between the two | 6 | 28 | Yes |
| 5c | In the story, the effectiveness of the sales call was mostly determined by the salesperson achieving their call objectives | 4 | 16 | Yes |
| 6b | After the sales call, your thoughts were that the customer had been very co-operative | 13 | 62 | Yes |

| Triad | Triad descriptor | Number of narratives with strength ≥50/21 | % | Relevant to the research objective |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1a | In general my story describes a successful call | 12 | 57 | Yes |
| 2a | Prior to seeing the customer, the salesperson's thoughts were focused on their call objectives | 9 | 41 | Yes |
| 3a | Most of the salesperson's thoughts about the call were before the call | 8 | 36 | Yes |
| 4b | As it turned out most of the thoughts the salesperson had before the call were justified | 12 | 54 | Yes |
| 5a | In the story, the effectiveness of the sales call was mostly determined by the flexibility of the salesperson during the call | 4 | 18 | Yes |
| 5b | In the story, the effectiveness of the sales call was mostly determined by how much trust there was between the two | 5 | 23 | Yes |
| 5c | In the story, the effectiveness of the sales call was mostly determined by the salesperson achieving their call objectives | 4 | 18 | Yes |
| 6b | After the sales call, your thoughts were that the customer had been very co-operative | 11 | 50 | Yes |

Sections 4.2 and 4.3 of this chapter identify the narratives associated with the Triads shown in the above Tables and provide an overview or initial analysis of the key information, including the emotions applicable to each narrative.

A sample narrative is then selected (identified as a shaded narrative) from each Triad and analysed. Following the analysis of the chosen narratives, Tables are produced which identify the relevance to the first three of the research questions. The process is then repeated for each of the six Triads for both positive and negative selected narratives.

Once all narratives have been completed and Tables are produced identifying relevance to the research questions, a further Table is produced, summarising the contributions to the research questions (Table 4.7& Table 4.14).

An analysis of the Dyad results concludes Chapter 4. A macro level discussion of the research questions relative to the research findings of general negative and general positive affect is provided in Chapter 5.

Figure 4.1 below has been included to show the filtering process and steps followed to eventually arrive at the narratives suitable for further analysis. The process was complicated and required a hierarchical and structured approach.
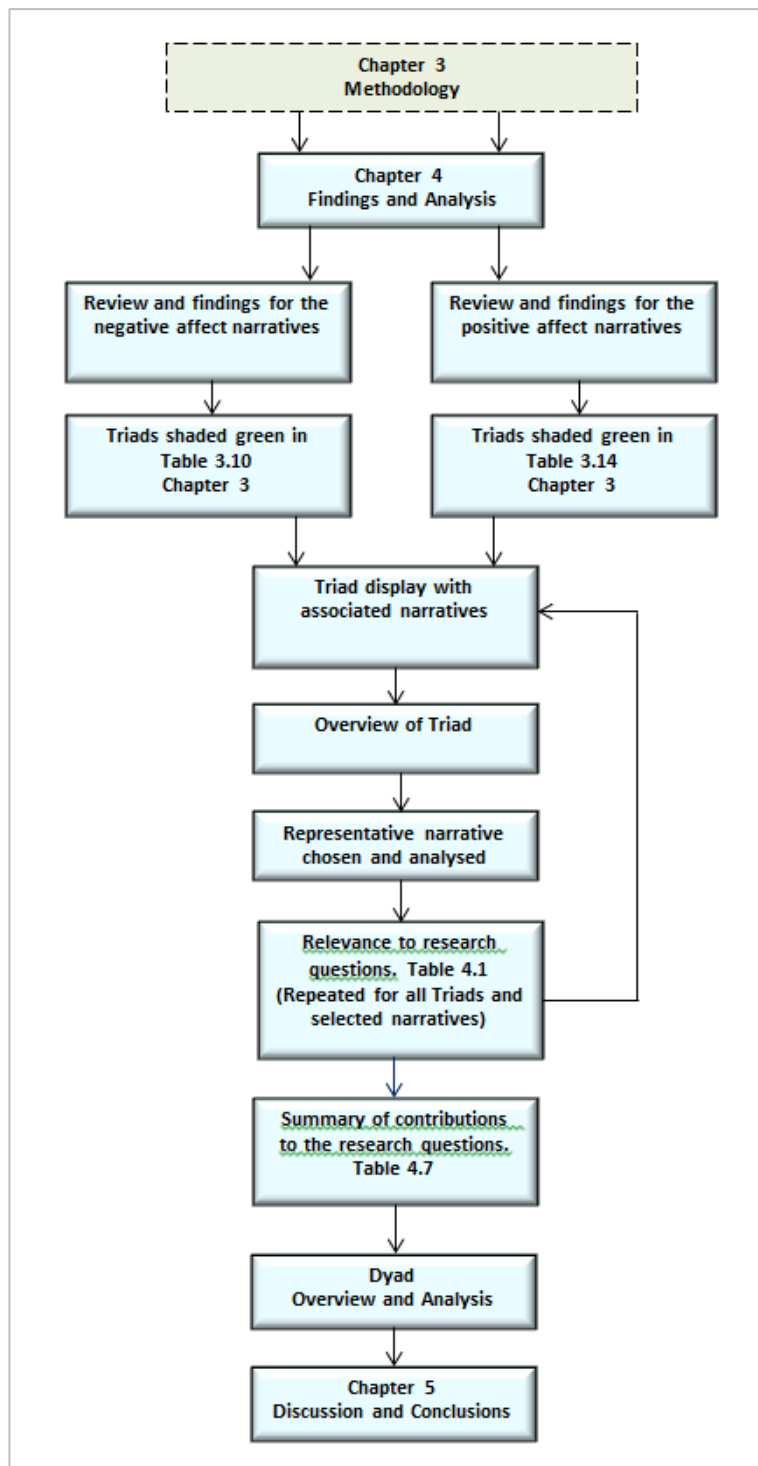
**Figure 4.1:** **Findings and analysis hierarchy**

Figure 4.1, details the sequence of events followed in Chapter 4. The approach adopted needed to be highly hierarchical because there was a significant amount of data to consider and it was necessary to ensure that the narrowing down of the data resulted in only those narratives which were directly related to the research objective and associated questions.

## 4.2 Review and Findings for the Negative Affect Narratives

The six Triads below are the negative affect Triads which contain the narratives for discussion in this section. Table 3.9 in Chapter 3, list the actual narratives by title and their corresponding Triad data point strengths. Only those filters which directly contributed to answering the research objective and associated questions were used for this stage of the study as previously mentioned in Chapter 3.

**Negative Affect Triads Data Distribution**
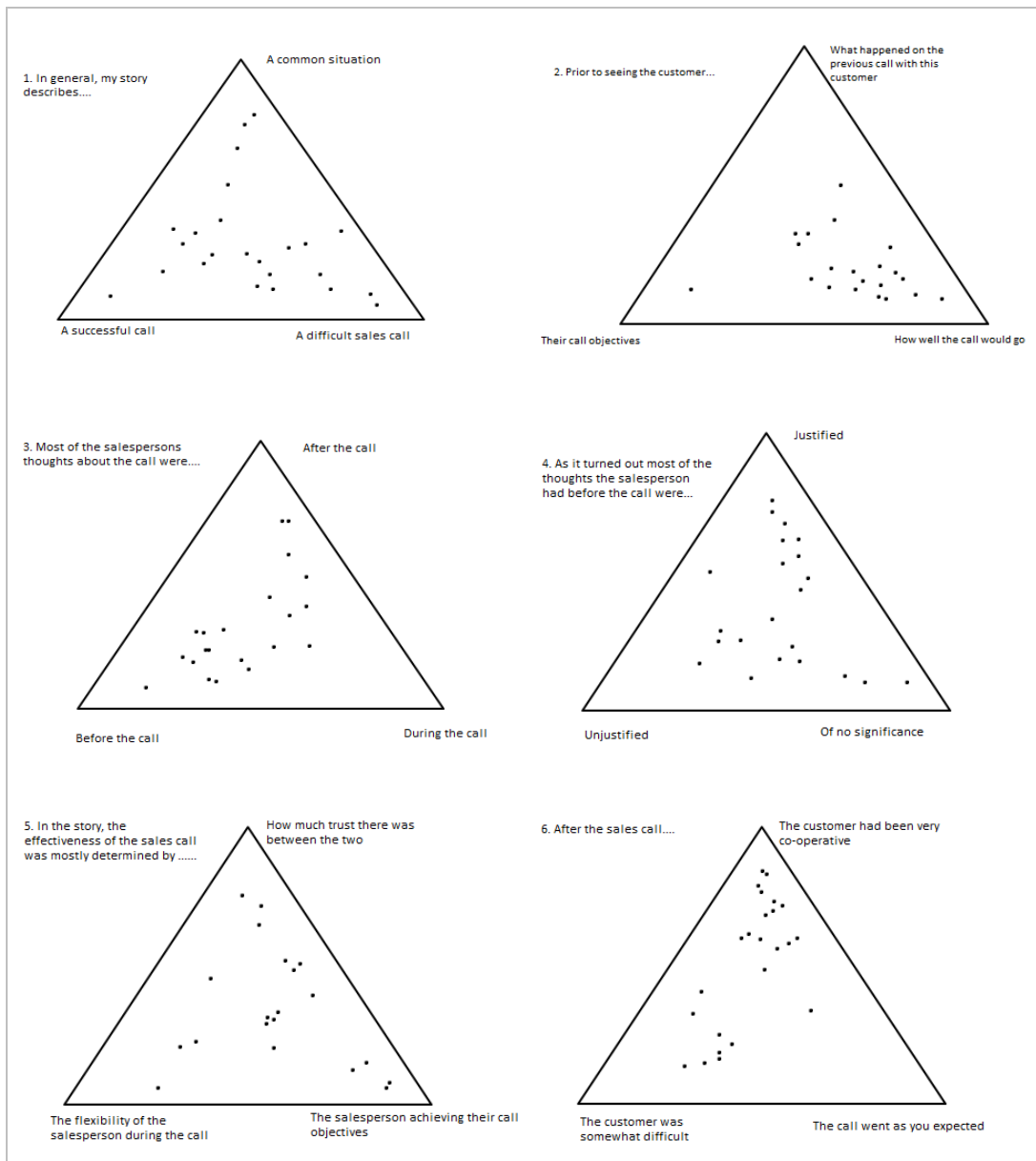
### 4.2.1    Observations and Findings of Negative Affect Triads.

The next six Triad data sets provide a snapshot view of the narratives chosen for review from Table 3.10. The first column lists the title of the narrative; the next column is an extract of the emotions selected by the participant and any emotions mentioned by them in their narrative as well as other information perceived to be important by the researcher. The full narrative together with demographic information can be found in Appendix 4A for the negative affect narratives and Appendix 4B for the positive affect narratives.

The full sets of 6 Triad responses for both negative and positive affect narratives below, equate to the cluster themes in Appendix 4. Each Triad is discussed in turn, and a representative narrative (shaded) in each Table is analysed.

## 4.2.1.1    Triad 1
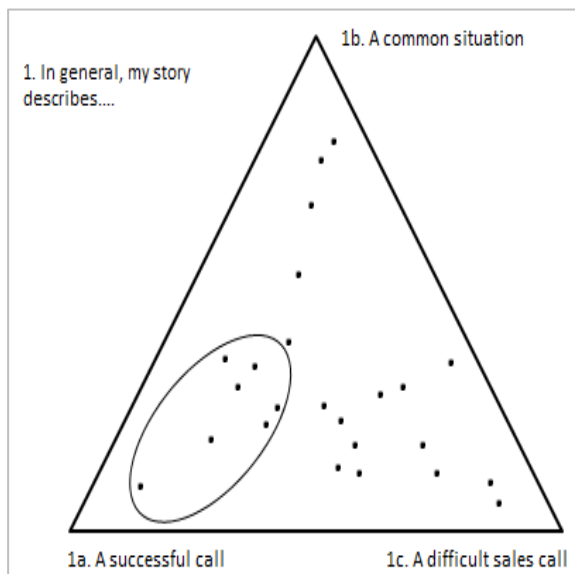


**Triad 1 narrative data clustering**

| Narratives associated with Triad 1a (Table 3.10) | Key information and emotions interpreted from the narrative (Appendix 4A) |
|---|---|
| Customer turned friend | Nervous, anxious, pleased, surprised |
| Don't worry unnecessarily | Worry that was unjustified, concern, lack of confidence |
| Healthcare | Nervous, initial lacking in confidence and anxious. Confidence improved as call progressed. |
| Meeting Turn Around | Worried, anxious, fear, prepared, surprised. |
| Perseverance and tenacity | High risk large account, worry, clear call objectives, apprehensive, nervous, positive, success through perseverance. |
| Too relaxed | Worried, apprehensive, concerned, surprised |
| Unnecessary fear | Negative thoughts before the call, fear, afraid, uneasy, lacking confidence, successful outcome, unnecessary worry and fear |

**Triad 1 Overview**

For Triad 1a in Table 3.10, 7 participants, perceived their sales call to be successful given the Triad choices available. Interestingly Triad 1c indicates that a similar number of participants described their call as difficult.

It should be noted that some participants who chose to code their sales call as 'difficult' may also have experienced a successful call. Some salespeople may have chosen 'difficulty' over 'success' because it may have been a significantly difficult call that ended successfully. Certainly if the call was memorable because of its difficulty, it may have been the dominant aspect of the call remembered by the salesperson.

When considering the result provided for the successful calls, it must be remembered that the participants listed negative emotions as being applicable to the call. Those emotions are provided in the second column of Triad 1above. If the salesperson experienced negative affect, how is it that they coded their call as successful? When looking at the narratives in Appendix 4A, it is clear most were worrying about their perceived difficulties in the pending calls. The perceived difficulties are a result of an initial appraisal by the participants. This situation is consistent with the views of Stein, Hernandez, and Trabasso (2010) who claim that a perceived lack of progress towards the achievement of goals results in negative affect. However Brown, Westbrook, and Challagalla (2005) have also stated that a salespersons call effectiveness is impacted upon by the salespersons ability to self-regulate their behaviour and their ability to cope when they perceive a lack of progress towards the achievement of goals. In these cases the question is; did the salespeople self-regulate their behaviour and their ability to cope or was it that they re-evaluated the situation once in the call and found their worry was not justified? When reviewing the particular narratives in Appendix 4A it is evident that the salespeople realised once going in to the call that there was nothing to worry about and the call proceeded successfully.

When reviewing the particular emotions provided by the participants in the second column for the set of Triads above, it can be seen that most relate to worry, nervousness, apprehensiveness and being anxious. The narrative "Unnecessary Fear" was chosen for analysis as it represented a typical example of a narrative related to Triad 1. A summary is provided together with a verbatim extract of the narrative and an analysis of the narrative.

**Example Narrative: Unnecessary Fear**

| | |
|---|---|
| Anticipatory Emotion 1 (E1): | Fear |
| Anticipatory Emotion 2 (E2): | Afraid |
| Other feelings: | Uneasy, lack confidence |
| Age: | 26-35 |
| Location: | Australia |
| Gender: | Female |
| Experience: | 11 to 15 years |
| Triads applicable to this narrative | 1a, 2c, 3a, 6b |
| Self-coded strength : This story describes a - successful sales call | 1a=72 |

**Verbatim extract**

> *"I went to see a <u>new prospect</u> about some products I felt they would be interested in. I phoned before hand and made an appointment. I arrived about 5 minutes early and waited in the car until 1 minute before the call. Whilst in the car <u>I started having negative thoughts</u> about whether the prospect would be open to my companies products. <u>I started to feel fearful</u>*

*of this and also began to think of ways to change my approach. I <u>do not know why I did this</u> at the last minute as I have <u>done these call many times.</u> When I left the car for the meeting <u>I felt vey uneasy and certainly not confident</u>. I entered reception and asked for the person I was to meet. I was soon meeting <u>the person who was very welcoming and open to discussion</u>. I sat down, he offered me coffee or tea and we got down to discussions about what his company was doing and what his product needs were. As it turned out he identified 2 products he was interested in and I discussed this and provided a quote. <u>I was starting to feel more confident </u>as the call progressed and felt that I liked this person, not because they had bought some products from me but because <u>he was just a nice and welcoming person</u>. I was able to continue supplying this company and <u>my relationship was very good from then on.</u>"*

**Analysis**

In this scenario the salesperson was meeting with a new customer they had not met before. Whilst waiting for the customer, the salesperson began having negative thoughts about whether the customer would be open minded to their product range. This was an experienced salesperson that had made these types of calls before but for some reason they started having negative thoughts. To an extent there is an indication in the narrative that the salesperson was starting to lack confidence in both their sales ability and their company's product range by the statement;

> *"I felt very uneasy and certainly not confident…"*

At this stage of the call the salesperson was feeling uneasy and experiencing negative anticipatory emotions in the form of fear. Bagozzi, Baumgartner, and Pieters (1998) state that when a salesperson evaluates future goal success or failure it initiates anticipated emotional responses. In this call scenario the salesperson evaluated their future goal success and started losing confidence in themselves that the customer would not be open to their product offering. The result was that they felt afraid that they would not be successful in the call. The Cognitive theory of emotions says that emotions are felt in circumstances of significance to the person's well-being (Lazarus, Averill and Opton 1970). In this scenario the salesperson's well-being was being questioned which led to the anticipatory emotions that were experienced. The narrative extract below clearly identifies the thoughts and concerns of the salesperson;

> *"I started having negative thoughts about whether the prospect would be open to my company's products.  I started to feel fearful of this…."*

Frayne and Geringer (2000) have demonstrated in their research with salespeople that anticipated expectancies influence goal attainment – in this case concern about the customer not being open to the products on offer, trigger fear and worry because the salesperson has an expectation that the situation could occur, and if it did, it would be unlikely the salesperson would make a sale. It has been noted by Brown, Westbrook, and Challagalla (2005) that a salesperson's call effectiveness is impacted upon by the salesperson's ability to self-regulate their behaviour and their ability to cope when they perceive that progress towards goals is unlikely. In this sales scenario there is some suggestion the salesperson was contemplating changing their approach as indicated in the comment below;

> *"I started to feel fearful of this and also began to think of ways to change my approach".*

According to Weitz (1981) an important requirement for sales people is to be adaptable during sales calls. The fact that the salesperson was considering a contingency approach is a sound indicator that the salesperson was experienced and as the demographics indicate for this salesperson they had 11-15 years' experience. Even though the salesperson was thinking about coping strategies they still experienced the negative emotions, but perhaps to a lesser degree of intensity (Luminet et al. 2000). Tenenbaum et al. (2009) claim that individuals experiencing negative affect are so pre-occupied with their situation that they are less able to adopt flexible coping strategies and as a result their performance declines.

It is not clear from the narrative whether the salesperson had reduced the intensity of their anticipatory emotions as previously discussed or whether they were so pre-occupied with the perceived problem that they merely thought about a different approach in order to cope but were unable to immobilise the strategy as suggested by Tenenbaum et al. (2009).

The overall coding of Triad 1(a) as to the perceived success of the sales call by the salesperson is relatively high with a score of 72. This indicates that even though the salesperson experienced negative anticipatory emotions, the salesperson perceived the call to be successful. This can be attributed to a few possibilities. The first as previously mentioned is that the salesperson was able to mobilise their coping strategy by taking a different approach and by being adaptable in the call (Weitz, Sujan and Sujan 1986). However, there is nothing in the narrative to provide any insights as to what the strategy may have involved. The other possibility which is supported by comments in the narrative is that the salesperson re-evaluated or re-appraised the situation once they were in the call. The evidences in the narrative supporting these finding are as quoted;

> *"I was soon meeting the person who was very welcoming and open to discussion."*

*"As it turned out he identified 2 products he was interested in and I discussed this and provided a quote."*

*"I was starting to feel more confident as the call progressed and felt that I liked this person…"*

*"…he was just a nice and welcoming person."*

*"…my relationship was very good from then on."*

The above extracts from the narrative support the view that the salesperson had every reason to re-appraise the situation once in the call. They were no longer afraid or fearful of the unknown once they realised the customer was a 'nice and welcoming person'. Research conducted by Gross (1998b) and Dandoy and Goldstein (1990) have demonstrated that when re-appraisal takes place, there is a decline in the experience of negative emotion and associated behaviour. According to Herwig et al. (2007) a re-appraisal is an antecedent strategy which is likely to reduce both behavioural and emotional aspects of future encounters. The re-appraisal experience and outcomes of the salesperson are stored in memory and retrieved for future use (Bower 1981; Forgas 1991).

**Table 4-1:    Relevance to the research questions — Unnecessary fear**

| 1. What are the primary anticipatory emotions experienced (factual data) | 2. In what ways do they impact on sales effectiveness  (linked to the literature) | 3. What are the key factors perceived as influencing anticipatory emotions (emergent data) |
|---|---|---|
| Fear<br>Afraid | When salespeople fear failure, it can negatively affect their self-esteem, motivation and overall feelings of self-efficacy (Verbeke and Bagozzi 2000).<br><br>When salespeople evaluate future goal success or failure it initiates anticipated emotional responses, in this case fear (Bagozzi, Baumgartner and Pieters 1998) & (Frayne and Geringer 2000).<br><br>When salespeople experience negative affect and are so pre-occupied with their situation they are less able to adopt flexible coping strategies and as a result their performance declines (Tenenbaum et al. 2009). | Fear of failure and rejection by anew customer.<br>Lack of confidence in product offering. |

Table 4.1 summarises the findings of the narrative - 'Unnecessary fear' - with relation to the first three research questions, namely:

1.   What are the primary anticipatory emotions experienced by B2B salespeople
2.   In what ways do they perceive these anticipatory emotions impacting on their sales effectiveness (linked to the literature)
3.   What are the key factors perceived as influencing anticipatory emotions (emergent data)

The primary anticipatory emotions experienced by the salesperson who conducted the call 'unnecessary fear' were – fear and being afraid.

The anticipatory emotions of being afraid and being fearful can impact on sales effectiveness by negatively affecting self-esteem and motivation. In addition the salesperson may be less able to adopt flexible coping strategies to deal with the situation presented in the call. In this particular call, the salesperson re appraised the situation when meeting with the customer and even though they experienced negative anticipatory emotions they were able to successfully complete the call.

The reason the salesperson experienced the negative anticipatory emotions was because of fear of failure and rejection by the new customer.

The approach used in this section to analyse Triad 1has been adopted for the remaining Triads as detailed in the following pages.

## 4.2.1.2    Triad 2



2. Prior to seeing the customer, the salesperson's thoughts were focused on....

2b. What happened on the previous call with this customer

2a. Their call objectives

2c. How well the call would go
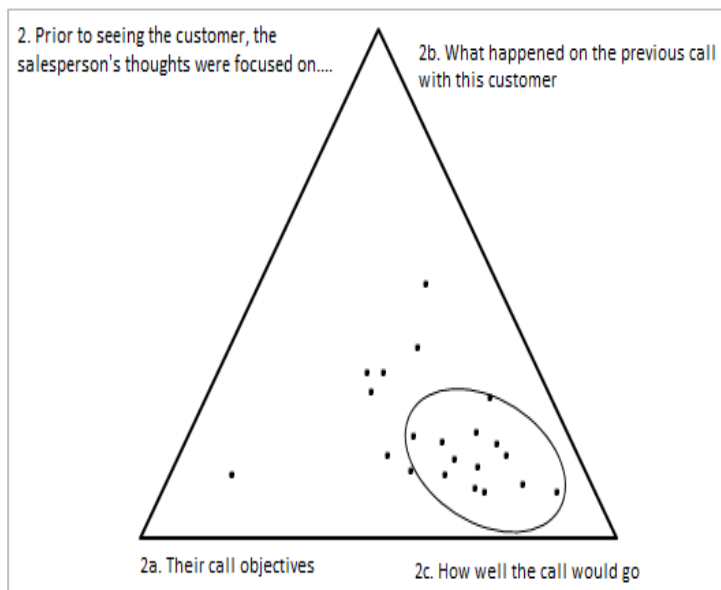
**Triad 2 narrative clustering**

| Narratives associated with Triad 2c (Table 3.10) | Key information and emotions interpreted from the narrative (Appendix 4A) |
|---|---|
| Customer turned friend | Nervous, anxious, pleased, surprised |
| Don't worry unnecessarily | Worry that was unjustified, concern, lack of confidence |
| Don't you worry | Worry, nervous, lacking confidence, anxiety, and impression management |
| Healthcare | Nervous, initial lacking in confidence and anxious. Confidence improved as call progressed. |
| Learning from the customer | Lack of product knowledge, nervous, worried, impression management. |
| Lost sales not my fault | Afraid, apprehensive, personal pride, disappointment, worried, nervous, good customer relationship |
| Nerves and being able to joke | Lacking confidence, nervous, concerned, fear, scared, afraid, unjustified worry, successful outcome |
| Product failure | Worried, concerned, prepared, successful outcome. |
| Save face | Apprehensive, concerned, worry, confident, successful outcome |
| Success with a grumpy receptionist | Nervous, apprehensive, hopeful, successful outcome |
| The evil emperor | Worried, scared, anxious, fear, distressed, awkward. |
| Unnecessary fear | Negative thoughts before the call, fear, afraid, uneasy, lacking confidence, successful outcome, unnecessary worry and fear |
| Whatever it takes | Stressed, worried, anxious |

**Triad 2 Overview**

The purpose of the question for this Triad was to gain insight as to what it is that salespeople think mostly about before going in to see a customer. Participants were given three choices

based on important aspects of sales calls; the first was to identify the extent call objectives were thought about, the second was to see if salespeople worried about what had happened on the previous call with the customer and thirdly to see the extent salespeople have thoughts about the call itself and how the call will unfold.

The results for Triad 2b indicate that the participants did not have thoughts prior to the call about what had happened on the previous call with the customer. It may be that for the narratives in this study, nothing 'in particular' happened on the previous call and that there was nothing 'out of the ordinary' which justified any thoughts about what had happened. Triad 2a was low scoring as well suggesting that the salespeople were not particularly concerned about their call objectives.

What is of significant interest is Triad 2c, which indicates that most salespeople who participated in the research had anticipatory thoughts about how well the call would go. This result strongly supports the view that negative anticipatory emotions are indeed experienced by salespeople and in the case of the narratives written by these participants the emotions were worry, anxiousness, lack of confidence and apprehension.

In the discussion earlier, Triad 1a asked participants if their call was successful. When cross relating narratives present in Triad 1c with Triad 2c, only 4 of the 13 narratives, or 30% indicated the call was successful. This means that for the result in this Triad, over 60% of participants who were thinking about how well the call would go prior to going in to the call, did not say their call was successful. What this suggests is that 60% of the calls in Triad 2c most likely had less than successful outcomes. This is a clear indicator that when a salesperson thinks predominantly about what might happen in a call and has negative anticipatory emotions, it is likely that their call effectiveness will be negatively impacted. This finding is consistent with Frayne and Geringer (2000) and Carver and Scheier (1998) who argue that anticipations influence and impact on a person's volitions and goal attainment. Beckwe et al. (2014) does point out however that impacts on goal attainment can depend upon coping ability or cognitive flexibility (Carver and Connor-Smith 2010). As all sales calls are different and emerge as a part of a complex system (Stacey 2003b), there can never always be linear progression as pointed out by Folkman and Moskowitz (2004) who highlight that coping strategy of people may be effective in one situation but not in another.

**Example Narrative: Learning from the Customer**

| | |
|---|---|
| Anticipatory Emotion 1 (E1): | Worried |
| Anticipatory Emotion 2 (E2): | Nervous |
| Other feelings: | |
| Age: | 36-45 |
| Location: | Australia |
| Gender: | Male |
| Experience: | 6 to 10 years |
| Triads applicable to this narrative | 2c, 3a, 6b |
| Self-coded strength : This story describes a – successful sales call | 1a=46 |

**Verbatim extract**

> *"I had a potentially embarrassing call once when I had to show a client a new technical product. I <u>did not fully know how to use the product so</u> I was <u>very nervous and worried</u> that <u>I would look incompetent</u> to the customer and when in technical sales it is necessary to know what you are talking about. I turned the unit on and let it warm up and then asked the customer what his application was. He brought out a piece of his equipment and we connected it to my equipment. No sooner had we connected it, and the customer immediately started operating my new product. I was amazed at what was happening and I actually learnt a lot from the customer without them ever knowing"*

**Analysis**

In this scenario the salesperson was worried about not having enough product knowledge to answers questions posed by the customer. To an extent there was a lack of confidence on the part of the salesperson which has resulted because of their lack of product knowledge and their concern that they would not appear professional and in the process let their company down. These concerns are evidenced by the following extract from the participant's narrative;

> **"I always want to make sure I present myself and my company in the most professional way."**

Frayne and Geringer (2000) have demonstrated in their research with salespeople that anticipated expectancies influence goal attainment to the extent that it can impact on call effectiveness – in this case concern about not being able to answer all the customers questions has triggered apprehension and nervousness because the salesperson has

anticipated the situation arising and if it did, they perceive it would make them look unprofessional.

Bagozzi, Baumgartner, and Pieters (1998) have said that when a salesperson evaluates future goal success or failure it initiates anticipated emotional responses. Clearly in this call the salesperson has evaluated the upcoming call and has started worrying about what might happen in the call because of their lack of product knowledge. As a consequence of this they have become nervous and apprehensive.

To some extent there is evidence in this particular narrative that the salesperson has a relatively high degree of pride, and if damaged could result in further negative emotions (Lewis 1993). This is evidenced by the salesperson saying in their narrative;

> *"I was very nervous and worried that I would look incompetent."*

It could be argued that all salespeople may have commendable thoughts and a high level of pride, however, the important aspect in this situation is that the thoughts have initiated anticipatory emotions resulting in negative affect which will influence volitions and goal attainment (Carver and Scheier 1998). A proud person can worry excessively if they ruminate over the potential for them to experience a loss of pride (Verbeke, Belschak and Bagozzi 2004). According to Valenas and Szentagotai (2015) people who ruminate frequently, have difficulty getting over some situations and remain fixed on their problems and feelings, in other words they are in a vicious cycle. Clark and Wells (1995) have said that those involved in ruminative thoughts are often influenced by feelings of anxiety, worry, apprehension and general negative persistent thinking related to their self-perceptions.

It is not clear from the narrative just how successful or otherwise the call ultimately was. When asked to what extent the narrative described a successful call (Triad 1a) the salesperson gave a score of 46 which is not indicative of a successful call outcome. The narrative does suggest the salesperson was able to overcome their nervousness and worry because the customer was able to use the product without the salesperson having to demonstrate the unit.

**Table 4-2:  Relevance to the research questions – Learning from the customer**

| 1. What are the primary anticipatory emotions experienced (factual data) | 2. In what ways do they impact on sales effectiveness  (linked to the literature) | 3. What are the key factors perceived as influencing anticipatory emotions (emergent data) |
|---|---|---|
| Nervousness, Apprehension and Concern.<br>Worry | Anticipatory emotions resulting in negative affect can influence volitions and goal attainment (Carver and Scheier 1998).<br><br>Anticipation of goal success or failure influence volitions and goal attainment. (Carver and Scheier 1998).<br><br>People who ruminate frequently have difficulty getting over some situations and remain fixed on their problems and feelings  (Valenas and Szentagotai 2015)<br><br>Self-concept is a driver of self-efficacy which initiates feelings of self-confidence which in turn can impact on volitions and behavior.<br>(Wood and Bandura 1989)<br><br>Those involved in ruminative thoughts are often influenced by feelings of anxiety, apprehension and general negative persistent thinking related to their self-perceptions (Clark and Wells 1995) | Worry leading to anxiety and apprehension<br>Fear of the unknown<br>Perception sensitivity<br>Lack of confidence<br>Rumination |

Table 4.2 summarises the findings of the narrative - 'Learning from the customer' - with relation to the first three research questions, namely:

1.  What are the primary anticipatory emotions experienced by B2B salespeople
2.  In what ways do they perceive these anticipatory emotions impacting on their sales effectiveness  (linked to the literature)
3.  What are the key factors perceived as influencing anticipatory emotions (emergent data)

The primary anticipatory emotions experienced by the salesperson who conducted the call 'Learning from the customer' were – Nervousness, Apprehension Concern and Worry.

The anticipatory emotions of being nervous, apprehensive and concerned resulted in the salesperson worrying, that they might look incompetent in front of the customer. In this call the salesperson rated the success of the call with a score of only 46. The concerns of looking incompetent in front of the customer negatively influenced the salespersons volitions and subsequent goal attainment.

The reason the salesperson experienced the negative anticipatory emotions was because of a lack of confidence which was enhanced by them having ruminative thoughts and worry about looking incompetent.

## 4.2.1.3    Triad 3



3. Most of the salespersons thoughts about the call were....

3b. After the call

3a. Before the call

3c. During the call
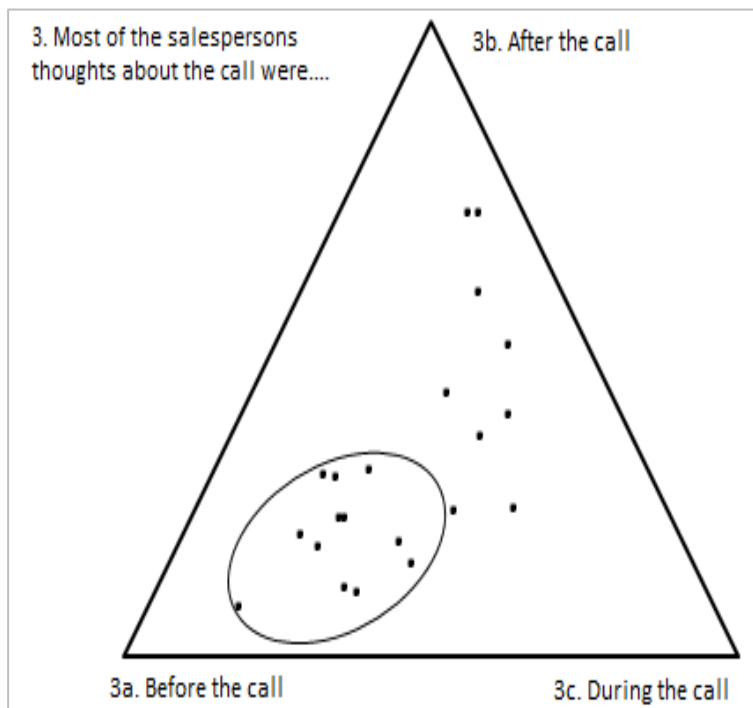
**Triad 3 narrative clustering**

| Narratives associated with Triad 3a (Table 3.10) | Key information and emotions interpreted from the narrative (Appendix 4A) |
|---|---|
| Don't worry unnecessarily | Worry that was unjustified, concern, lack of confidence |
| Don't you worry | Worry, nervous, lacking confidence, anxiety, and impression management |
| Important customer | Nervous, concerned, initial lacking in confidence and anxious, impression management. |
| Journey | Challenging customer, fear, afraid, pride, well prepared, worried, sweating due to important customer, successful outcome |
| Learning from the customer | Lack of product knowledge, nervous, worried, impression management. |
| Lost sales not my fault | Afraid, apprehensive, personal pride, disappointment, worried, nervous, good customer relationship |
| Lots on concern but no issue. | Worry, nervous, anxious, concerned, surprised, determined, unjustified worry |
| Perseverance and tenacity | High risk large account, worry, clear call objectives, apprehensive, nervous, positive, success through perseverance |
| Product failure | Worried, concerned, prepared, successful outcome |
| Save face | Apprehensive, concerned, worry, confident, successful outcome. |
| Success with a grumpy receptionist | Nervous, apprehensive, hopeful, successful outcome |
| The evil emperor | Worried, scared, anxious, fear, distressed, awkward. |
| Too relaxed | Worried, apprehensive, concerned, surprised. |
| Unnecessary fear | Negative thoughts before the call, fear, afraid, uneasy, lacking confidence, successful outcome, unnecessary worry and fear |

**Triad 3 Overview**

The purpose of the question for Triad 3 was to identify if a salesperson had the majority of their thoughts about a call, before, after or during the call. Triad 3a clearly indicates that 66% of salespeople experienced the majority of their thoughts about the call, before going in to the call and meeting with the customer. This clearly suggests anticipatory thoughts would be generated in the salesperson. It is claimed by Brown, Cron, and Slocum (1997) that anticipatory emotions are more intense under higher levels of uncertainty. Salespeople inclined to anticipate events more than others will be more likely to be faced with perceptions of failure if their expectations are perceived to be threatened (Elster and Loewenstein 1992). In the case of this Triad, there was a strong suggestion that salespeople worry about what might happen in a call. When reviewing the narratives in Appendix 4 the findings often found that they had no need to worry because things were not like what they were imagining or anticipating. This is an important finding given the evidence is that 66% of salespeople have negative anticipatory thoughts prior to the call.

The other finding, looking ahead at Triad 4b is that only 38% of the salespeople believed that their thoughts and feelings before the call were in fact justified. This suggests that the salespeople were experiencing negative affect emotions prior to conducting the call and were nervous, anxious, apprehensive and worried about the call but perhaps unnecessarily so. This will be discussed further in the next Triad review.

Also worthy of note is that the results of Triads 1a, 2c and 3a demonstrate consistency and collectively assist in confirming the reliability and trustworthiness of the findings (see Section 3.8).

**Example Narrative: Important Customer**

| | |
|---|---|
| Anticipatory Emotion 1 (E1): | Anxious |
| Anticipatory Emotion 2 (E2): | Concerned |
| Other feelings: | |
| Age: | 46-55 |
| Location: | Australia |
| Gender: | Female |
| Experience: | 6 to 10 years |
| Triads applicable to this narrative | 3a |
| Self-coded strength : This story describes a – common situation | 1b=82 |

**Verbatim extract**

> *"I had a big appointment with an <u>important customer</u> and I was <u>feeling very</u> <u>nervous</u> and didn't want to sound unprofessional, have limited product knowledge where I could not answer all of their questions and find solutions*

*and didn't want to lose them as a customer. Once we met, friendly greetings were made and I acted very professional and treated them with respect. I was able to answer all queries. The sale went ahead."*

**Analysis**

This sales call is very similar to the previous one in that the salesperson had limited product knowledge and was concerned about how they would appear to an important customer. The salesperson was feeling very nervous and did not want to sound unprofessional. The sales person had given a lot of thought to the situation prior to the call, knowing that they could have a problem with their lack of product knowledge and potentially lose them as a customer. At the time leading up to the call the salesperson had already identified the problem and experienced negative anticipatory emotions. Lacking in confidence, feeling nervous and worrying about the pending call, the salesperson had appraised the situation knowing there was little that they could do. Brown, Cron, and Slocum (1997) have shown in research studies that the personal stakes salespeople have in achieving their objectives form anticipatory emotions that are an evaluation of the likelihood of achieving or even failing to achieve the objectives. In this call scenario, the salesperson evaluated the situation and realised there was the potential to lose an important customer because of their lack of knowledge. Because there was little they could do about the situation they became anxious and concerned, mainly because of not knowing what would happen.

Fortunately for the salesperson things went well once they were in the call. As can be seen from the following narrative extract, a second appraisal took place once in the call and the salesperson realised they could work their way around the shortfall of product knowledge;

*"Once we met, friendly greetings were made…"* and
*"I was able to answer all queries."* and
*"The sale went ahead."*

Once the salesperson realised the customer was friendly it gave the salesperson improved confidence which enabled them to conduct the call with less concern.

**Table 4-3:     Relevance to the research questions – Important customer**

| 1. What are the primary anticipatory emotions experienced (factual data) | 2. In what ways do they impact on sales effectiveness (linked to the literature) | 3. What are the key factors perceived as influencing anticipatory emotions (emergent data) |
|---|---|---|
| Anxiety, Concern and Nervousness | High levels of anxiety impact on self-confidence and coping ability which impact on goal achievement (Dickson, Ciesla and Reilly 2012; Valenas and Szentagotai 2014)<br><br>Anticipation of goal success or failure influence volitions and goal attainment. (Carver and Scheier 1998).<br><br>Perceptions of goal failure are linked to impaired cognitive flexibility (Martin and Tesser 1996).<br><br>Self-concept is a driver of self-efficacy which initiates feelings of self-confidence which in turn can impact on volitions and behaviour (Wood and Bandura 1989)<br><br>Certain types of attribution impact the amount of sales effort expended (Sujan 1986)<br><br>Efficacy beliefs significantly impact motivation and performance (Bandura and Locke 2003) | Worry leading to anxiety<br>Fear of the unknown<br>Perception sensitivity<br>Lack of confidence<br>Impaired cognitive flexibility<br>Affective trait characteristics |

Table 4.3 summarises the findings of the narrative - 'Important customer' - with relation to the first three research questions, namely:

1. What are the primary anticipatory emotions experienced by B2B salespeople
2. In what ways do they perceive these anticipatory emotions impacting on their sales effectiveness (linked to the literature)
3. What are the key factors perceived as influencing anticipatory emotions (emergent data)

The primary anticipatory emotions experienced by the salesperson who conducted the call 'Important customer' were – Anxiety, Concern and Nervousness.

The anticipatory emotions of being Anxious, Concerned and Nervous resulted in the salesperson worrying, that they might look unprofessional because of limited product knowledge. The concerns of looking unprofessional in front of the customer negatively influenced the salespersons volitions and subsequent goal attainment. The reason the salesperson experienced the negative anticipatory emotions was because of a perceived lack of product knowledge which impacted negatively on their self-efficacy. On this occasion, once the sales person was in the call their concerns did not eventuate and the salesperson was able to answer all of the customer's questions and the call proceeded successfully.

## 4.2.1.4    Triad 4



4. As it turned out most of the thoughts the salesperson had before the call were…

4b. Justified

4a. Unjustified

4c. Of no significance
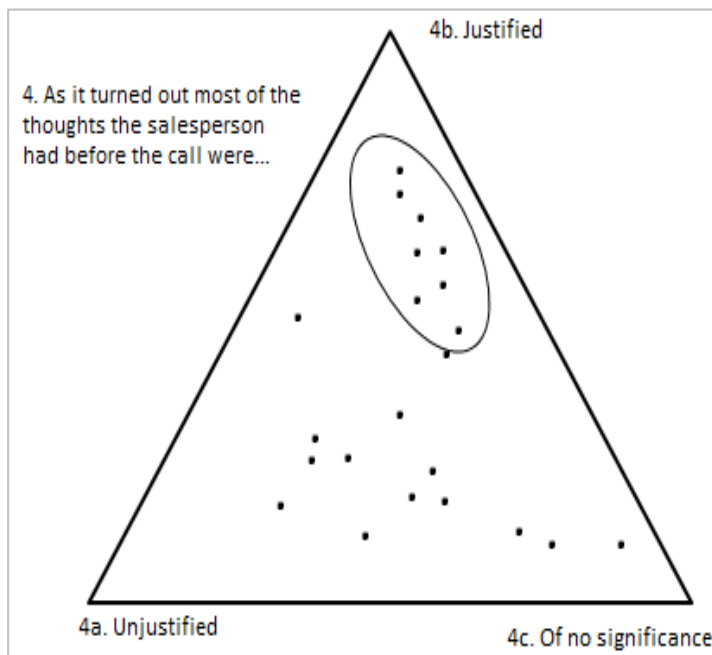
**Triad 4 narrative clustering**

| Narratives associated with Triad 4b (Table 3.10) | Key information and emotions interpreted from the narrative (Appendix 4A) |
|---|---|
| Journey | Challenging customer, fear, afraid, pride, well prepared, worried, sweating due to important customer, successful outcome |
| Lost sales not my fault | Afraid, apprehensive, personal pride, disappointment, worried, nervous, good customer relationship |
| Meeting Turn Around | Worried, anxious, fear, prepared, surprised |
| Product failure | Worried, concerned, prepared, successful outcome |
| Save face | Apprehensive, concerned, worry, confident, successful outcome. |
| Success with a grumpy receptionist | Nervous, apprehensive, hopeful, successful outcome |
| The evil emperor | Worried, scared, anxious, fear, distressed, awkward. |
| Too relaxed | Worried, apprehensive, concerned, surprised. |

**Triad 4 Overview**

The purpose of the question for Triad 4 was to identify if salespeople felt that their pre call thoughts turned out to be justified once attending the call. Interestingly 38% of respondents felt their thoughts were justified. That means that 62% felt otherwise which supports one of the important findings of the study and that is that most of the worry, anxiety, apprehensiveness and concern experienced by salespeople is not justified. This finding has particular relevance when considering  research question 3 because it means that the key factors perceived by salespeople as influencing their anticipatory emotions have turned out to be of no real significance especially when 66% felt the anticipatory thoughts they had

prior to the call were 'not justified'. Clearly what the salesperson perceives as the cause is one thing but what the research found is another. In considering research question 3, it is important that both findings be considered together. In the literature, there is clear evidence that negative anticipatory emotions can impact on call effectiveness (Carver and Scheier 1998; Frayne and Geringer 2000; Tenenbaum et al. 2009). This study has found salespeople do indeed experience negative anticipatory emotions in relation to a pending call and it can impact on call effectiveness but in this research the salespeople were able to counter the initial anticipatory thoughts through a re-appraisal of events once they were in the call.

**Example Narrative: Meeting Turn Around**

| Anticipatory Emotion 1 (E1): | Anxious |
|---|---|
| Anticipatory Emotion 2 (E2): | Fear |
| Other feelings: | |
| Age: | 26-35 |
| Location: | South Africa |
| Gender: | Male |
| Experience: | 11 to 15 years |
| Triads applicable to this narrative | 1a, 4b, 5b |
| Self-coded strength : This story describes a - successful sales call | 1a=91 |

**Verbatim extract:**

> *"The Day that I was on my way to meet the engineers and GM from the SAB Plant everyone reporting to them has warned me that they are very tough people to deal with, I prepared for the meeting and was placed at the head of a 20 seater conference table, to my suprise al three of them are extremly ralaxed and down to earth individuals."*

**Analysis**

In this extract of a call scenario, the participant recorded 'Anxious' and 'Fear' as the two anticipatory emotion felt prior to going in to the call. Based on the initial information provided by others to the salesperson that they were

> *"…very tough people to deal with…"*

the salesperson made a first appraisal of what might happen in the call.

Imagining and anticipating a very difficult time with the customer, feeling anxious and fearful of what might happen, the salesperson experienced negative anticipatory emotions about whether they would be able to deal with the unknown situation and whether they would be able to achieve what they were expecting to achieve in their call. The anxiety and

fear caused the salesperson to worry about how the call would go – will the customer be friendly? Will I achieve my call objectives? will they be amenable to my products and services? Will I be able to get a repeat appointment? These and many other thoughts are what can go through the mind of a salesperson especially when they are expecting the customer to be very tough to deal with.

When the salesperson had first heard from others that the customer was tough to deal with, the salesperson would have thought about a past experience where the customer was difficult and tough to deal with and recalled what happened. The recall of events from memory (Bower 1981; Forgas, Bower and Krantz 1984) would have been the initiator of the anticipatory emotions experienced by the salesperson. Important events, especially when a salesperson experiences a difficult sales call, are stored in memory for later use and are recalled when similar circumstances are perceived to be presenting themselves. The recall of events from the past help to inform the individual of potential action strategies, in doing so the individual cognitively constructs feelings associated with what happened in the past which help shape their anticipatory emotions.

In this particular sales narrative there is evidence that once the salesperson met with the customer, they were *surprised* that they were

*"extremely relaxed and down to earth individuals……"*

What this indicates is a second appraisal or re-appraisal of the call once the salesperson was in the call.

The re-appraisal resulted in them being surprised because their anticipations and expectations were that the customer would be very difficult and it turned out that they were not, and in fact, they were relaxed and down to earth individuals. In this instance, the worry, anxiety and fear was created by negative effects of fear and anxiety caused by what they had been told by others before the call and what they had recalled form memory about another sales call with a different customer. In this sales experience the anticipatory emotions were unjustified and the salesperson scored the call 91 and very successful.

**Table 4-4:** **Relevance to the research questions - Meeting Turn Around**

| 1. What are the primary anticipatory emotions experienced (factual data) | 2. In what ways do they impact on sales effectiveness (linked to the literature) | 3. What are the key factors perceived as influencing anticipatory emotions (emergent data) |
|---|---|---|
| Anxiety and Fear | Anticipation of goal success or failure influence volitions and goal attainment. (Carver and Scheier 1998).<br><br>Perceptions of goal failure are linked to impaired cognitive flexibility (Martin and Tesser 1996).<br><br>High levels of anxiety impact on self-confidence and coping ability which impact on goal achievement (Dickson, Ciesla and Reilly 2012; Valenas and Szentagotai 2014). | Worry leading to anxiety<br>Fear of the unknown<br>Perception sensitivity<br>Lack of confidence<br>Impaired cognitive flexibility<br>Affective trait characteristics |

Table 4.4 summarises the findings of the narrative - 'Meeting turn around' - with relation to the first three research questions, namely:

1. What are the primary anticipatory emotions experienced by B2B salespeople
2. In what ways do they perceive these anticipatory emotions impacting on their sales effectiveness (linked to the literature)
3. What are the key factors perceived as influencing anticipatory emotions (emergent data)

The primary anticipatory emotions experienced by the salesperson who conducted the call 'Meeting turn around' were – anxiety and fear.

The anticipatory emotions of anxiety and being fearful can impact on sales effectiveness by negatively affecting self-esteem and motivation. In addition the salesperson may be less able to adopt flexible coping strategies to deal with the situation presented in the call. In this particular call, the salesperson re appraised the situation when meeting with the customer and even though they experienced negative anticipatory emotions they were able to successfully complete the call.

The reason the salesperson experienced the negative anticipatory emotions was because of anxiety brought about by what others had told the salesperson. The anxiety impacted on their self-confidence. On this occasion the salesperson re-evaluated the call once they met with the customer and realised the customer was easy going and relaxed and nothing like what they had been told.

## 4.2.1.5 Triad 5
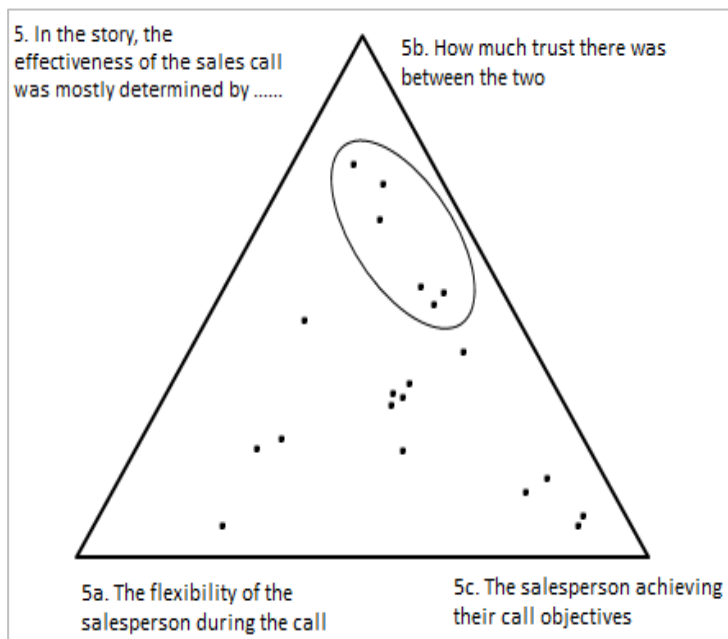


**Triad 5 narrative clustering**

| Narratives associated with Triad 5b (Table 3.10) | Key information and emotions interpreted from the narrative (Appendix 4A) |
|---|---|
| Customer turned friend | Nervous, anxious, pleased, surprised |
| Lost sales not my fault | Afraid, apprehensive, personal pride, disappointment, worried, nervous, good customer relationship |
| Meeting clients | Nervous, apprehensive, concerned, proud, trust, impression management |
| Meeting Turn Around | Worried, anxious, fear, prepared, surprised. |
| Save face | Apprehensive, concerned, worry, confident, successful outcome. |
| Nervous day at corporate client | Nervous, lacking confidence, worrying, anxious, concerned, ruminating and unnecessary worry as it turns out, successful outcome |
| Too relaxed | Worried, apprehensive, concerned, surprised. |

**Triad 5 Overview**

Triad 5a, 5b and 5c asked participants what they believed the effectiveness of their sales call was mostly determined by. The participants were provided with the options of 'salesperson flexibility during the call', 'trust between the salesperson and the customer' and 'the salesperson achieving their call objectives'. The three options available in Triad 5 were all equally important choices and supported by the sales literature (Guenzi, Baldauf and Panagopoulos 2014; Jiang et al. 2016). The results for Triad 5a, 5b and 5c for both positive and negative affect narratives are relatively equally balanced between the three options,

suggesting that participants considered flexibility, trust and call objectives to be of similar importance when considering call effectiveness. As a result of this, not a great deal of relationship can be established with respect to the impact of anticipatory emotions on sales effectiveness for this particular group of Triad choices.

**Example Narrative: Nervous day at corporate client**

| Anticipatory Emotion 1 (E1): | Anxious |
|---|---|
| Anticipatory Emotion 2 (E2): | Concerned |
| Other feelings: | |
| Age: | 26-35 |
| Location: | South Africa |
| Gender: | Male |
| Experience: | 11 to 15 years |
| Triads applicable to this narrative | 5b |
| Self-coded strength : This story describes a – successful sales call | 1a=43 |

**Verbatim extract**

> "I am now working for xxxxxxx for 3 months. It is a new industry with new products and new chalanges but with the same function, SALES. I have been in the sales industry for a long time and been in almost every sector of sales you can think of, Retail, Direct selling, account management, Technical sales and services and now Territory Manager. Although I had the skills and tools to do my job well I was <u>still very nevous about my incounter with this huge corporate client</u> because I still had very <u>little knowlege</u> about what presicely I am selling and what the structures are of the company I am currently working for. <u>What if I say the wrong thing? What if I over promice and under deliver? What if he asks something I am supposed to know and don't know what to say? But when I sat in front of the client he was actualy very helpful</u> and was <u>very open and was more than happy to share</u> his work experiance, needs, wants, threats, and opportunities with me. I walked out there knowing it was a <u>sucessful meeting</u> and got a RFQ the following week."

**Analysis**

To be successful in sales it is necessary for salespeople to be able to think positively and to resist anticipatory thoughts about failure (Dixon and Schertzer 2005). Wood and Bandura (1989) have identified that a person's self-concept is a driver of self-efficacy which initiates feelings of self-confidence in their abilities to respond to changing demands which in turn can impact on volitions and behaviour. Gist (1987) articulates the view that individuals with higher self-efficacy may cope better because the failure represents a challenge to be overcome, supporting this view is Barling and Beattie (1983) who have established a positive relationship between self-efficacy and performance.

In this scenario the salesperson had a lot of sales experience but was in a new job, selling products they were not familiar with and they were calling on a large and important corporate account. Being concerned and having feelings of anxiety because of their perceived lack of confidence, made the salesperson worry about what the customer would think of them and  what would happen if they did not know the answer to a question or if they gave an incorrect answer. Anticipatory negative affect in the form of feelings of anxiety, nervousness and concern established a sense of helplessness (Lewin and Sager 2007) which made them look for reasons for the perceived failure. The salesperson attributed their perceived failure to a combination of internal and external factors;

*"I still had very little knowledge…"*
*"What if I say the wrong thing?"*
*"What if I over promise and under deliver?"*
*"What if he asks something I am supposed to know and don't know what to say?"*

Sujan (1986) has made the claim that the type of attribution a salesperson makes can affect the amount of sales effort expended. Research by Mallin and Mayo (2006) found that low self-efficacy salespeople made internal attributions to explain for sales failure. In this narrative there is a substantial number of attributions the salesperson has made, both internal and external, which can be interpreted as them already accepting failure and them having explanations as to why they failed. In this case it could be inferred that the salesperson was not prepared to make a greater sales effort because they had already resigned themselves to perceived failure.

Interestingly as has been the case in many of the sales narratives, the salesperson re-appraised the situation once they were in the call. This is evidenced by the statements;

*"But when I sat in front of the client he was actually very helpful and was very open and was more than happy to share his work experience, needs, wants, threats, and opportunities with me."*
*"I walked out there knowing it was a successful meeting and got a RFQ the following week."*

The narrative identifies the sales call as being successful and confirms that they received a request for a quote the following week. Interestingly, the coding provided by the salesperson for Triad 1a was that the call was not that successful with a coding of 43. The discrepancy cannot be easily explained, however, the narrative is believed because it was the first thing recorded in the survey and the salesperson may not have fully understood how the Triad device functioned.

**Table 4-5:     Relevance to the research questions - Nervous day at corporate client**

| 1. What are the primary anticipatory emotions experienced (factual data) | 2. In what ways do they impact on sales effectiveness (linked to the literature) | 3. What are the key factors perceived as influencing anticipatory emotions (emergent data) |
|---|---|---|
| Anxiety, Concern and Nervousness | High levels of anxiety impact on self-confidence and coping ability which impact on goal achievement (Dickson, Ciesla and Reilly 2012; Valenas and Szentagotai 2014)<br><br>Anticipation of goal success or failure influence volitions and goal attainment. (Carver and Scheier 1998).<br><br>Perceptions of goal failure are linked to impaired cognitive flexibility (Martin and Tesser 1996).<br><br>Self-concept is a driver of self-efficacy which initiates feelings of self-confidence which in turn can impact on volitions and behaviour<br>(Wood and Bandura 1989)<br><br>Certain types of attribution impact the amount of sales effort expended (Sujan 1986)<br><br>Efficacy beliefs significantly impact motivation and performance (Bandura and Locke 2003) | Worry leading to anxiety<br>Fear of the unknown<br>Perception sensitivity<br>Lack of confidence<br>Impaired cognitive flexibility<br>Affective trait characteristics |

Table 4.5 summarises the findings of the narrative - 'Nervous day at corporate client' - with relation to the first three research questions, namely:

1.  What are the primary anticipatory emotions experienced by B2B salespeople
2.  In what ways do they perceive these anticipatory emotions impacting on their sales effectiveness  (linked to the literature)
3.  What are the key factors perceived as influencing anticipatory emotions (emergent data)

The primary anticipatory emotions experienced by the salesperson who conducted the call 'Nervous day at corporate client' were – Anxiety, Concern and Nervousness. The anticipatory emotions of being Anxious, Concerned and Nervous resulted in the salesperson worrying, because they were new to the job and had little product knowledge. They were worried because they feared they might say something wrong, or the customer might ask a question that they couldn't answer.

The concerns of possibly not having answers to customer questions negatively influenced the salespersons volitions and subsequent goal attainment. The reason the salesperson experienced the negative anticipatory emotions was because of a perceived lack of knowledge about their company or products which impacted negatively on their perceived self-efficacy. On this occasion, once the sales person was in the call their concerns did not eventuate and the call proceeded successfully.

## 4.2.1.6    Triad 6



6. After the sales call your thoughts were that....

6b. The customer had been very co-operative

6a. The customer was somewhat difficult

6c. The call went as you expected
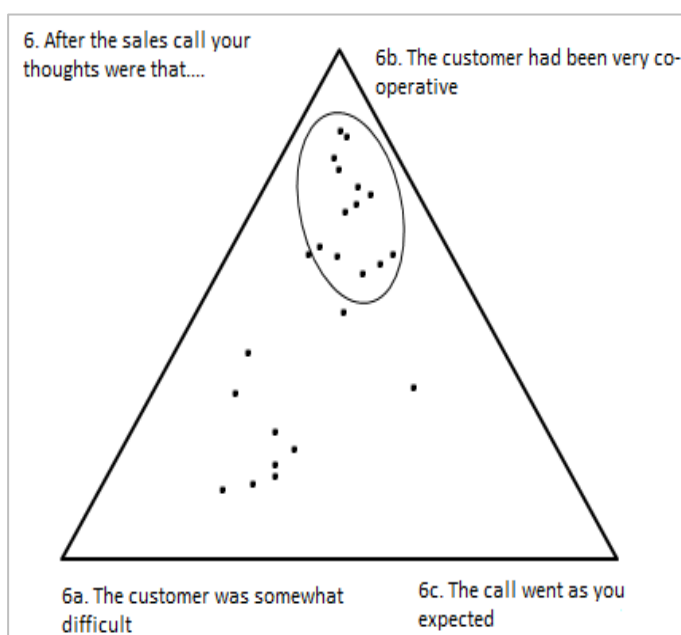
**Triad 6 narrative clustering**

| Narratives associated with Triad 6b (Table 3.10) | Key information and emotions interpreted from the narrative (Appendix 4A) |
|---|---|
| Customer turned friend | Nervous, anxious, pleased, surprised |
| Don't worry unnecessarily | Worry that was unjustified, concern, lack of confidence. |
| Don't you worry | Worry, nervous, lacking confidence, anxiety, and impression management |
| Healthcare | Nervous, initial lacking in confidence and anxious. Confidence improved as call progressed |
| Learning from the customer | Lack of product knowledge, nervous, worried, impression management |
| Lots on concern but no issue. | Worry, nervous, anxious, concerned, surprised, determined, unjustified worry. |
| Meeting clients | Nervous, apprehensive, concerned, proud, trust, impression management |
| Nerves and being able to joke | Nervous, apprehensive, concerned, proud, trust, impression management |
| Perseverance and tenacity | High risk large account, worry, clear call objectives, apprehensive, nervous, positive, success through perseverance |
| Product failure | Worried, concerned, prepared, successful outcome |
| Success with a grumpy receptionist | Nervous, apprehensive, hopeful, successful outcome |
| Unnecessary fear | Negative thoughts before the call, fear, afraid, uneasy, lacking confidence, successful outcome, unnecessary worry and fear. |
| Whatever it takes | Stressed, worried, anxious |

**Triad 6 Overview**

Triad 6b resulted in 62% of salespeople thinking that the customer had been very co-operative once they had left the call. This result is interesting given that the majority of salespeople experienced negative emotions and were apprehensive and worried about how the call would go. The result suggests that the majority of salespeople, who were worried, apprehensive and anxious, may have been unnecessarily so if after the call they felt the customer had been very co-operative. It also suggests as the research found that the salespeople most likely re-appraised the situation once in the call and found the customer was after all, easy-going and co-operative. This is supported by a number of statements found in the narratives in Appendix 4A.

**Example Narrative: Meeting Clients**

| | |
|---|---|
| Anticipatory Emotion 1 (E1): | Nervous |
| Anticipatory Emotion 2 (E2): | Apprehensive |
| Other feelings: | Trusting, Proud |
| Age: | 36-45 |
| Location: | Australia |
| Gender: | Male |
| Experience: | 6 to 10 years |
| Triads applicable to this narrative | 5b, 6b |
| Self-coded strength : This story describes a – common situation | 1b=62 |

**Verbatim extract**

> *"slightly nervous and apprehensive. Mainly concerned I would have enough information for any unprepared questions. Meeting important clients can always be nerving times. I always want to make sure I present myself, and my company in the most professional way. The meeting went well. More informal and friendly in the dialogue."*

**Analysis**

In this scenario the salesperson was worried about not being able to answers questions posed by the customer or not having enough information to be able to answer questions. To an extent there is a lack of confidence on the part of this salesperson because they are concerned they may not have enough knowledge or information for unexpected questions.

Bagozzi, Baumgartner, and Pieters (1998) state that when a salesperson evaluates future goal success or failure it initiates anticipated emotional responses. In this call the emotional responses experienced by the salesperson were apprehension and nervousness.

Cognitive theory (Bandura 1986; Lazarus, Averill and Opton 1970) suggests that emotions are felt in circumstances of significance to the person's well-being. In this scenario the

salespersons well-being is related to them potentially not looking competent or appearing to be unprofessional, which to this salesperson is of great importance to them. This is evidenced by the salesperson saying

*"I always want to make sure I present myself, and my company in the most professional way."*

The important factor in this scenario is that the salesperson's thoughts have initiated anticipatory emotions resulting in negative affect, namely apprehension and nervousness which can influence volitions and goal attainment (Carver and Scheier 1998). Frayne and Geringer (2000) have demonstrated in their research with salespeople that anticipated expectancies influence goal attainment – in these cases concern about not being able to answer all the customers questions trigger apprehension and nervousness because the salesperson expects the situation to arise and if it does, they will not look professional. According to the research be Frayne and Geringer (2000) the anticipated expectancies of the salesperson will impact on the achievement of their goals thus impacting on their call effectiveness.

The statement in the narrative;

*"meeting important clients can always be nerving times."*

suggests that the salesperson experiences these emotions frequently. When asked the question in Triad 1, the participant confirmed this by providing a high score for Triad 1b saying that it is a common situation. The fact that it was mentioned in the scenario also suggests an element of rumination by the participant. According to Valenas and Szentagotai (2015) people who ruminate frequently, have difficulty getting over some situations and remain fixed on their problems and feelings, in other words they are in a vicious cycle. Clark and Wells (1995) have said that those involved in ruminative thoughts are often influenced by feelings of anxiety, apprehension and general negative persistent thinking related to their self-perceptions. This is indeed the case in this scenario because the salesperson was concerned about how they would look to the customer if they could not answer all their questions. There is evidence in the narrative that the salesperson appraised the situation again once they were in the call:

*"more informal and friendly in the dialogue."*

this statement indicates that once in the call, the salesperson found the customer to be friendly and more informal than they expected. The newly discovered information about the customer is the second appraisal by the salesperson and one which has made the salesperson

feel more at ease and less threatened which in turn has made the salesperson more confident and able to cope with the situation. As the salesperson said in their narrative;

*"the meeting went well…"*

When the salesperson said 'the meeting went well' it really means that the outcome during the call made them feel at ease and better able to deal with the situation. It does not suggest the call was successful; in fact the participant scored Triad 1a only 25, indicating the call was not successful. These finding suggest that the salesperson in this call lacks confidence and commonly has these feelings.

**Table 4-6:    Relevance to the research questions - Meeting clients**

| 1. What are the primary anticipatory emotions experienced (factual data) | 2. In what ways do they impact on sales effectiveness (linked to the literature) | 3. What are the key factors perceived as influencing anticipatory emotions (emergent data) |
|---|---|---|
| Nervousness, Apprehension and Concern. Worry | Anticipatory emotions resulting in negative affect can influence volitions and goal attainment (Carver and Scheier 1998). Anticipation of goal success or failure influence volitions and goal attainment. (Carver and Scheier 1998). People who ruminate frequently have difficulty getting over some situations and remain fixed on their problems and feelings  (Valenas and Szentagotai 2015) Self-concept is a driver of self-efficacy which initiates feelings of self-confidence which in turn can impact on volitions and behavior. (Wood and Bandura 1989) Those involved in ruminative thoughts are often influenced by feelings of anxiety, apprehension and general negative persistent thinking related to their self-perceptions (Clark and Wells 1995) | Worry leading to anxiety and apprehension Fear of the unknown Perception sensitivity Lack of confidence Rumination |

Table 4.6 summarises the findings of the narrative - 'Meeting clients' - with relation to the first three research questions, namely:

1.  What are the primary anticipatory emotions experienced by B2B salespeople
2.  In what ways do they perceive these anticipatory emotions impacting on their sales effectiveness (linked to the literature)
3.  What are the key factors perceived as influencing anticipatory emotions (emergent data)

The primary anticipatory emotions experienced by the salesperson who conducted the call 'Meeting clients' were – nervousness, apprehension concern and worry.

The anticipatory emotions of being nervous, apprehensive and concerned resulted in the salesperson worrying and ruminating. Persistent negative thinking resulting from ruminative thoughts can negatively impact self-confidence.

Once the salesperson commenced the call, they realised the customer was informal and friendly to talk with.

**Table 4-7:    Summary of Contributions to the Research Questions (negative emotions)**

| No. | Research question | Finding |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | What are the primary anticipatory emotions experienced by B2B salespeople? | Anxious, nervous, apprehensive, worried, fear, afraid and concerned. |
| 2 | In what ways do anticipatory emotions impact on their sales effectiveness? | This question was not directly answered. However, the findings relate to the felt emotion and what happened once they were in the call. The findings are that the salespeople did not see them impacting on their call because once in the call the majority realized their pre call concerns were not founded. |
| 3 | What are the key factors perceived as influencing anticipatory emotions? | The narratives identified many things that worry salespeople. They include lack of product knowledge, lack of confidence, looking incompetent, loss of business or the account, product or supplier concerns, |
| 4 | What insights might complexity theory provide with regards to anticipatory emotions? | A discussion concerning complexity theory will be done separately by applying the findings to the components of CAS. |

Table 4.7 summarises the findings from the foregoing six narratives. The narratives chosen are intended to be representative of the sales experiences of B2B salespeople who experienced negative anticipatory emotions prior to their call. As can be seen from the Table, the negative affect anticipatory emotions experienced are all of similar construct and are later referred to as general negative affect.

Interestingly, even though the general negative affect anticipatory emotions were experienced, they did not appear to impact on sales effectiveness to any extent and the reason for that is because the salespeople re appraised the call, once the call commenced and found that their anticipatory feelings were not justified once they were in the call.

The factors impacting on the formation of anticipatory emotions experienced by B2B salespeople are related to concerns of inadequacy with relation to knowledge and lack of confidence in being able to answer customer questions.

## 4.3 Review and Findings for the Positive Affect Narratives

The below six Triads are the positive affect Triads which contain the narratives for discussion in this section. Table 3.13 in Chapter 3, list the actual narratives by title and their corresponding data point strengths. As previously discussed in Chapter 3, not all filters were used for this study. Only those filters which directly contributed to answering the research objective and questions were used in this part of the study.
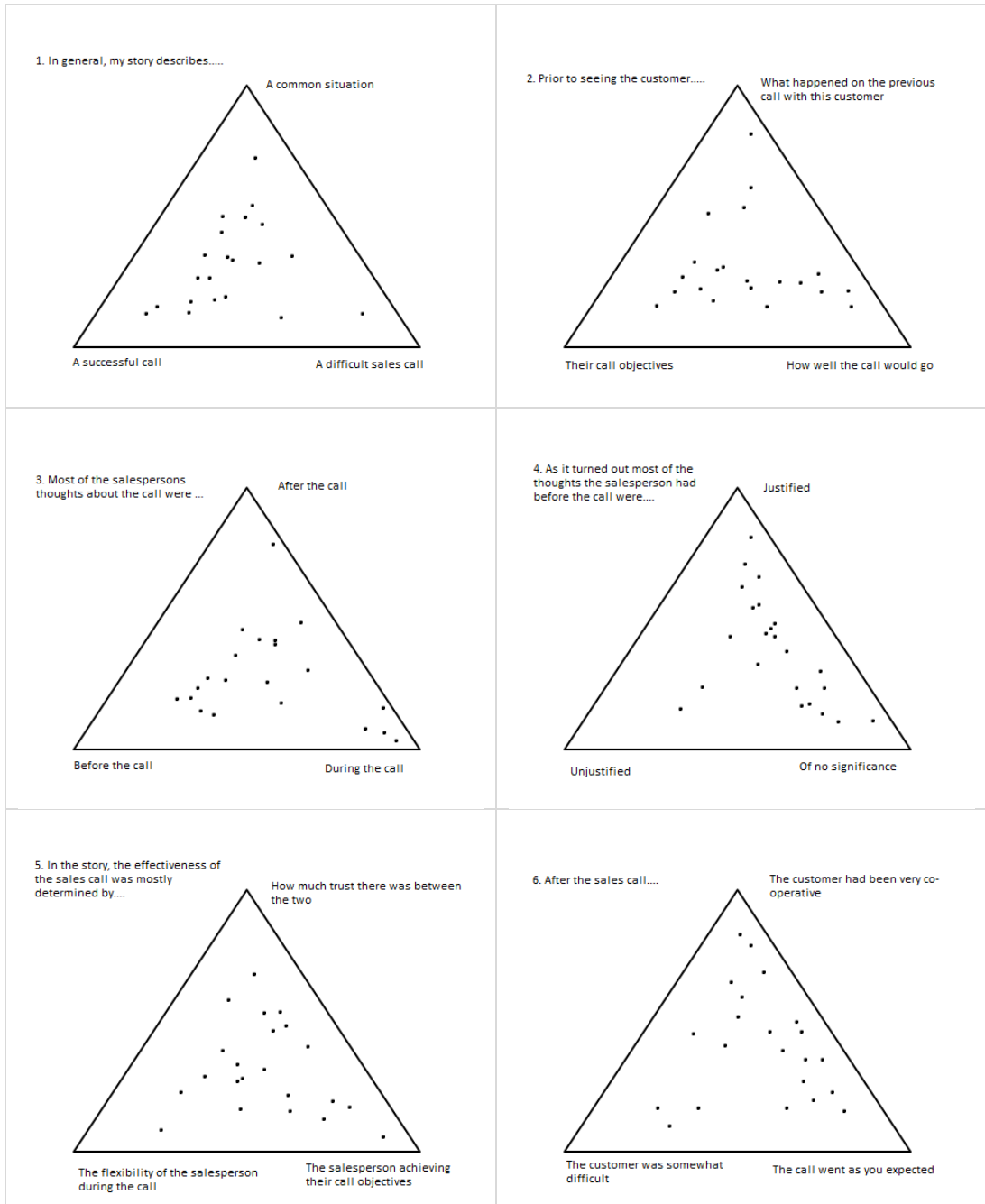
## 4.3.1   Observations and Findings of Positive Affect Triads

## 4.3.1.1   Triad 1
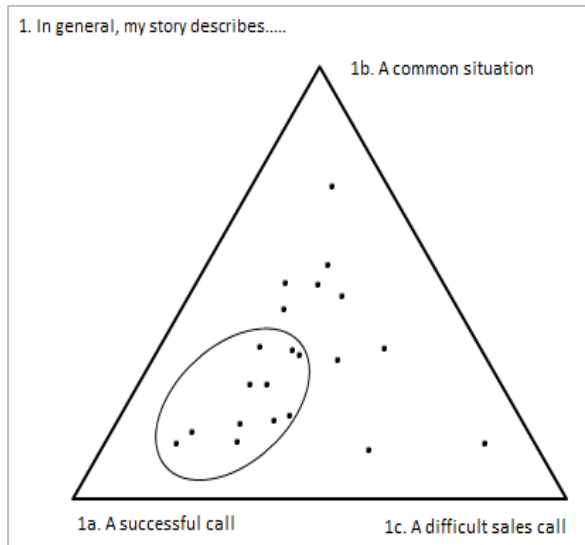


**Triad 1 narrative clustering**

| Narratives associated with Triad 1a (Table 3.14, Ch3) | Key information and emotions interpreted from the narrative (Appendix 4B) |
|---|---|
| Arcelor Mittal | Excited, positive, optimistic, tenacious |
| Be Honest | Felt fine, confident, positive, sympathetic, listened, did their best, successful outcome |
| Coffee lover | Relationship development, optimistic, hopeful, confident, successful outcome |
| First meeting | Prepared, positive, self-assured, clear call outcomes |
| Fishing trip secures order | Optimistic, confident, excited, clear call objectives, relationship was good, successful outcome |
| Focusing on the game | Emotion regulation, determined, optimistic, self-assured, confident, proud, positive appearance, good customer relations. Focus on call objectives and relationship with customer |
| New service | Excited, confident, optimistic, bridge to business, successful outcome |
| Out for dinner to get to see the customer | Strategic, tenacious, focused, optimistic, confident, successful outcome |
| Planning is everything | Important customer, well prepared, confident, certain, optimistic. |
| Sales Consultant | Tenacious, excited, optimistic, hopeful, certain, confident, unsure, curious |
| Selling to DJs | Confident, hopeful, nervous, not so intimidated, positive, successful outcome and good customer relationship. |
| Together we succeed | Customer relationship, positive, determined, difficult market, good deal, working closely and regular contact |

**Triad 1 Overview**

Triad 1a resulted in 57% of participants describing their sales call as successful. Participants experienced positive emotions including confidence, optimism, as well as being positive, excited, determined and hopeful. These results contrast notably with the results from the salespeople who reported experiencing negative emotions.

**Example Narrative: Planning is everything**

| | |
|---|---|
| Anticipatory Emotion 1 (E1): | Confident |
| Anticipatory Emotion 2 (E2): | Optimistic |
| Other feelings: | |
| Age: | 26-35 |
| Location: | Austria |
| Gender: | Female |
| Experience: | 1 to 5 years |
| Triads applicable to this narrative | 1a |
| Self-coded strength : This story describes a – successful sales call | 1a=67 |

**Verbatim extract:**

> *"Two days ago I have had an appointment with a <u>very important customer,</u> for this meeting it took <u>1 month preparation</u> for presentation and other arrangements to make sure we get him/her on board. As <u>everything was planned in professional manner</u> <u>I was confident and certain that I will close the deal."</u>*

**Analysis**

A salesperson's self- confidence is a belief that they can and will succeed in a sales call (Lewin and Sager 2010). In this sales call the salesperson invested significant time in planning for the call. The degree of planning was related to the customer being a very important customer.

Confidence and optimism are characteristics of self-efficacy and are strongly related with salesperson performance (Bandura and Adams 1977; Brief and Aldag 1981; Luthans, Zhu and Avolio 2006; Wang and Netemeyer 2002). The salesperson in this call scenario was very confident they would be successful and this is evidenced by the statement;

**"I was confident and certain that I will close the deal."**

Empirical research conducted by Krishnan, Netemeyer, and Boles (2002) found a direct positive link between the amount of effort put in by a salesperson and sales performance.

This finding is supported by VandeWalle et al. (1999) and Brown and Peterson (1994) who believe that effort is a direct antecedent of performance. In this narrative, the salesperson placed great effort in preparing for the call and was very confident in their ability to close the deal. Expectations of succeeding are related to past successful experiences and motivate the salesperson to succeed in the future (Bandura 1997).

In this call the salesperson identified the customer as very important. They spent one month preparing and making sure everything was professionally done prior to the visit. Because the salesperson had done all the work beforehand to maximise the success of the call, they felt confident everything would go well and they would successfully close the deal. Being optimistic and confident increased the volitional thoughts of success and their conviction about their abilities to close the deal (Stajkovic and Luthans 1998).

For Triad1a, the salesperson scored 67 indicating a successful call.

**Table 4-8:     Relevance to the research questions — Planning is everything**

| 1. What are the primary anticipatory emotions experienced  (factual data) | 2. In what ways do they impact on sales effectiveness  (linked to the literature) | 3. What are the key factors perceived as influencing anticipatory emotions (emergent data) |
|---|---|---|
| Confident<br>Optimistic | Confidence and optimism are characteristics of self-efficacy and are strongly related with salesperson performance (Bandura and Adams 1977; Brief and Aldag 1981; Luthans, Zhu and Avolio 2006; Wang and Netemeyer 2002)<br><br>There is a direct positive link between the amount of effort put in by a salesperson and sales performance (Krishnan, Netemeyer and Boles 2002)<br><br>Optimism and confidence increase volitional thoughts of success and conviction about abilities to close a deal (Stajkovic and Luthans 1998). | Self-efficacy, the extent of pre-call planning |

Table 4.8 summarises the findings of the narrative - 'Planning is everything' - with relation to the first three research questions, namely:

1.    What are the primary anticipatory emotions experienced by B2B salespeople

2. In what ways do they perceive these anticipatory emotions impacting on their sales effectiveness  (linked to the literature)
3. What are the key factors perceived as influencing anticipatory emotions (emergent data)

The primary anticipatory emotions experienced by the salesperson who conducted the call 'Planning is everything' were feelings of confidence and optimism.

The anticipatory emotions of being confident and optimistic increased the salespersons volitional thoughts of success.  They also contributed to the conviction to succeed in the call. In this particular call, the participant scored the call as successful with a rating of 67.

## 4.3.1.2    Triad 2
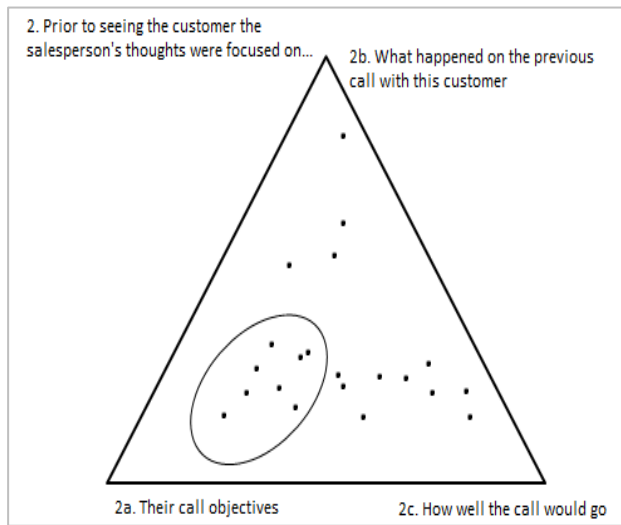


**Triad 2 narrative clustering**

| Narratives associated with Triad 2a (Table 3.14, Ch3) | Key information and emotions interpreted from the narrative (Appendix 4B) |
|---|---|
| Arcelor Mittal | Excited, positive, optimistic, tenacious |
| Focusing on the game | Emotion regulation, determined, optimistic, self-assured, confident, proud, positive appearance, good customer relations. Focus on call objectives and relationship with customer |
| Little things can build the relationship | Determined, confident, optimistic, good relationships, strategic, successful outcome |
| My B to B Sales Style | relaxed, confident, optimistic, self-assured, comfortable, prepared, listen, ask questions, build rapport, flexibility, adaptability, relationship first. |
| Out for dinner to get to see the customer | Strategic, tenacious, focused, optimistic, confident, successful outcome |
| Pitching a new idea to a large retailer | Excited, positive, confident, organised and prepared, innovative product successful outcome |
| Sign on the dotted line please | Competitive market, informed customer, committed, determined, self-assured, successful outcome |
| The A.D.D. VP | Prior knowledge of customer, invigorated, excited, challenge, confident, positive, successful outcome |
| Together we succeed | Customer relationship, positive, determined, difficult market, good deal, working closely and regular contact |

**Triad 2 Overview**

Triad 2a was the highest self-coded Triad filter with 41% of salespeople thinking about their call objectives prior to the call. The alternative options were thinking about 'what happened on the previous call' with 14% and 'how well the call would go' with 19%. These results seem consistent with positive emotions suggesting that the majority of salespeople were relatively 'relaxed and in a positive mind as they were focused on the call objectives and

worrying less about how the call would go and what happened on the previous call with the customer. There may be a link with Triad 1a because respondents considered the majority of calls as being successful and the majority were also thinking about their call objectives prior to the call. In the analysis of the Triads consisting of negative affect, there was no real emphasis on call objectives. This finding may have relevance to the importance of call objectives.

**Example Narrative: The ADD VP**

| Anticipatory Emotion 1 (E1): | Confident |
|---|---|
| Anticipatory Emotion 2 (E2): | Positive |
| Other feelings: | Invigorated |
| Age: | 18-25 |
| Location: | United States of America |
| Gender: | Female |
| Experience: | 6 to 10 years |
| Triads applicable to this narrative | 2a, 4b, 5a |
| Self-coded strength : This story describes a – common situation | 1b=84 |

**Verbatim extract:**

> *"We had a meeting with a VP of a large fitness branch and had heard that the leader was touch and ADD prone and would not listen for long. I was feeling invigorated and excited to share the value we were bringing to the table for his company. The meeting went amazingly. We were able to align and redirect him and engage him by feeding into his significance needs."*

**Analysis**

The salesperson in this call was told the customer had Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD) and would present some challenges because their span of attention was short. The salesperson felt enthused, and excited at the challenge and the opportunity it provided for them to explain their value statement to the customer. The salesperson was both confident and positive before going to the call.

In this particular case it may be that the salesperson had some past experience with ADD customers and felt confident they knew what to do (Mallin and Mayo 2006). Experiencing general positive affect before going in to the call, enabled the salesperson to be more creative and to be more flexible in their approach and to employ novel approaches to employ when selling to the customer (Fredrickson 1998).

There is a significant amount of research that supports the view that positive emotions and moods assist in helpfulness (Aderman 1972; Cunningham, Steinberg and Grev 1980; Isen, Clark and Schwartz 1976; Isen and Levin 1972; Rosenhan, Salovey and Hargis 1981) and in

creating positive perceptions of situations (Forgas, Bower and Krantz 1984). In this scenario it is likely that being in a positive affective state enhanced the salespersons desire to be helpful and to accommodate the special needs of the customer, particularly as the customer was ADD. If the salesperson was being more flexible because of the general positive affect they were experiencing it is likely that they were doing more than would normally be the case to help the customer fulfil their needs. There is evidence in the narrative that the salesperson had a successful call and the customers' needs were satisfied.

*"The meeting went amazingly. We were able to align and redirect him and engage him by feeding into his significance needs…"*

The choice of words used in the narrative, provide evidence of enthusiasm and self-efficacy, for example; the use of the word 'amazingly' and feeling 'invigorated and excited' suggest a general feeling of positivity in the salesperson. According to Bandura (1986), individuals who possess a high sense of self-efficacy are more likely to respond to events in an energising and invigorating way which in turn is likely to influence their goal achievement. Research conducted by Lewin and Sager (2010) have highlighted the importance of self-efficacy in sales environments because they are usually comprised of many adverse challenges. The salesperson challenge in this call was the customer being ADD as well as being a tough customer to deal with. The salesperson knowing this acknowledged the challenge and went in to the call prepared for what might eventuate. It seems the salesperson may thrive on challenges because they coded the call (Triad 1b) a common situation

Table 4-9:     Relevance to the research questions – The A. D. D. VP

| 1. What are the primary anticipatory emotions experienced (factual data) | 2. In what ways do they impact on sales effectiveness  (linked to the literature) | 3. What are the key factors perceived as influencing anticipatory emotions (emergent data) |
|---|---|---|
| Confidence and Positivity Excitement | General positivity enables the salesperson to be more creative and to be more flexible during the call (Fredrickson 1998). Positive emotions assist in helpfulness (Aderman 1972; Cunningham, Steinberg and Grev 1980; Isen, Clark and Schwartz 1976; Isen and Levin 1972; Rosenhan, Salovey and Hargis 1981) Positive emotions create positive perceptions of situations (Forgas, Bower and Krantz 1984) | Perceptions of needing to help Challenges and  opportunities Salesperson flexibility |

Table 4.9 summarises the findings of the narrative - 'The A. D. D. VP' - with relation to the first three research questions, namely:

1. What are the primary anticipatory emotions experienced by B2B salespeople
2. In what ways do they perceive these anticipatory emotions impacting on their sales effectiveness  (linked to the literature)
3. What are the key factors perceived as influencing anticipatory emotions (emergent data)

The primary anticipatory emotions experienced by the salesperson who conducted the call 'The A. D. D. VP' were – confidence, positivity and excitement.

The anticipatory emotions of being confident, positive and excited resulted in the salesperson having an upbeat attitude which resulted in the salesperson being more flexible and having thoughts of succeeding in the call.

In this call the salesperson said they felt invigorated and excited. The customer was A.D.D. and most likely represented a challenge to the salesperson which resulted in feelings of positivity and excitement.

## 4.3.1.3    Triad 3
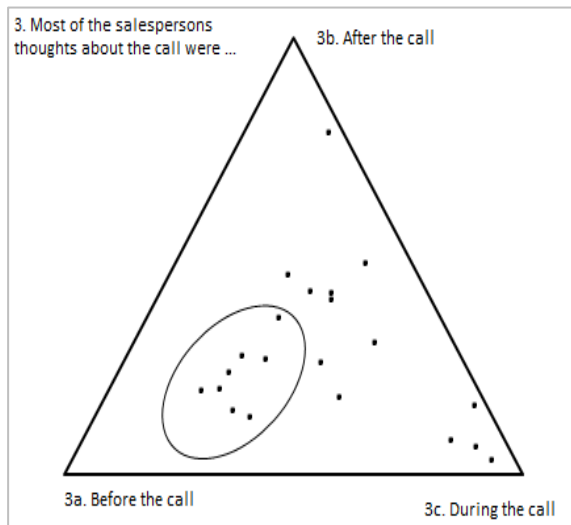


**Triad 3 narrative clustering**

| Narratives associated with Triad 3a (Table 3.14, Ch3) | Key information and emotions interpreted from the narrative (Appendix 4B) |
|---|---|
| Coffee lover | Relationship development, optimistic, hopeful, confident, successful outcome |
| First contact | Excited, positive, optimistic, hopeful, happy |
| Fishing trip secures order | Optimistic, confident, excited, clear call objectives, relationship was good, successful outcome |
| Little things can build the relationship | Determined, confident, optimistic, good relationships, strategic, successful outcome |
| Never be too confident | New customer, confident, self-assured, difficult customer, unhappy customer, unsuccessful call, surprised |
| New service | Excited, confident, optimistic, bridge to business, successful outcome |
| Pitching a new idea to a large retailer | Excited, positive, confident, organised and prepared, innovative product successful outcome |
| Selling to DJs | Confident, hopeful, nervous, not so intimidated, positive, successful outcome and good customer relationship. |

**Triad 3 Overview**

Triad 3a was the highest self-coded Triad filter with 62% of salespeople thinking about the call prior to the call. The alternative options were thinking about the call 'after the call' with 24% and 'during the call' with 14%. These results are important and are consistent with the overall study objective of exploring anticipatory emotions. The findings show that a significant percentage of the salespeople were thinking about the call prior to the call. For Triad 3a the thoughts prior to the call elicited positive anticipatory emotions.

**Example Narrative: New service**

| | |
|---|---|
| Anticipatory Emotion 1 (E1): | Confident |
| Anticipatory Emotion 2 (E2): | Optimistic |
| Other feelings: | Excited |
| Age: | 36-45 |
| Location: | United States of America |
| Gender: | Female |
| Experience: | 11 to 15 years |
| Triads applicable to this narrative | 1a, 3a, 4b, 5c, 6b |
| Self-coded strength : This story describes a – successful sales call | 1a=80 |

**Verbatim extract**

> *"I went to a customer whom I had been to only once before to see if I could obtain more new business from the account. Met with my contact once before who was relatively new to the job of Recruitment Manager. My company provides a range of recruitment support services which takes a lot of the repetitive tasks from the recruiter enabling them more time to focus on testing and selection. On my way to the customer I got a call from my manager saying a new service had been launched by head office and to start promoting it on my calls. I thought <u>the timing was great</u> as I was on my way to my customer and <u>she could use these new services. I was excited and confident</u> I would be able to make some new sales. I got to the customer and <u>had some general chit chat</u> and then discussed my services especially the new one my boss had called me about. <u>My customer was very excited</u> and said that it would <u>save them a lot of time</u> and money and that they would be interested. <u>A great call.</u>"*

**Analysis**

In this call, the salesperson obtained good news from their manager about a new product they would be able to sell. As it turned out, the salesperson was on their way to a potential customer when they learnt about the new product.  The salesperson was confident and optimistic that they would be able to make a sale because the new product was exactly what the customer was looking for.  Having a sense of optimism is a positive anticipatory state which according to Bruininks and Malle (2005) is most associated with the probability of a positive outcome occurring. In other words having received the information about the new product, the salesperson started to think about the customers' needs and the probability of them purchasing the new product, this then initiated feelings of optimism which can intensify other positive emotions such as enthusiasm and happiness which results in improved performance and overall sales effectiveness (Hodges and Winstanley 2012).

In this call the salesperson perceived the sales call to be effective which is supported by the statement:

*"My customer was very excited and said that it would save them a lot of time and money and that they would be interested. A great call."*

Krishnan, Netemeyer, and Boles (2002) have found that a salesperson's confidence is positively related to their performance. Similar finding have been made by Stajkovic and Luthans (1998) and Lubbers, Loughlin, and Zweig (2005) which support the findings in this sales scenario and evidenced by the extract below from the participant's narrative;

*"I was excited and confident…"*

In this call the participant rated the call (Triad1) with a coding of 80 suggesting the call was very successful.

**Table 4-10:    Relevance to the research questions — New service**

| 1. What are the primary anticipatory emotions experienced (factual data) | 2. In what ways do they impact on sales effectiveness  (linked to the literature) | 3. What are the key factors perceived as influencing anticipatory emotions (emergent data) |
|---|---|---|
| Confident Optimistic | Optimism is a positive anticipatory state which is most associated with the probability of a positive outcome occurring (Bruininks and Malle 2005). Feelings of optimism can intensify other positive emotions such as enthusiasm and happiness which results in improved performance and overall sales effectiveness (Hodges and Winstanley 2012) | Confidence in having the products or services your customer needs. |

Table 4.10 summarises the findings of the narrative - 'New service' - with relation to the first three research questions, namely:

1. What are the primary anticipatory emotions experienced by B2B salespeople
2. In what ways do they perceive these anticipatory emotions impacting on their sales effectiveness  (linked to the literature)
3. What are the key factors perceived as influencing anticipatory emotions (emergent data)

The primary anticipatory emotions experienced by the salesperson who conducted the call 'New service' were – confident and optimistic.

The anticipatory emotions of being confident and optimistic increased the salespersons volitional thoughts of success especially since they had a new product to show the customer. The volitional thoughts also contributed to the conviction to succeed in the call.  In this particular call, the participant scored the call as successful with a high rating of 80.

## 4.3.1.4 Triad 4



4. As it turned out most of the thoughts the salesperson had before the call were....

4b. Justified

4a. Unjustified

4c. Of no significance
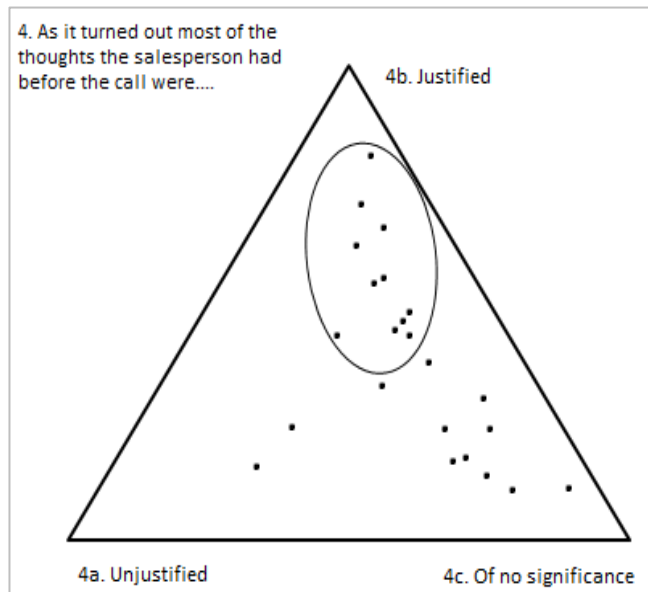
**Triad 4 narrative clustering**

| Narratives associated with Triad 4b (Table 3.14, Ch3) | Key information and emotions interpreted from the narrative (Appendix 4B) |
|---|---|
| Arcelor Mittal | Excited, positive, optimistic, tenacious |
| Be Honest | Felt fine, confident, positive, sympathetic, listened, did their best, successful outcome |
| Coffee lover | Relationship development, optimistic, hopeful, confident, successful outcome |
| Cracking a New Market | Competitive market, previous attempt unsuccessful, perseverance, nervous, optimistic, hopeful, focused |
| First meeting | Prepared, positive, self-assured, clear call outcomes |
| Fishing trip secures order | Optimistic, confident, excited, clear call objectives, relationship was good, successful outcome |
| Little things can build the relationship | Determined, confident, optimistic, good relationships, strategic, successful outcome |
| New service | Excited, confident, optimistic, bridge to business, successful outcome |
| Out for dinner to get to see the customer | Strategic, tenacious, focused, optimistic, confident, successful outcome |
| Sales Consultant | Tenacious, excited, optimistic, hopeful, certain, confident, unsure, curious |
| The A.D.D. VP | Prior knowledge of customer, invigorated, excited, challenge, confident, positive, successful outcome |

**Triad 4 Overview**

The result obtained in Triad 3a supports the notion that most of the salespeople's thoughts were anticipatory with a focus on their call objectives and in addition they felt they were

justified in those anticipatory thoughts with 54% of the salespeople supporting that view as evidenced by the result in Triad 4b.

**Example Narrative: Cracking a New Market**

| | |
|---|---|
| Anticipatory Emotion 1 (E1): | Optimistic |
| Anticipatory Emotion 2 (E2): | Hopeful |
| Other feelings: | |
| Age: | 56-65 |
| Location: | Australia |
| Gender: | Male |
| Experience: | More than 20 years |
| Triads applicable to this narrative | 4b |
| Self-coded strength : This story describes a – successful sales call | 1a=43 |

**Verbatim extract:**

> *"I recently went with a demo artist to see a client to attempt the first Australian sale of a major piece of equipment. While the equipment has seen lots of* <u>*success in Asia*</u>*, we had been* <u>*unable to penetrate the Australian market*</u> *due to* <u>*entrenched competition and local bias*</u>*. One* <u>*previous attempt with the same client had been unsuccessful*</u>*, but the use case was different this time, and we* <u>*felt it was our best chance ever*</u>*.* <u>*I was slightly nervous*</u>*, but it made me feel more focused and* <u>*sensitive to every nuance of feedback*</u> *from the client during the demo. The feedback from almost all of the attendees at the demo was positive. Subsequent to the demo I held discussions with the Engineering Manager about support, and the decision is now pending."*

**Analysis**

In this call the salesperson had been unsuccessful on a previous occasion in the Australian market but was well aware the products had been successful in Asia. Knowing this, the salesperson retained hope that a sale was achievable. Erikson (1964) claims that hoping to achieve a particular outcome as in the case of a sales order, has the effect of motivating the salesperson towards achieving the goal. In this scenario the positive motivational state of the salesperson initiated flexibility in the salesperson. This is evidenced by the following extract from the participant's narrative;

   ***"…we felt it was our best chance ever."***

The flexibility enabled the salesperson to consider more options in their volitional pursuit to achieve the desired call outcome (Snyder, Irving and Anderson 1991). The four rule theory put forward by Averill, Catlin, and Chon (1990) seems the most plausible in this call scenario; the

salesperson perceived the goal was achievable, the goal was relevant and important to the salesperson and the salesperson was in a position to pursue further volitional activity.

It is clear from the narrative that the salesperson was, as Snyder, Cheavens, and Michael (1999) would put it, encouraged by the prospect of winning the order, particularly as previous attempts had been unsuccessful. Salespeople according to Snyder (2002) who are higher in 'hope' characteristics tend to plan for contingencies when appraising events particularly when there is a perceived obstacle to goal achievement. The obstacles according to the narrative that the salesperson was facing, can be found in the extract below:

> *"…we had been unable to penetrate the Australian market due to entrenched competition and local bias."*

In this scenario, the salesperson noted 'hope' and 'optimism' as the two significant anticipatory emotions experienced. This is evidenced by the statement;

> *"I was slightly nervous, but it made me feel more focused and sensitive to every nuance of feedback…"*

These statements indicate as Perry (2011) believes, that in this call, the salesperson was experiencing overall feelings of positivity and self-confidence which according to Bandura (1986), is evidence of positive self-efficacy. As already stated, self-efficacy is represented by confidence and optimism which is strongly associated with positive salesperson performance or in other words through the successful achievement of goals the salesperson's sales effectiveness improves.

Sales effectiveness in this call can be attributed to the 'hope', 'optimism' and overall positivity of the salesperson. The salesperson perceived their call to be effective which is evidenced by the following statement:

> *"…feedback from almost all of the attendees at the demo was positive."*

In this call scenario the participant advised that they believed their thoughts before the call were justified and scored Triad 4b 71. The narrative supports this view because the salesperson was optimistic and hopeful before the call and the call ended with positive feedback from most of the attendees.

**Table 4-11:    Relevance to the research questions – Cracking a new market**

| 1. What are the primary anticipatory emotions experienced (factual data) | 2. In what ways do they impact on sales effectiveness  (linked to the literature) | 3. What are the key factors perceived as influencing anticipatory emotions (emergent data) |
|---|---|---|
| Optimism and Hope | Hope has the effect of motivating the salesperson towards achieving their goals (Erikson 1964).<br><br>Flexibility is enabled in the salesperson (Snyder, Irving and Anderson 1991).<br><br>Salespeople higher in 'hope' characteristics tend to plan for contingencies when appraising events (Snyder 2002).<br><br>General feelings of positivity and self-confidence, is evidence of positive self-efficacy (Bandura 1986).<br><br>There is a direct positive effect between self-efficacy and performance (Krishnan, Netemeyer and Boles 2002) | Self-efficacy<br>Commitment<br>Expectations of success<br>General positivity.<br>Past experiences |

Table 4.11 summarises the findings of the narrative - 'Cracking a new market' - with relation to the first three research questions, namely:

1.  What are the primary anticipatory emotions experienced by B2B salespeople
2.  In what ways do they perceive these anticipatory emotions impacting on their sales effectiveness  (linked to the literature)
3.  What are the key factors perceived as influencing anticipatory emotions (emergent data)

The primary anticipatory emotions experienced by the salesperson who conducted the call 'Cracking a new market' were – Optimism and Hope.

Optimism and hope are anticipatory emotions that reflected feelings of self – efficacy within the salesperson. The feeling of self-efficacy had a positive impact on the salesperson's performance by inducing positive thoughts about their ability to succeed in the call.

## 4.3.1.5    Triad 5
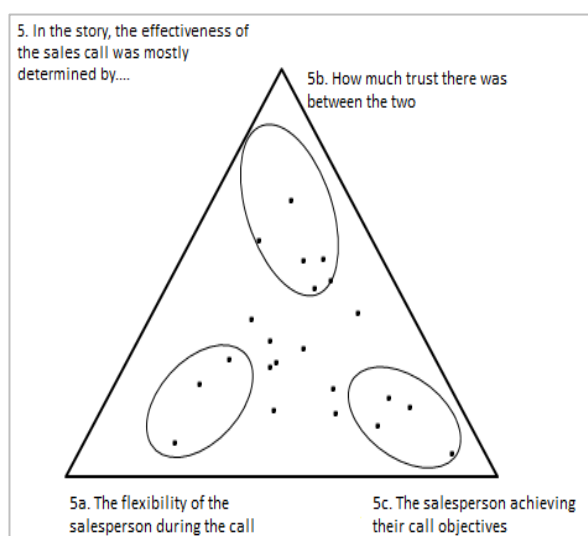


**Triad 5 narrative clustering**

| Narratives associated with Triad 5a (Table 3.14, Ch3) | Key information and emotions interpreted from the narrative (Appendix 4B) |
|---|---|
| My B to B Sales Style | Relaxed, confident, optimistic, self-assured, comfortable, prepared, listen, ask questions, build rapport, flexibility, adaptability, relationship first. |
| Sales Consultant | Tenacious, excited, optimistic, hopeful, certain, confident, unsure, curious |
| The A.D.D. VP | Prior knowledge of customer, invigorated, excited, challenge, confident, positive, successful outcome |
| Coffee lover | Relationship development, optimistic, hopeful, confident, successful outcome |
| Focusing on the game | Emotion regulation, determined, optimistic, self-assured, confident, proud, positive appearance, good customer relations. Focus on call objectives and relationship with customer |
| Never be too confident | New customer, confident, self-assured, difficult customer, unhappy customer, unsuccessful call, surprised |
| Pitching a new idea to a large retailer | Excited, positive, confident, organised and prepared, innovative product successful outcome |
| The commitment roller coaster | Nervous, doubt, lacking confidence, determined, pride, optimistic, excited, commitment, reputation |
| Be Honest | Felt fine, confident, positive, sympathetic, listened, did their best, successful outcome |
| Little things can build the relationship | Determined, confident, optimistic, good relationships, strategic, successful outcome |
| New service | Excited, confident, optimistic, bridge to business, successful outcome |
| Selling to DJs | Confident, hopeful, nervous, not so intimidated, positive, successful outcome and good customer relationship. |

**Triad 5 Overview**

Triad 5a, 5b and 5c asked participants what they believed the effectiveness of their sales call was mostly determined by. The participants were provided with the options of 'salesperson flexibility' during the call, 'trust' between the salesperson and the customer and the salesperson achieving their 'call objectives'. The design of the Triad presented three competing but balanced labels from which participants could select the mix of strength between the competing options. Selecting a centre position within the Triad represented an even mix of strengths between the three options. The three options available in Triad 5 were all equally important choices and well established in the sales literature (Guenzi, Baldauf and Panagopoulos 2014; Jiang et al. 2016). The results for Triad 5a, 5b and 5c for both positive and negative affect narratives are relatively equally balanced between the three options, suggesting that participants considered flexibility, trust and call objectives to be of similar importance when considering call effectiveness. As a result of this, not a great deal of relationship can be established in this Triad with respect to the impact of anticipatory emotions on sales effectiveness.

**Example Narrative: Sales Consultant**

| | |
|---|---|
| Anticipatory Emotion 1 (E1): | Excited |
| Anticipatory Emotion 2 (E2): | Hopeful |
| Other feelings: | Optimistic |
| Age: | 46-55 |
| Location: | United States of America |
| Gender: | Male |
| Experience: | More than 20 years |
| Triads applicable to this narrative | 1a, 4b, 5a, 6b |
| Self-coded strength : This story describes a – successful sales call | 1a=95 |

**Verbatim extract**

> *"I had made several cold calls by telemarketing to a prospect and finally got an appointment there. I knew from our telephone conversation that there was need for a change so I was very excited about the potential opportunity. My feelings were of optimism, as this was the first large prospect in a new company. Although I had 20 years of experience I was still curious on the new business sales cycle."*

**Analysis**

In this sales call the salesperson was excited that they had been successful finding a new potentially large customer. Speaking with the prospect, the salesperson established that there was the possibility of a change of supplier. According to Andrade, Odean, and Lin (2015),

excitement is an emotion that directly influences behaviour, further to this it has been found by Lowenstein and Lerner (2003) that as emotions intensify the influence they have on behaviour increases proportionately.  Even though the salesperson had 20 years' experience they were still curious about the process of the sales cycle of a new customer. This suggests that the salesperson was intrigued by what would happen next in the sales cycle and because it was an unknown it was exciting. Some researchers argue that excited people anticipate and focus on the potential positive outcomes which further intensify their anticipatory emotions and optimism (Ashby, Isen and Turken 1999; Aspinwall and Taylor 1997; Brown and Curhan 2013; Jamieson et al. 2010; Schnall, Roper and Fessler 2010).  In this call, the sales person was excited about the potential sales opportunity and this can be evidenced by the following narrative extract;

> **"…I was very excited about the potential opportunity."**

The other important finding from this narrative is the fact that the salesperson was optimistic. According to Hartline and Ferrell (1996) confidence and optimism are strongly associated with salesperson performance. In addition the salesperson was feeling hopeful, which is consistent with them feeling optimistic. Snyder, Irving, and Anderson (1991) articulate the view that 'hope' in a salesperson is a positive motivational state that is based on volitions of goal achievement and the flexibility to change directions in order to achieve goals. Salespersons' demonstrating these characteristics improves the likelihood of success. Certainly in this particular sales scenario, the participant scored the call 95 (Triad 1a) indicating that the call was considered to be highly successful.

**Table 4-12:   Relevance to the research questions – Sales consultant**

| 1. What are the primary anticipatory emotions experienced  (factual data) | 2. In what ways do they impact on sales effectiveness (linked to the literature) | 3. What are the key factors perceived as influencing anticipatory emotions (emergent data) |
|---|---|---|
| Excited and Hopeful<br>Optimistic | Excitement is an emotion that directly influences behaviour (Andrade, Odean and Lin 2015)<br><br>Excited people anticipate and focus on potential positive outcomes (Ashby, Isen and Turken 1999; Aspinwall and Taylor 1997; Brown and Curhan 2013; Jamieson et al. 2010; Schnall, Roper and Fessler 2010)<br><br>Hope has the effect of motivating the salesperson towards achieving their goals (Erikson 1964) | Opportunities<br>Salesperson flexibility |

Table 4.12 summarises the findings of the narrative - 'Sales consultant' - with relation to the first three research questions, namely:

1. What are the primary anticipatory emotions experienced by B2B salespeople
2. In what ways do they perceive these anticipatory emotions impacting on their sales effectiveness  (linked to the literature)
3. What are the key factors perceived as influencing anticipatory emotions (emergent data)

The primary anticipatory emotions experienced by the salesperson who conducted the call 'Sales consultant' were – excited, hopeful and optimistic.

The two anticipatory emotions – hope and excitement create feelings of achieving positive outcomes and motivation towards success.

The feelings were due to the challenge and thought of achieving a sale with a new prospect.

## 4.3.1.6     Triad 6
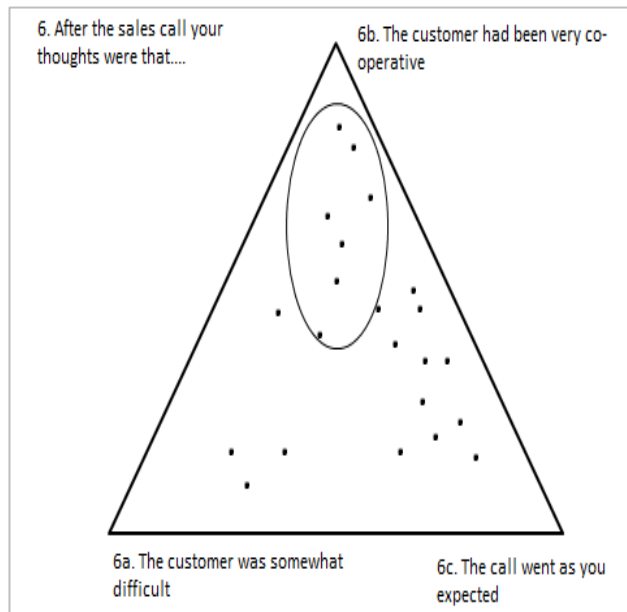


**Triad 6 narrative clustering**

| Narratives associated with Triad 6b (Table 3.14, Ch3) | Key information and emotions interpreted from the narrative (Appendix 4B) |
| --- | --- |
| Arcelor Mittal | Excited, positive, optimistic, tenacious |
| Be Honest | Felt fine, confident, positive, sympathetic, listened, did their best, successful outcome |
| Coffee lover | Relationship development, optimistic, hopeful, confident, successful outcome |
| First meeting | Prepared, positive, self-assured, clear call outcomes |
| Fishing trip secures order | Optimistic, confident, excited, clear call objectives, relationship was good, successful outcome |
| My B to B Sales Style | Relaxed, confident, optimistic, self-assured, comfortable, prepared, listen, ask questions, build rapport, flexibility, adaptability, relationship first. |
| New service | Excited, confident, optimistic, bridge to business, successful outcome |
| Pitching a new idea to a large retailer | Excited, positive, confident, organised and prepared, innovative product successful outcome |
| Sales Consultant | Tenacious, excited, optimistic, hopeful, certain, confident, unsure, curious |
| Selling to DJs | Confident, hopeful, nervous, not so intimidated, positive, successful outcome and good customer relationship. |
| The commitment roller coaster | Nervous, doubt, lacking confidence, determined, pride, optimistic, excited, commitment, reputation |

**Triad 6 Overview**

Triad 6b resulted in 50% of the salespeople confirming that they felt that the customer had been very co-operative. That result is consistent with Triad 1a results where 57% of participants described their call as successful.

**Example Narrative:  fishing trip secures order**

| | |
|---|---|
| Anticipatory Emotion 1 (E1): | Optimistic |
| Anticipatory Emotion 2 (E2): | Confident |
| Other feelings: | Excited |
| Age: | 36-45 |
| Location: | Australia |
| Gender: | Male |
| Experience: | 11 to 15 years |
| Triads applicable to this narrative | 1a, 3a, 4b, 6b |
| Self-coded strength : This story describes a – successful sales call | 1a=67 |

**Verbatim extract:**

> *"An opportunity arose with a mining company to supply aluminium pipe. I went to Karratha in Western Australia to meet the mining company purchasing officer. I got their on the Friday afternoon and met with the contact at the airport. To my surprise the contact asked if I would like to go fishing that evening with a few of the staff. I eagerly accepted as I love fishing. The fishing trip went well and I was dropped off about 10pm that night. On the Monday morning I went to their offices to meet the contact to discuss the supply of the pipes. I was feeling optimistic and confident before the call and had clear objectives to meet. The call went really well and the relationship with the contact was strong especially since we had been out fishing a few days before. The order I got was substantial and it just goes to show how important relations with the customer can be."*

**Analysis**

In this sales narrative a kind gesture by the customer instilled a feeling of optimism and confidence in the salesperson following a fishing trip the night before.  This is evidenced by the statement;

> *"I was feeling optimistic and confident before the call…"*

 Krishnan, Netemeyer, and Boles (2002) have said that having confidence in one's ability is positively related to sales performance. Over the weekend, the salesperson would have appraised the situation and evaluated the strengthened relationship following the fishing trip and anticipated a continuing relationship with the customer on the Monday morning when

they were to meet to discuss the purchase of aluminium pipes. The fishing trip and the new relationship with the customer were instrumental in the salesperson feeling optimistic and confident. The narrative supports this;

*"The call went really well and the relationship with the contact was strong …"*

Empirical research by Barling and Beattie (1983) found a positive relationship between optimism, confidence and self-efficacy. It would seem the anticipatory optimism and confidence of the salesperson in this call scenario led to strong performance as evidenced by the statement;

*"The order I got was substantial…"*

In this sales call, sales effectiveness was enhanced because of the optimism and confidence of the salesperson (Brown, Cron and Slocum 1998; Luthans, Zhu and Avolio 2006) that resulted in the achievement of a substantial sales order.

**Table 4-13:    Relevance to the research questions — Fishing trip secures order**

| 1. What are the primary anticipatory emotions experienced (factual data) | 2. In what ways do they impact on sales effectiveness (linked to the literature) | 3. What are the key factors perceived as influencing anticipatory emotions (emergent data) |
|---|---|---|
| Confident<br>Optimistic | Confidence in one's ability is positively related to sales performance (Krishnan, Netemeyer and Boles 2002)<br><br>There is a positive relationship between optimism, confidence and self-efficacy (Barling and Beattie 1983) which in turn are strongly related with salesperson performance (Bandura and Adams 1977; Brief and Aldag 1981; Luthans, Zhu and Avolio 2006; Wang and Netemeyer 2002). | Good customer relationship. |

Table 4.13 summarises the findings of the narrative - 'Fishing trip secures order' - with relation to the first three research questions, namely:

1. What are the primary anticipatory emotions experienced by B2B salespeople
2. In what ways do they perceive these anticipatory emotions impacting on their sales effectiveness (linked to the literature)
3. What are the key factors perceived as influencing anticipatory emotions (emergent data)

The primary anticipatory emotions experienced by the salesperson who conducted the call 'Fishing trip secures order' were –confidence and optimism.

As has been discussed in previous narratives containing positive anticipatory emotions, confidence and optimism are indicators of self-efficacy which are significantly related to positive sales performance.

Self-efficacy and the anticipatory emotions of confidence and optimism were induced in the salesperson because the salesperson had established a good relationship with the customer by going on a fishing trip.

**Table 4-14:  Summary of Contributions to the Research Questions (positive emotions)**
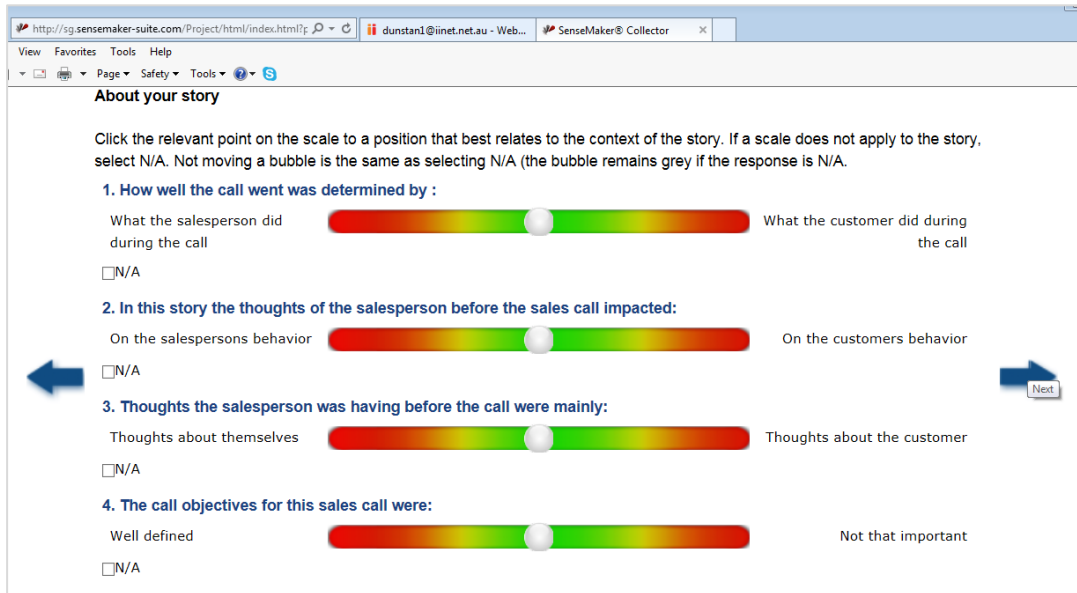
| No. | Research question | Finding |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | What are the primary anticipatory emotions experienced by B2B salespeople? | Confidence, optimism, positivity, hope, excitement. |
| 2 | In what ways do anticipatory emotions impact on their sales effectiveness? | Optimism and confidence increase thoughts of success. |
| | | General positive attitude enables the salesperson to be more creative and to be more flexible during the call. |
| | | Feelings of optimism can intensify other positive emotions such as enthusiasm and happiness which results in improved performance and overall sales effectiveness. |
| | | Hope has the effect of motivating the salesperson towards achieving their goals |
| | | Salespeople higher in 'hope' characteristics tend to plan for contingencies when appraising the call. |
| | | Excited people anticipate and focus on potential positive outcomes |
| | | Hope motivates the salesperson towards achieving their goals. |
| | | Confidence in one's ability is positively related to sales performance |
| | | There is a positive relationship between optimism, confidence and self-efficacy which in turn are strongly related with salesperson performance. |
| 3 | What are the key factors perceived as influencing anticipatory emotions? | The extent they are prepared for the call. Perceptions of needing to help. The opportunities presenting themselves. Confidence in having the products or services your customer needs. Feelings of self-efficacy. Commitment to the customer. Expectations of success. Feeling positive. Past good experiences. Good customer relationship. |
| 4 | What insights might complexity theory provide with regards to anticipatory emotions? | A discussion concerning complexity theory will be done separately by applying the findings to the components of CAS. |

Table 4.14 summarises the positive anticipatory emotions identified in this study and their contributions towards answering the research questions.

With any qualitative study, each participant has their own story to tell with unique differences. Across the narratives which were analysed, it is evident that there is consistency with the actual positive anticipatory emotions experienced. This supports the view that positive emotions are less differentiated when compared to negative emotions and can be grouped as general positive affect.

## 4.4    Dyad Findings and Analysis

As discussed in Chapter 3, Dyads or polarities are a sliding scale between two extremes, one of excess, the other of deficiency. They have been included in this study as a means of easily identifying participant opinions and experiences on well-established concepts in the sales literature and in relation to the research questions.



**Figure 4.2:    SenseMaker© Dyad Screen image**

The results of the negative affect Dyads are discussed below.

## 4.4.1 Results of Negative Affect Dyads

## 4.4.1.1 Whatever it takes

| Narrative:   Whatever it takes! | Dyad strengths:<br> 1A=87,  2B=89,  3A=92,  4A=94 |
| --- | --- |
| Anticipatory Emotion 1 (E1): | Anxious |
| Anticipatory Emotion 2 (E2): | Worried |
| Other feelings: | |
| Age: | 46-55 |
| Location: | Australia |
| Gender: | Male |
| Experience: | 1 to 5 years |
| Dyads applicable to this narrative | 1a, 2b, 3a, 4a |
| Self-coded strength : This story describes a – difficult sales call | 1c=75 |



1B

1. How well the call went was determined by - What the customer did during the call

1. The evil emperor.
2. Unnecessary fear
3. Lost sales not my fault
4. Don't worry unnecessarily
5. Lots on concern but no issue.
6. Learning from the customer
7. Success with a grumpy receptionist
8. Nerves and being able to joke

1. Product failure
2. Whatever it takes!
3. Don't you worry
4. Save face
5. Perseverance and tenacity
6. Meeting clients
7. Journey

1A

1. How well the call went was determined by - What the salesperson did during the call

**Figure 4.3:    Negative affect Dyad 1 results**

The Dyad poles shown above represent a continuum of choice between the below two choices;

> *1A. How well the call went was determined by what the salesperson did during the call.*
>
> *1B. How well the call went was determined by what the customer did during the call.*

When reviewing the results of Dyad 1, it can be seen that there is a relatively even spread of narratives across the Dyad however there are notable clusters at both ends of the Dyad. The purpose of this Dyad was to determine whether salespeople believe they have most influence over what happens in a call or the customer. As mentioned, the result was a relatively even spread of opinions with some saying that 'both' salesperson and customer influence the call.

To further analyse the results an example sales narrative was chosen to determine the rationale for the participant's choice. The narrative is reproduced below and some

demographics surrounding this particular participant appear above. In this narrative the two anticipatory emotions selected were 'anxious' and 'worried' and the selected strength for Dyad 1A was 87.

**Narrative: Whatever it takes!**

> "XYZ Pty Ltd (not real name) is a mining company and <u>my biggest customer</u>. However, due to a new accounts system recently installed by them, I must adhere to their new invoicing and ordering policies which basically means I need to match the pricing on their purchase orders with our invoices to the cent! If these documents do not match, I will not be paid and if in breach multiple times, the chance of losing this account (my largest and most important customer) is certain. They are also looking for more competitive discounts. I decided to meet with XYZ's senior accounts staff personally to discuss this issue and to assure them that I do not want to lose their account and will basically do anything possible to retain my position as one of their favoured suppliers. They agreed that their demands for accuracy were "over the top", however, with their new accounting system, they had little alternative but to insist these new policies be met! As I am confidentially in the process of selling my business, I absolutely must retain this customer otherwise my sales figures will be disastrous. I have decided I will look after this account personally, offer exceptional discounts and triple check all transactions both inwards and outwards for accuracy. <u>I am feeling very stressed</u> about this situation and <u>the chance of losing this account</u> prior to sale of this business, however, by taking over the account personally, offering competitive discounts and checking that all transactions match their requirements, I will minimise this possibility and keep the monthly sales figures looking positive for potential buyers of the business. Basically, <u>I'll do whatever it takes to keep this customer</u>, however, the early indications of my "personal" strategy is very positive."

**Analysis**

The above sales scenario is describing a key account situation where the supplier is being asked to change their invoicing practices to the new accounting requirements of the key account customer. The key account sales literature has identified that organisations wishing to establish long-term relationships with suppliers often base their decisions on the extent they have been satisfied with the supplier in the past (Sharma 1997). In the case of the salesperson in the scenario above there is clear evidence that they want to comply with the customers' requests at all costs. The selected coding choice for Dyad 1A was 87, a high score which indicates the salesperson has a strong belief that how well the call went was determined by what the salesperson did during the call.

Again, this supports the finding that the salesperson was very keen to do whatever was necessary to comply with the customer's requests. Sengupta, Krapfel, and Pusateri (2000) believe that the effectiveness of key account salespeople is directly related to the degree they co-operate, and build productive enduring relationships with the customer.

There is evidence in this sales scenario that the salesperson was willing to co-operate and even manage the account personally to ensure they kept the account in the long term. The sales literature also posits that salesperson flexibility and adaptability are key determinates of sales effectiveness (Bodkin and Stevenson 1993a; Giacobbe et al. 2006; Predmore and Bonnice 1994). Call adaptability is related to the ability of the salesperson to appraise sales situations and to adapt to the prevailing conditions or requirements in the call (Guenzi, Baldauf and Panagopoulos 2014). The salesperson in this call felt anxious and worried before the call and stressed at the thought of losing the account. They also believed that it is what they do in the call that influences how well the call progresses. A potential issue in this scenario is the possibility that the salesperson will ruminate about the potential loss of the account which will impact on their ability to perform effectively (Nolen-Hoeksema, Wisco and Lyubomirsky 2008).

## 4.4.1.2    Success with a grumpy receptionist

| Narrative:   Success with a grumpy receptionist | Dyad strengths:<br> 1B=80,  2A=85,  3B=85 |
|---|---|
| Anticipatory Emotion 1 (E1): | Apprehensive |
| Anticipatory Emotion 2 (E2): | Nervous |
| Other feelings: | Hopeful |
| Age: | 36-45 |
| Location: | Australia |
| Gender: | Male |
| Experience: | 6 to 10 years |
| Triads applicable to this narrative | 2c, 3a, 4b, 6b |
| Self-coded strength : This story describes a – successful sales call | 1a=40 |



**Figure 4.4:    Negative affect Dyad 2 results**

The Dyad poles shown above represent a continuum of choice between the below two choices;

> **2A. *In this story the thoughts of the salesperson before the sales call impacted: On the salespersons behaviour.***
> **2B. *In this story the thoughts of the salesperson before the sales call impacted: On the customers behaviour.***

There is a cluster of sales narratives towards the 2A end of the Dyad which indicates the majority of the participants believed that the thoughts the salesperson had before the call impacted on their behaviour during the call. This is an interesting result because it seems that most salespeople are aware that their anticipatory emotions and thoughts are drivers of their actions during the call.

**Narrative: Success with a grumpy receptionist**

*"Much of my time is spent prospecting for new sales. One time I stopped off in an industrial area and decided to walk around door to door in other words cold calling. One of the businesses I went to was a manufacturer of air-conditioning ducting that they sold to air conditioning installers. When I first knocked on the door and entered the reception I was greeted by a <u>grumpy older receptionist</u> who snapped "do you have an appointment?" I said no and that I was in the area and as my company was a supplier of sheet metal and associated products that I thought they may have an interest in my products. She glared at me and said "wait there." I nervously waited and an elderly gentleman came out. I ran through <u>my usual introduction</u> and he said to come through into the factory. I went with him and <u>proceeded to discuss my products</u>. As it turned out <u>he was very interested</u> and <u>wanted me to quote</u> on a range of sheet metal and fastners. I went back to the office did the quote and <u>within a week I had an initial small order</u>. <u>I have taken the time to nurture and develop a good relationship</u> with this customer and the business has continued to grow."*

**Analysis**

When analysing Dyads 1A and 2A together, which were the choices assigned to this narrative, it can be seen that not only did the salesperson think that their thoughts before the sales call impact on their behaviour during the call but also on how well the call went. Interestingly the two anticipatory emotions felt by the salesperson prior to the call were both negative affect emotions – apprehensive and nervous. The result for Dyads 1A and 2A suggests the salesperson knew how they were feeling before the call and they knew that it would impact on how the call would go. So how can this situation be explained?

Firstly cold calling has been identified in the sales literature as likely to invoke fear of rejection and embarrassment (Kauppila, Rajala and Jyrämä 2010) and is often abrupt and confrontational (Greenberg and Greenberg 1991). Jolson and Wotruba (1992) claim that conversion rates of cold calls to sales is low and that a large number of contacts is required before a single sale is made. When salespeople perceive the rate of rejection to be high and the rate of conversion to be low, they are likely to reduce the frequency of making cold calls. It is understandable in the circumstances that a salesperson would experience apprehension and nervousness before going in to a call. In the case of the sales scenario the salesperson was greeted by a 'grumpy receptionist' but was still able to see the prospect. Once able to see the prospect the salesperson re-appraised the call situation and was able to conduct a call that led to an initial small order. The salesperson put in effort developing the relationship with the prospect which has resulted in the account growing. This is consistent with the views of Crosby, Evans, and Cowles (1990) who found that when a customer had a good relationship with their salesperson, there was an increased likelihood of doing business with that salesperson in the future.

## 4.4.1.3     Product failure

| Narrative:   Product failure | Dyad strengths:<br> 1A=93,  2A=88,  3B=96 |
|---|---|
| Anticipatory Emotion 1 (E1): | Worried |
| Anticipatory Emotion 2 (E2): | Concerned |
| Other feelings: | |
| Age: | 36-45 |
| Location: | Australia |
| Gender: | Male |
| Experience: | 6 to 10 years |
| Triads applicable to this narrative | 2c, 3a, 4b, 6b |
| Self-coded strength : This story describes a – difficult sales call | 1c=44 |



- Product failure
- Lots on concern but no issue.
- Customer turned friend
- Too relaxed
- Don't worry unnecessarily
- Unnecessary fear
- Lost sales not my fault
- Success with a grumpy receptionist
- Save face

3B

3. Thoughts the salesperson was having before the call were mainly - Thoughts about the customer

- Whatever it takes!
- The evil emperor

3A

3. Thoughts the salesperson was having before the call were mainly - Thoughts about themselves

**Figure 4.5:**     **Negative affect Dyad 3results**

The Dyad poles shown above represent a continuum of choice between the below two choices;

*3A. Thoughts the salesperson was having before the call were mainly - Thoughts about themselves.*

*3B. Thoughts the salesperson was having before the call were mainly - Thoughts about the customer*

As can be seen from the Dyad data distribution above, the dominant choice for participants was for them having thoughts about the customer before getting to the call. The Dyads currently being reviewed relate to the salesperson having negative affect emotions prior to the call which suggests that there was a problem and the salesperson was worried or concerned before getting to the call, no knowing the full extent of the problem. In this scenario, the salesperson had received a complaint from the customer so they knew ahead of time there was a problem and that is what caused them to experience negative affect in the form of worry and concern.

**Narrative: Product failure**

> *"A customer once called with <u>a complaint</u> about one of the products we supplied them. It was a part that performed a critical function and whilst not expensive was critical to their production. Before calling on the customer I looked back over their sales history and confirmed there had been no faulty products in the past. They had been a customer for around 3.5 years. <u>I dropped around not knowing what to expect</u>. I was <u>feeling very worried</u> that there <u>may have been more to it</u>, so <u>I prepared myself for the worst</u>. When I got to see the customer <u>he was not looking all that happy</u>. We sat down and he explained that the faulty part had cost his company 3 hours downtime which amounted to many thousands of dollars in lost time. <u>I was very apologetic</u> and assured the customer that our products were of a very high quality but there was always the chance of a rare failure. The customer understood and everything seemed OK. I suggested to the customer that I could come back and spend time with him and identify a list of critical parts that he used and arrange for spares to be stocked on his premises so that should a failure occur then they could minimize the downtime. The customer was very happy with this."*

**Analysis**

In B2B sales organisations, long lasting partnerships and relationships are established for the benefit of all but one potential 'downside' is the formation of a strong dependency on the other (Strutton and Holmes 2002). In this scenario the supplier organisation has established sound business partnership with the customer, so much so that one component failure caused significant disruption to the customers operations. Trying to control the impression formed following a supplier breakdown can be a challenge, especially when the supplier has had little control over what has happened (Leary and Kowalski 1990). In the scenario the salesperson was unsure of the extent of the problem which had caused concern and worry. Once in the call, and noticing the customer was not very happy, the salesperson apologised, re-appraised the situation and worked out a solution for the future. When salespeople create business value for customers, it is more often than not created through the relationship formed with the customer (Hohenschwert and Geiger 2015). The salesperson in this scenario came up with a creative solution to help avoid downtime should a similar problem ever occur in the future. Because of the relationship the salesperson had with the customer it is evident that the customer had seen the value created in such a solution and agreed to the proposal and in doing so, has moved on from the current problem (Hohenschwert and Geiger 2015). The salesperson in this sales scenario had negative anticipatory emotions on hearing about a problem that a customer had experienced with one of their products. The salesperson began worrying and became very concerned about the implications of what had happened. Once in the call the salesperson re-appraised the situation and in conversation with the customer worked out a creative solution the customer willingly accepted.

## 4.4.1.4　　Lots on concern but no issue

| Narrative:　Lots on concern but no issue | Dyad strengths:<br>　1B=85,　2A=86,　3B=95, 4A=94 |
|---|---|
| Anticipatory Emotion 1 (E1): | Anxious |
| Anticipatory Emotion 2 (E2): | Worry |
| Other feelings: | Concerned |
| Age: | 36-45 |
| Location: | Australia |
| Gender: | Male |
| Experience: | 6 to 10 years |
| Triads applicable to this narrative | 3a, 6b |
| Self-coded strength : This story describes a – successful sales call | 1a=49 |



**Figure 4.6:　　Negative affect Dyad 4results**

The Dyad poles shown above represent a continuum of choice between the below two choices;

> *4A. The call objectives for this sales call were - Well defined*
> *4B. The call objectives for this sales call were - Not that important*

Negative affect Dyad 4, has a cluster of data points towards the 4A end of the Dyad which indicates that most of the participants felt they had call objectives that were well defined. Sales objectives can be many and varied (Singh and Koshy 2010) however the existence and importance of call objectives was all that was sought using this Dyad. For that reason there is clear evidence that the majority of participants had call objectives and that they were well defined and important.

**Narrative: Lots on concern but no issue**

> *"There was a time when I had to visit a customer who <u>had dealt with us before</u> but when they worked for another company. <u>Their experience was not a good one</u>. On the way to the customer I was <u>worrying</u> about how the customer would be. <u>I did not know what the previous problems had been</u> so <u>I was nervous</u>. zeven though I did not know anything about the earlier issues I could not help <u>feeling anxious about the call</u>. My objective for the call was to allow the customer to lead the way and for me to address issues if and when they were raised. <u>Surprisingly</u> when I met the customer <u>they were welcoming</u> and as the call went on <u>there was no mention of the previous problems</u>. I therefore was <u>determined</u> to make sure everything about the call/sales went well."*

**Analysis**

In the sales scenario provided, the salesperson experienced anxiety and worry about a past poor experience the customer had when working with a previous company and using the suppliers products. The worry was partly due to the salesperson not fully knowing what the problem was that had occurred in the past. By worrying the salesperson could have created problems for themselves when in the call, in particular thoughts the salesperson was having regarding how they were going to address the customers problem when it was completely out of their control (Frayne and Geringer 2000). Once the salesperson was in the call the customer was found to be welcoming. At that stage once the salesperson had re-appraised the situation and realised that the customer was friendly, they were able to stop worrying and allow the call to proceed in the usual manner. In fact once that had happened the salesperson was determined to make sure the call went well. As it turned out and to the surprise of the salesperson, the customer did not raise the issue at all and the call went well as the salesperson had hoped.

**Table 4-15:  Summary of Negative Affect Dyads**

| Dyad Pole (identifier) | Customer turned friend | Don't worry unnecessarily | Don't you worry | Important customer | Journey | Learning from the customer | Lost sales not my fault | Lots on concern but no issue. | Meeting clients | Nerves and being able to joke | Nervous day at corporate client | Perseverance and tenacity | Product failure | Save face | Success with a grumpy receptionist | The evil emperor. | Too relaxed | Unnecessary fear | Whatever it takes! | Dyad descriptor |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1A | | 85 | | | 71 | | | | 75 | | | 79 | 93 | 81 | | | | | 87 | How well the call went was determined by what the salesperson did during the call |
| 1B | | 87 | | | | 85 | 88 | 85 | | 72 | | | | | 80 | 98 | | 95 | | How well the call went was determined by what the customer did during the call |
| 2A | | | 95 | | | | 86 | 86 | | | 85 | | 88 | | 85 | 91 | | 93 | | In this story the thoughts of the salesperson before the sales call impacted on the salespersons behaviour |
| 2B | 88 | | | | | | | | | | | | | 80 | | | | | 89 | In this story the thoughts of the salesperson before the sales call impacted on the customers behaviour |
| 3A | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 91 | | | 92 | Thoughts the salesperson was having before the call were mainly thoughts about themselves |
| 3B | 93 | 89 | | | | | 87 | 95 | | | | 96 | 85 | 85 | | | 93 | 88 | | Thoughts the salesperson was having before the call were mainly thoughts about the customer |
| 4A | 92 | 89 | | 92 | | 94 | | | | | | | | | | 94 | | | 94 | The call objectives for this sales call were well defined |
| 4B | | | | | | | 87 | | | | | | | | | | | | | The call objectives for this sales call were not that important |

## 4.4.2    Results of Positive Affect Dyads

## 4.4.2.1    Little things can build the relationship

| Narrative:   Little things can build the relationship | Dyad strength: 1A=93, 2B=91, 3B=91, 4A=93 |
|---|---|
| Anticipatory Emotion 1 (E1): | Confident |
| Anticipatory Emotion 2 (E2): | Optimistic |
| Other feelings: | Determined |
| Age: | 46-55 |
| Location: | Australia |
| Gender: | Female |
| Experience: | 11 to 15 years |
| Triads applicable to this narrative | 2a, 3a, 4b, 5c |
| Self-coded strength : This story describes a – difficult sales call | 1c=46 |



**Figure 4.7:    Positive affect Dyad 1results**

The Dyad poles shown above represent a continuum of choice between the below two choices;

*1A. How well the call went was determined by what the salesperson did during the call*

*1B. How well the call went was determined by what the customer did during the call*

**Narrative: Little things can build the relationship**

*"A lot of sales people fear making calls to unhappy customers. I remember a call that I had to make to an unhappy customer and I was determined to make the call a success and to turn the customer around. The customer was unhappy because their usual sales representative had been moved to another sales territory within the company. The original sales rep. had built a good*

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*reputation with the customer over a six year period. I explained to the customer that sometimes the territories need to be balanced and it was not a common practice but it was necessary this time. The customer continued to express their dis-pleasure so <u>I asked them what was the thing they liked most about the old sales rep</u>. Their reply was that they got on well with them and that the old rep. <u>used to bring morning tea when they came</u>! I suggested to the customer that given time the new rep. may well do the same. The customer seemed unsure about this so I arranged to bring the new rep. to meet the customer and we took along morning tea. The customer was beaming with smiles when he saw what we had and it was clear everything would work out. <u>The new rep. established a good relationship</u> with the customer and sales continued."*

**Analysis**

In this scenario the sales manager was able to uncover the hidden objection of the customer to the new sales representative looking after their account. Once known the solution was relatively simple and straight forward and in some instances demonstrates call flexibility as has been identified as an important requirement of salespeople if they are to be successful in calls (Weitz, Sujan and Sujan 1986). The two anticipatory emotions listed in the narrative for this sales scenario were confidence and optimism as well as the mention of determination. The Dyad choice chosen was that the way the call went was determined by what the salesperson did during the call. Clearly that was a correct choice for this call. By the salesperson identifying the hidden objection and then by being flexible by having the new salesperson continue the practice of bringing morning tea, the customer was more than willing to accept the new salesperson. To that extent the call objectives were achieved and the salespersons call effectiveness maintained (Lubbers, Loughlin and Zweig 2005).

In review, the salesperson in this call was highly focused on achieving their call objectives as evidenced by Triad 2a coding strength of 66, Triad 3a of 65 and Triad 5c of 75. The scores when coupled with Dyad 1A result contribute towards the factors influencing their anticipatory emotions of confidence and optimism.

## 4.4.2.2      Sign on the dotted line please

| Narrative: Sign on the dotted line please | Dyad strength: 2A=79, 4A=72 |
|---|---|
| Anticipatory Emotion 1 (E1): | Determined |
| Anticipatory Emotion 2 (E2): | Self-assured |
| Other feelings: | |
| Age: | 26-35 |
| Location: | Australia |
| Gender: | Male |
| Experience: | 6 to 10 years |
| Triads applicable to this narrative | 2a |
| Self-coded strength : This story describes a – successful sales call | 1a=49 |



- New service
- Focusing on the game
- The ADD VP
- Cracking a New Market
- Fishing trip secures order
- Sign on the dotted line

2. In this story the thoughts of the salesperson before the sales call impacted - On the salespersons behavior

2A

2B

- My B to B Sales Style
- Little things can build the relationship

2. In this story the thoughts of the salesperson before the sales call impacted - On the customers behavior

**Figure 4.8:**    **Positive affect Dyad 2 results**

The Dyad poles shown above represent a continuum of choice between the below two choices;

> *2A. In this story the thoughts of the salesperson before the sales call impacted on the salespersons behaviour*
> *2B. In this story the thoughts of the salesperson before the sales call impacted on the customers behaviour*

**Narrative: Sign on the dotted line please**

> *"Making a sales these days is a lot more difficult because it is more competitive and customers have more information and choices. When I sold a contract for services last year the customer was very informed and very particular about the contract details. They seemed to know many of the issues*

*with such a contract which in some ways made my job easier and in other ways more difficult. I worked through the contract offer and met all their concerns. They seemed very happy and there was no hesitation signing."*

**Analysis**

In this story the salesperson believed that their anticipatory thoughts before the call impacted on their behaviour. In this sales scenario, the salesperson had found it more difficult to make sales due to customers being more informed. They made a sales call to a customer concerning a sales contract and the customer wanted reassurance about a number of the details in the contract before they would sign. The salesperson had recorded determination and self-assuredness as anticipatory emotions prior to the call. According to a number of authors (Krishnan, Netemeyer and Boles 2002; Pettijohn, Schaefer and Burnett 2014) there is a direct link between self-efficacy, confidence and optimism which are emotions under the same umbrella as determination and self-assuredness (Shaver et al. 1987; Smith and Ellsworth 1985).

## 4.4.2.3    Together we succeed

| Narrative:        Together we succeed | Dyad strength:<br>3B=83, 4A=88 |
|---|---|
| Anticipatory Emotion 1 (E1): | Positive |
| Anticipatory Emotion 2 (E2): | Determined |
| Other feelings: | |
| Age: | 46-55 |
| Location: | Australia |
| Gender: | Male |
| Experience: | 11 to 15 years |
| Triads applicable to this narrative | 1a, 2a |
| Self-coded strength : This story describes a – successful sales call | 1a=68 |

➤ Cracking a New Market
➤ Pitching a new idea to a large retailer
➤ My B to B Sales Style
➤ New service
➤ Little things can build the relationship
➤ The ADD VP
➤ Fishing trip secures order
➤ Together we succeed
➤ Focusing on the game

3. Thoughts the salesperson was having before the call were mainly - Thoughts about the customer

3B

3A

3. Thoughts the salesperson was having before the call were mainly - Thoughts about themselves

**Figure 4.9:    Positive affect Dyad 3 results**

The Dyad poles shown above represent a continuum of choice between the below two choices;

*3A. In this story the thoughts of the salesperson before the sales call impacted on the salespersons behaviour*

*3B. In this story the thoughts of the salesperson before the sales call impacted on the customers behaviour*

**Narrative: Together we succeed**

> *"print newspaper advertising is becoming more difficult to sell. My job is to sell advertising space to small business. Most people these days advertise on the internet and less in a newspaper. I had a call recently when a business was having difficulty as sales were dropping. I approached them and suggested the advertise in one of our local newspapers. I offered them a very special deal because they didn't have a big budget and we needed the advertising as well so it was in both our interests to do business with each other. The manager finally agreed and we put a campaign together that ran*

*over 8 weeks. the results were slow but by week 5 the business was getting double the business. Needless to say, the manager was very happy and we continued the campaign. That business is now a regular advertiser with me and it was <u>mainly due to offering a good deal and working closely with the customer and keeping in regular contact</u>."*

**Analysis**

In this story the salesperson believes that their thoughts before the sales call, impacted on the customers behaviour. The two anticipatory emotions chosen by the salesperson were positivity and determination. The influence of positive affect on work performance is well established in the literature (Erevelles and Fukawa 2013; Verbeke, Belschak and Bagozzi 2004). In this scenario, there is evidence that genuine emotional contagion impacted on the customer's emotional state and the fact that the salesperson was positive and determined indicates that the salesperson may have influenced the customer sub consciously and created positive affective states and subsequent behaviours (Hatfield, Cacioppo and Rapson 1994). The salesperson was also focused on their call objectives and determined which impacted on their affective state

## 4.4.2.4    Arcelor Mittal

| Narrative:    Arcelor Mittal | Dyad strength:<br>4A=80 |
|---|---|
| Anticipatory Emotion 1 (E1): | Optimistic |
| Anticipatory Emotion 2 (E2): | Excited |
| Other feelings: | |
| Age: | 36-45 |
| Location: | South Africa |
| Gender: | Male |
| Experience: | 16 to 20 years |
| Triads applicable to this narrative | 1a, 2a, 4b, 6b |
| Self-coded strength : This story describes a – successful sales call | 1a=76 |



4B

4. The call objectives for this sales call were - Not that important

➢ Cracking a New Market
➢ Focusing on the game
➢ Planning is everything
➢ Little things can build the relationship
➢ The ADD VP
➢ The commitment roller coaster
➢ Together we succeed
➢ Coffee lover
➢ New service
➢ Selling to DJs
➢ Fishing trip secures order

➢ Arcelor Mittal
➢ Pitching a new idea to a large retailer
➢ Never be too confident
➢ First contact
➢ Out for dinner to get to see the customer
➢ My B to B Sales Style
➢ Sign on the dotted line please
➢ Sales Consultant
➢ Be Honest
➢ First meeting

4A

4. The call objectives for this sales call were - Well defined

**Figure 4.10:  Positive affect Dyad 4 results**

The Dyad poles shown above represent a continuum of choice between the two choices;

*4A. The call objectives for this sales call were well defined*

*4B. The call objectives for this sales call were not that important*

**Narrative: Arcelor Mittal**

> *"My Meeting with xxxx buyers. I was scheduled to meet with xxxx buyers, <u>I was excited and postive</u> to meet these buyers. Upon meeting them <u>they were very hesutant</u> of xxxx and there <u>had been afew past issues</u> that put them off about xxxx, <u>I assured them I would sort out any issues</u> and would be their contact point for business. <u>It took a bit of time to win their confidence</u> and now since I have they are <u>buying a lot more</u> and view xxxx in different light."*

**Analysis**

There were no participants who believed that their call objectives were not that important. This gives a clear indication as to the importance of call objectives to participants, and given the Dyad 4a was scored 80, is further evidence of their importance. The salesperson in this scenario convinced the customer that they would fix any problems and that they would manage their account from then on. Over time the salesperson developed trust and built a relationship with the customer. According to Andersen and Kumar (2006) trust is a determinant of salesperson effectiveness. The scenario indicated the salesperson had won the customers confidence over time and that they were buying a lot more. The participant listed optimism and excitement as the two anticipatory emotions applicable to the call. The salesperson in the scenario was focused on their call objectives prior to the call and gave Triad 2a a score of 58. Having positive affect influenced their work performance (Clore and Huntsinger 2009) and was responsible for them achieving their call effectiveness.

**Table 4-16:    Summary of Positive Affect Dyads**

| Dyad Pole (identifier) | The ADD VP | My B to B Sales Style | Never be too confident | Selling to DJs | Fishing trip secures order | Little things can build the relationship | Focusing on the game | New service | Cracking a New Market | Sign on the dotted line pleas | Pitching a new idea to a large retailer | Together we succeed | Planning is everything | The commitment roller coaster | Coffee lover | Arcelor Mittal | First contact | Out for dinner to get to see the customer | Sales Consultant | Be Honest | First meeting | Dyad descriptor |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1A | | | | | | 93 | 89 | 80 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | How well the call went was determined by what the salesperson did during the call |
| 1B | 95 | 92 | 91 | 86 | 82 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | How well the call went was determined by what the customer did during the call |
| 2A | 92 | | | 81 | | 92 | 93 | 84 | 79 | | | | | | | | | | | | | In this story the thoughts of the salesperson before the sales call impacted on the salespersons behaviour |
| 2B | | 99 | | | | 91 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | In this story the thoughts of the salesperson before the sales call impacted on the customers behaviour |
| 3A | | | | | | | 91 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | Thoughts the salesperson was having before the call were mainly thoughts about themselves |
| 3B | 91 | 94 | | | 85 | 91 | | 92 | 97 | | 95 | 83 | | | | | | | | | | Thoughts the salesperson was having before the call were mainly thoughts about the customer |
| 4A | 92 | 72 | 77 | 85 | 83 | 93 | 96 | 86 | 98 | 72 | 78 | 88 | 95 | 91 | 86 | 80 | 75 | 73 | | | | The call objectives for this sales call were well defined |

## 4.5　Summary

Chapter 4 set out to review the research findings and to explore the data to identify anything that would assist in providing insights to answering the research questions. Following a review of the data, an analysis was carried out and the outcomes from the analysis were mapped against each of the research questions.

The negative affect narratives were reviewed first which were then followed by the positive affect narratives. Data taken from Chapter 3, Tables 3.10 and 3.14 were used to identify the Triad narratives most relevant to answering the research objective. The Triads were then re-constructed with the relevant narratives identified for analysis. One representative narrative was then analysed. The analysis commenced with a general overview of the meaning of what the Triad was displaying and was followed by a Table of general demographic characteristics of the participant. The narrative chosen for analysis was then reproduced verbatim. An analysis of the data was then provided. The findings from each analysis were then summarised in Tables and arranged relative to the first 3 research questions. Findings relative to Question 1 were factual data provided by the participant which identified the primary anticipatory emotions experienced. Findings relative to Question 2 were key aspects identified in the data which were then mapped to key authors and their research and discussed in the Literature Review. Findings relative to Question 3 were factors that the participant perceived as influencing their anticipatory emotions. The factors perceived by participants were emergent in nature and effectively, interpretations of the participants constructed realty when conducting the call.  Following an analysis of the Triad data, each Dyad was then analysed and the findings of each presented.

The fourth research question was related to the application of Complexity Theory to sales call dynamics and whether CAS theory could provide insights to anticipatory emotions. The discussion relative to research question 4 is provided in Chapter 5.

In conclusion, the exploration of the research data has provided insights to anticipatory emotions and B2B salesperson effectiveness.  The insights obtained are discussed in Chapter 5 along with conclusions, implications, contributions and directions for future research.

# Chapter 5        Discussion and Conclusions

## 5.1    Introduction

This concluding chapter provides a brief summary and background to the study and re-visits the research questions and overall research objective. In this regard, it presents a macro view of how the research questions were addressed by the thesis. Following is a discussion describing the conceptual model which subsequently emerged following the collection and analysis of the research findings. The next sections of the chapter discuss the theoretical contributions, methodological implications and managerial implications of the study. The limitations of the study are then discussed followed by suggested directions for future research.

## 5.2    Brief summary of the study

This research was undertaken to explore anticipatory emotions in B2B sales people and their potential impact on sales effectiveness. The research objective and related research questions are provided below:

**Research objective**

To what extent are anticipatory emotions perceived by B2B salespeople as impacting on their sales effectiveness.

In order to achieve the research objective, several research questions were developed:

**Research questions:**

1. What are the primary anticipatory emotions experienced by B2B salespeople?
2. In what ways do they perceive these anticipatory emotions impacting on their sales effectiveness?
3. What are the key factors perceived as influencing anticipatory emotions?
4. What insights might complexity theory provide with regards to anticipatory emotions?

The information for this study required the capture of actual sales experiences from B2B salespeople. It was therefore important to determine the most appropriate method to obtain the information that would provide enough relevant information to answer the research questions. Because the information gathered was in the form of lived, personal experiences an exploratory framework was used. To obtain pure qualitative data in the form of sales narratives, it was necessary to use an open architecture design where no priori knowledge or information could 'bias' the collection of the sales narrative data. It was decided that a pre-

hypothesis approach was most appropriate in designing the data collection methodology. A web based application called SenseMaker© by Cognitive Edge Pte. Ltd.® was evaluated and chosen as the preferred method to collect the metadata for this research. SenseMaker© employs an open pre-hypothesis approach to narrative collection. Once the sales narrative has been provided by the salesperson it is augmented with a series of choices which allows the respondent to self-code and contextualise their narrative. A detailed explanation with respect to this requirement was provided in the methodology section in Chapter three.

The key aspect of this study was to collect and explore the lived sales experiences of B2B salespeople and the emotions they experience before going in to a sales call. To this end, the study is unique, as the vast majority of research on emotions in sales have been in the B2C segment, and are focused on general emotions and not specifically anticipatory emotions. There is a paucity of information in the literature in the area of B2B sales and anticipatory emotions, as a result, a significant amount of the literature referred to for this study has come from the field of psychology and where available, from the sales literature. Given the broad base of the study and its interdisciplinary reference, the study contributes significantly towards new knowledge and a better understanding of anticipatory emotions in B2B sales environments.

## 5.3    Contributions towards answering the research questions

Each of the research questions for the study are presented in the following sections and a macro discussion is provided detailing how the research findings and analysis provided in Chapter 4 have contributed towards answering each of the research questions. Once the research questions have been addressed a summary statement is presented in response to the overall research objective.

### 5.3.1    What are the primary anticipatory emotions experienced by B2B salespeople?

This study has provided evidence that B2B sales people make cognitive appraisals about pending sales calls, before making the call. The appraisals are based on memories of past experiences and knowledge of the customer.

From the research findings, the first appraisals made by salespeople were anticipatory appraisals based on knowledge and information about the customer, some of which was already known from previous experience with the customer and some of which was based on information provided by others. In addition, past experience of similar situations learnt from other sales calls shape these anticipatory emotions. From an interpretation of the data

collected, once the salesperson attended the call, a second appraisal occurred and the analysis found that the second appraisal was often incongruent with the first appraisal.

A review of the findings and an analysis of the relevant data, has demonstrated that B2B salespeople experience a relatively even balance of both negative and positive affect anticipatory emotions.

In relation to the research question;

**"what are the primary anticipatory emotions experienced by B2B salespeople?"**

Table 5.1 lists the negative affect anticipatory emotions and Table 5.2 lists the positive affect anticipatory emotions identified from the study:

**Table 5-1:    Primary negative affect anticipatory emotions.**

| Rank | Negative affect emotion | Total count |
|------|------------------------|-------------|
| 1 | Anxious | 33 |
| 2 | Nervous | 21 |
| 3 | Apprehensive | 15 |
| 4 | Concerned | 15 |
| 5 | Worried | 7 |
| 6 | Fearful | 7 |
| 7 | Afraid | 5 |
| Total Count | | 103 |

Table 5.1 lists the seven primary, negative anticipatory emotions experienced by the B2B salespeople in the study. As discussed in the thesis, the seven anticipatory emotions identified have similar constructs, meaning that they exhibit similar states of negative affect of 'generalised worry'.

The psychology literature refers to negative affect as primitive evolutionary feelings which serve to warn and prepare individuals for action readiness to either approach or avoid a pending event (Darwin 1872; Frijda, Kuipers and ter Schure 1989; Lazarus 1991). The pending events in this study are the sales calls. For the negative affect emotions to be experienced, the B2B salespeople cognitively evaluated or appraised the upcoming call and anticipated that the call was likely to present difficulties, which they perceived would inhibit their chances of achieving their desired call outcomes, or in other words impact on their sales effectiveness. The cognitive appraisals they made about the pending call initiated anticipatory emotion(s) which in the case of this study, were in the form of 'generalised worry'. The findings are that the primary negative affect anticipatory emotions experienced

by the B2B salespeople who participated in the study, were anxiety, nervousness, apprehension, concern, worry, fear and being afraid.

This study also identified a similar number of positive affect anticipatory emotions as detailed in Table 5.2.

**Table 5-2:    Primary positive affect anticipatory emotions.**

| Rank | Positive affect emotion | Total count |
|------|------------------------|-------------|
| 1 | Confident | 18 |
| 2 | Optimistic | 17 |
| 3 | Hopeful | 16 |
| 4 | Positive | 14 |
| 5 | Excited | 12 |
| 6 | Determined | 10 |
| 7 | Self-assured | 5 |
| Total Count | | 92 |

The emotions literature, identified that there was a major discrepancy in the amount of empirical research conducted on positive emotions particularly when compared to negative emotions (Fredrickson 1998). The lack of research on positive emotions presented difficulties in being able to obtain useful information about the causes and impacts of positive emotions and in particular positive anticipatory emotions. Nevertheless, this research established which positive affect anticipatory emotions were mostly experienced by B2B salespeople. Those anticipatory emotions are listed in Table 5.2 above.

According to the literature regarding positive emotions, researchers have concluded that positive emotions are relatively undifferentiated in their appraisal characteristics and action inspired volitions (Shaver et al. 1987; Smith and Ellsworth 1985) because of this, positive emotions for the purposes of this study, were considered 'generalised feelings of positivity' and in particular feelings of self-efficacy and self-confidence (Bandura and Adams 1977). The findings reveal that the primary positive affect anticipatory emotions experienced by the B2B salespeople who participated in the study, were confidence, optimism, hope, feeling positive, excitement, determination and self-assuredness or in other words a high degree of self-confidence or overall positivity of thought.

## 5.3.2    In what ways do anticipatory emotions impact on sales effectiveness?

Negative affect anticipatory emotions are more intense and potentially more detrimental to the achievement of sales goals than negative affect emotions that are experienced as events

unfold in the present (Brown, Cron and Slocum 1997; Van Boven and Ashworth 2007). As a result, negative anticipatory emotions impact on goal achievement by altering the salespersons volitions which lead to goal directed behaviours.

This study found that the only way that negative affect anticipatory emotions were arrested was by the salesperson re-appraising the situation once they were in the call. Whilst the literature mentions that the cognitive flexibility or coping ability of the salesperson can also moderate their ability to deal with the negative affect (Herwig et al. 2007) it was not specifically measured in this study, however, it has been included in the conceptual model because there is some evidence in the psychology literature to justify its existence as a potential moderator of emotion control (Dandoy and Goldstein 1990; Folkman and Moskowitz 2004; Genet, Malooly and Siemer 2013; Gross 1998a; Ochsner and Gross 2005b).

The primary negative affect anticipatory emotions in this study feature an overall theme of generalised worry. Worry is an antecedent to anxiety which impacts on self-confidence and other general cognitive processes including coping ability and self-efficacy (Dickson, Ciesla and Reilly 2012; Valenas and Szentagotai 2015). Closely related with 'worry' is the concept of rumination. As was highlighted in Chapter 4, the psychology literature conceptualises rumination as: "a cognitive style that is marked by inflexible and repetitive patterns of thought, which interfere with active problem solving and successful emotion regulation." (Nolen-Hoeksema, Wisco and Lyubomirsky 2008). Kircanski et al. (2015) group rumination and worry together to the extent that they share the core features of unpleasantness, repetitiveness and demonstrate a general sense of 'lack of control' of the situation.

For the purposes of this research, all of the identified negative anticipatory emotions were treated under a general umbrella of generalised negative affect or generalised worry which Martin and Tesser (1996) refer to as general intrusive thoughts. This approach was adopted because B2B sales are highly dependent upon relationship building and repeat business. Worry and rumination are treated as one in the same for this research because a worrying issue on one visit with the customer will be stored in memory and thought about at a later stage as a ruminative thought. The ruminative thought will be recalled from memory and carried forward to the next visit as worry. The findings from this research support the view that worry and rumination are one in the same for B2B salespeople, particularly because of the need for repeat call cycles necessarily performed by B2B salespeople.

The anticipatory emotions and appraisals identified in this study were based on the uncertainty of what might happen in the sales call. Once in the call, the second appraisal undertaken by the salespeople most often resulted in the salesperson reporting that the call was often successful even though they had experienced negative affect before the call.

This study has contributed to the understanding of negative anticipatory emotions as events of appraisal which if not regulated through actions of secondary appraisal or by the salesperson having adequate coping or cognitive flexibility, will result in impaired volitions and goal directed behaviours. Sales effectiveness is therefore negatively impacted upon if salespeople experience negative anticipatory emotions and fail to re-appraise the situation or possess the necessary coping skills to adapt to the changed circumstances presenting in the call. These findings will be important for management and the training, assessment and selection of B2B salespeople. In particular it will be important for management to train existing salespeople in coping skills and how to deal with uncertainty and to use psychological testing as a part of the recruitment process for new sales employees. Table 5.3 outlines the managerial implications resulting from the findings of this study.

With regards to the positive affect emotions, this research identified positive affect anticipatory emotions as being general feelings of positive self-efficacy and includes confidence, optimism, hope, self-assuredness, being positive, excited and determined. Barling and Beattie (1983) confirmed a positive relationship between sales performance and self-efficacy and since then numerous researchers have confirmed a positive relationship (Brown, Cron and Slocum 1998; Hartline and Ferrell 1996; Lubbers, Loughlin and Zweig 2005; Luthans, Zhu and Avolio 2006; Wang and Netemeyer 2002). The literature on 'hope' and 'optimism' is equally convincing with a number of researchers making a direct link between 'hope' and work performance (Luthans et al. 2005; Peterson and Byron 2008; Youssef and Luthans 2007).

Following an analysis of many of the positive affect narratives in this study, it was evident B2B salespeople think about the achievement of sales goals before the call which instil positive anticipatory feelings and emotions. As mentioned, positive anticipatory emotions are directly related to feelings of self-efficacy and direct the volitions of the salesperson and their subsequent goal directed behaviours (Snyder et al. 1991) towards goal achievement and increased job performance or sales effectiveness. (Peterson and Byron 2008).

### 5.3.3 What are the key factors perceived as influencing anticipatory emotions?

As has already been established throughout the thesis, emotions, including anticipatory emotions are cognitive evaluations designed to prepare people for states of action readiness (Frijda, Kuipers and ter Schure 1989; Lazarus 1991). They are rooted in primitive evolutionary physiology and are inherent in the human kind and controlled by the autonomic nervous system (Stein, Hernandez and Trabasso 2010). In the case of anticipatory appraisals or evaluations, the resulting emotions are more intense because of the uncertainty of what might happen (Brown, Cron and Slocum 1997; Van Boven and Ashworth 2007).

Anticipating what might go wrong in the call creates feelings in the salesperson of concern, apprehension and worries which leads to anxiety and other negative affect emotions.

If we consider the nature of anticipatory emotions it is inferred that when a B2B salesperson experiences perceptions and cognitions of inadequacy, the cognitions are evaluations of the future which prepare the salesperson for action readiness. The action readiness is volitions the salesperson considers in order to avoid feelings associated with inadequacy. In the process worry emerges as a persistent negative emotion, constantly reminding the salesperson about how they will feel if they have inadequate product knowledge or cannot answer the customer's questions for example. The worry leads to anxiety which negatively impacts on the salespersons cognitive ability. The anticipatory emotions are further shaped and intensified if the salesperson recalls from memory a time when they did not have sufficient product knowledge and how they felt at the time (Tenenbaum et al. 2009). The persistent negative thinking reinforces ruminative thoughts and their desire to avoid similar feelings in the future (Nolen-Hoeksema, Wisco and Lyubomirsky 2008). The final outcome being that the salespersons cognitive ability is somewhat impaired which impacts on their volitions and goal directed behaviours which in turn impact on sales effectiveness (Martin and Tesser 1996).

Whilst this research found that B2B salespeople do experience negative anticipatory emotions, worry and ruminate and experience anxiety, they averted impaired cognitive ability by re-appraising the event once in the call. The act of re-appraisal is a cognitive task. If cognitive flexibility is impaired, the salesperson would not be able to effectively reappraise the event once in the call. The evidence from this research was that the majority of B2B salespeople researched possessed sufficient cognitive flexibility to enable them to cope and effectively reappraise the situation (Brown, Westbrook and Challagalla 2005).

The key factors perceived as influencing anticipatory emotions are feelings of self-doubt or negative self-efficacy or in other words the salesperson lacking in self-confidence. According to a number of narratives collected, B2B salespeople worry that they may look incompetent in front of the customer. The reported worry was related to the perception that they may not have sufficient product knowledge or that they may not be able to answer questions asked by the customer.

These findings have highlighted the need to conduct further research in the areas of 'pride' and 'embarrassment' which may shed further light on the role they play in cognitions of negative self-efficacy.

The single biggest factor identified as influencing positive anticipatory emotions is B2B salesperson self-efficacy. Self-efficacy is essentially one's confidence in their ability to perform (Dixon and Schertzer 2005). Self-efficacy emerged as the biggest factor impacting

on sales effectiveness, and was represented by feelings of positive affect relating to confidence, optimism, hope, positiveness determination and self-assuredness were well represented in the study findings. Wood and Bandura (1989) confirm that self-efficacy can account for a person's affective state. Gist and Mitchell (1992) go so far as to argue that feelings of self-efficacy are related to perceptions of self-confidence, optimism, and self-assuredness. Feelings of positive self-efficacy are possibly linked to individual differences which can result in pre-dispositions towards feelings of general positivity and self-confidence, however, the scope of the research did not provide for psychological testing of salesperson trait characteristics.

## 5.3.4    What insights might Complexity Theory provide with regards to anticipatory emotions?

By adopting Complexity Science metaphors it has been demonstrated in this thesis that Complex Adaptive Systems (CAS) thinking can provide an alternative and useful means of understanding sales call dynamics including an understanding of emotional responses to sales call events. Complex Adaptive Systems thinking can challenge many of the assumptions typically made by researchers, including the notion that all observed effects have an observable cause and that even the most complicated 'things' can be reduced to component parts and analysed to gain understanding. There is even the notion that if past events are studied sufficiently, future events can be predicted. CAS theory acknowledges that the world is made up of agents and system components that interact and connect with each other in unpredictable and unplanned ways. The interactions begin to form emergent behaviour which feeds back into the system process to further influence the interactions of the agents. Through the application of CAS theory and in particular the concepts of self-organisation, non-linearity, emergence and a sensitivity to initial conditions it was possible to obtain a better understanding of B2B sales call dynamics including insights to anticipatory emotions. Yates, Garfinkel and Walter (1987) describe self-organisation as an emergence of order to deal with social complex systems. It was explained in a previous chapter of this thesis that sales calls are social complex systems which self-organise around a theme of customer needs and salesperson offerings.

The act of conversing during sales calls is unscripted by the parties concerned, the call is mutually constructed and unfolds in the present without precise prior knowledge of what will happen or be said by either salesperson or customer. Salesperson and customer have a general idea of the direction the call will take, after all, they are meeting for a purpose. The shape and direction the call takes is not pre-determined simply by the fact that there is a purpose for the meeting. The 'agents' in the call, namely the salesperson and the customer, jointly create what the call is without prior arrangement as to what will be said or how

people will respond to what is said. The salesperson and customer (agents) mutually responds in an orderly manner observing general rules of conversation courtesy which contributes to the call self-organising. There is no one in the call directing each agent in what to say next, whilst unpredictable, the call self-organises without intervention.

- Based on the application of CAS to B2B sales calls, there is evidence that sales calls and emotions are non-linear systems. So if the sales call and salesperson emotions are non-linear, what does it mean for anticipatory emotions? Salesperson responses to sales call events form emotional responses that are physiologically perceived interpretations of the events before them and which are inherently designed to inform them of their 'wellbeing' or in other words their perceived interpretation of progress or otherwise towards their goals. The sales people in this study made evaluations prior to the call which resulted in anticipatory emotions as listed in Table 5.1 and Table 5.2. The anticipatory emotions were formed from personal appraisals and interpretations as previously discussed, many of which were based on past learned experiences recalled from memory, and all of which contributed to their evaluations of success or failure towards their call objectives. Because sales calls are unscripted, unpredictable, nonlinear system events, they can include emergent novel events which can take the salesperson by surprise during the call. Emergent events during a sales call are addressed by the salesperson as they arise during the call and are a measure of the salespersons flexibility. These events form part of the B2B repeat sales cycle and are important dynamics of both the present call and future calls with the same customer. On future calls with the same customer, the event or experience are placed in memory for use in appraising future calls and as a result, they play an important part of the formation of anticipatory emotions related to the next call with that same customer.
- It is common practice for new information in the form of the identification of previously unknown customer needs or problems, to emerge without notice (Bergmann Lichtenstein 2000; Dimitrov and Wright 2001; Hodgson 2000). Emergent 'items' in a call can be appraised as favourable or unfavourable and influence the anticipatory emotions on the next call. What this research found was that in many cases when salespeople appraise events unfavourably prior to a call and then re-appraise the situation once they are in the call, they effectively learn of new emergent information, or unexpected information which they may have been worrying about prior to the call.

As has been established in the foregoing, systems or in this case sales calls, evolve in unpredictable, nonlinear directions often because of unexpected emergent events (Smitherman 2004). Usually the emergent events are phenomena which are not consciously enacted or planned, in other words, small unintentional comments, actions or evaluations following appraisal can result in significant unexpected call outcomes (Warren, Franklin and Streeter 1998). The initial conditions of a sales call include not only what the salesperson finds when they get in to the call but also the cognitive appraisals and evaluations the

salesperson makes before the call. The cognitive appraisals result in anticipatory emotions which are based on what the salesperson thinks might happen in the call. The sensitivity to initial conditions are the appraisals made and the anticipatory emotions produced in consequence of the salesperson 'imagining' what may or may not happen in the sales call.

As described elsewhere in this thesis, CAS systems are sensitive to initial conditions. Subconscious anticipatory cognitions and evaluations result in volitional changes within the salesperson, which then result in changes to goal directed behaviours. So what began as a seemingly insignificant, routine pre-call appraisal of the upcoming call results in a significant change to the direction of the call and the potential for impaired sales effectiveness or renewed confidence and call success. The salespersons perceptive sensitivity and cognitive response to initial conditions as described above may go unnoticed but in effect they are reshaping their upcoming calls before they even begin, potentially taking the call in directions less favourable for achieving sales effectiveness.

## 5.4 The development of a conceptual model of anticipatory emotions and B2B sales effectiveness.

In order to explore, discover and understand anticipatory emotions and their impact on B2B sales effectiveness has required extensive primary qualitative research and a review of the literature in a number of areas including sales, psychology and social learning theory. Synthesising primary research findings, with empirical secondary research across a multitude of disciplines has enabled new theories to emerge and an opportunity to develop a conceptual model representative of what has been learnt. Susser (1973) describes a conceptual model as a means to organise and synthesise an array of related factors believed to exist, into a coherent, unified and orderly form. Linkages among concepts established from the literature and the findings of the research have informed the development of the conceptual model shown in Figure 5.1. The conceptual model effectively summarises and integrates the knowledge obtained from this study and draws linkages between concepts, theories and findings to advance new theories and insights to anticipatory emotions and sales effectiveness.
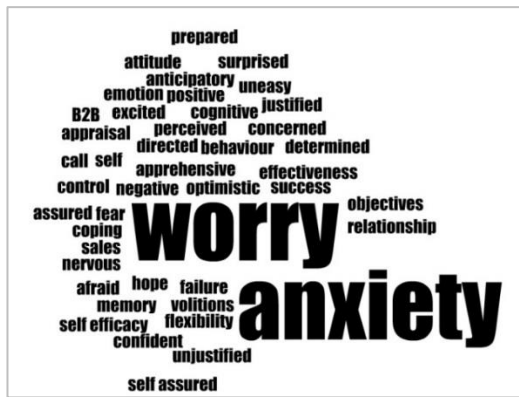
## 5.4.1     An explanation of the conceptual model

This study primarily sought to understand the impact of pre call cognitions and anticipatory emotions and how they might impact on sales effectiveness. The conceptual model is broadly separated into pre sales call activity and what happens once the salesperson has commenced the call.

Looking at the conceptual model, the salesperson receives sensory information via the five senses. The information is evaluated following an appraisal of the pre call information received by the salesperson.   The evaluations are cognitive appraisals of the available information which result in anticipatory emotions.  The cognitive appraisals are designed to establish action readiness strategies to deal with perceived opportunities or threats.  If the appraisals inform the salesperson of potential threats, negative anticipatory emotions follow. If the appraisals inform the salesperson of potential opportunities, positive anticipatory emotions result. Influencing the appraisal process are recalled memories from past sales encounters which are automatically recalled from memory and which further shape the salespersons appraisals.

In the psychology literature it is suggested that affective traits influence an individual's affective state. In other words the psychology literature claims that a person with a positive affective trait will have a tendency to perceive situations in a more positive way and a person with a negative trait will have a tendency to perceive situations in a more negative way.   The conceptual model includes 'affective trait' as it may play a role, however, due to the scope and objectives of this study the trait characteristics of B2B salespeople were not assessed.

One of the significant outcomes from this research was the discovery that when pre-call appraisals are made which results in negative anticipatory emotions, the emotions are most often going to present themselves as general negative affect in the form of generalised worry and rumination. The pre-call negative affective state of generalised worry leads to feelings of anxiety which impact on pre-call volitions, meaning that the anticipatory emotions create an intention by the salesperson to take some particular action or approach once in the call.

Equally, when a pre-call appraisal is made which results in positive anticipatory emotions, the emotions are most often going to be a form of generalised positive affect in the form of confidence and generalised positive self-efficacy. The pre-call positive affective state of generalised positive self-efficacy leads to feelings of confidence and optimism which impact on pre-call volitions, meaning that the positive anticipatory emotions create an intention by the salesperson to take some particular action or approach once in the call. The generalised positive affect increases determination and salesperson effort.

Whether it is negative or positive affect created from pre-call appraisals, a second appraisal is performed by the salesperson once they are in the call and they have new sensory information to hand. This discovery is one of the important contributions this study makes to B2B sales theory.
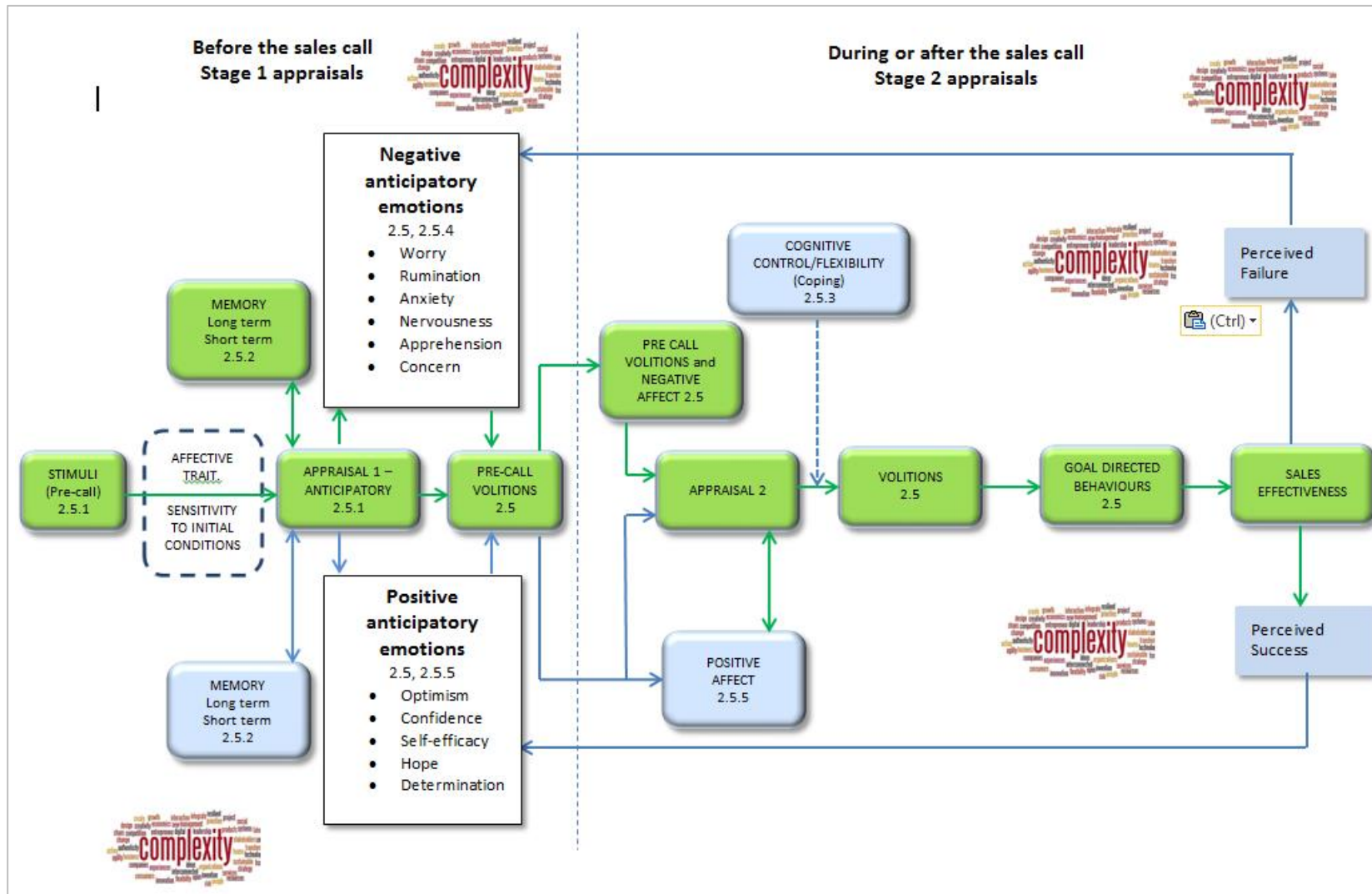
**Figure 5.1:    Conceptual model of B2B sales call regime**

## 5.5 Theoretical contributions and implications of the study

This study has made several valuable contributions for understanding the role of anticipatory emotions on B2B sales effectiveness. The three main contributions are:

1. That B2B salespeople make two appraisals, one before the call which induce anticipatory emotions and another appraisal once they are in the call.
2. That B2B salespeople do not always demonstrate impaired cognitive ability when experiencing generalised worry or negative affect following the second appraisal.
3. That B2B sales calls are Complex Adaptive Systems and sensitivity to initial conditions can have significant impacts on sales effectiveness.

The above findings contributed to the development of the conceptual model shown in Figure 5.1. Based on the findings of this study and the conceptual model developed, a number of theoretical contributions have been identified and are discussed below. Following the theoretical contributions is a discussion of the methodological and managerial implications that this study brings to theory and practice.

### 5.5.1 Theoretical contributions

The first significant contribution this study makes to B2B sales theory is the discovery of two acts of appraisal by B2B salespeople. In particular the appraisal B2B salespeople make before the call and the anticipatory emotions which form following the act of appraisal. In other words, the anticipatory emotions experienced by B2B salespeople are a result of pre-call appraisals. The pre-call appraisals establishes a 'sensitivity' threshold to initial call conditions which impact on volitional intentions which are then carried in to the call.

The B2B sales literature makes no mention of more than one appraisal. The literature does not discuss anticipatory emotions resulting from pre-call appraisals as such. This contribution is significant because it adds to theory and establishes that B2B salespeople experience important evaluative cognitions before going in to a call which induce affective states within the salesperson. The affective state of the salesperson shapes the call and establishes a new call dynamic. Once the salesperson is in the call with the customer, new sensory information via the five senses is available to the salesperson who evaluates and re-appraises a second time.

The second significant contribution this study makes is related to the impacts of salesperson affective states and their sales effectiveness. The sales and psychology literature claim that negative affect in the form of generalised worry leads to anxiety which impairs cognitive ability, or in the case of a B2B salesperson, their ability to re-think or find work around strategies when faced with perceived difficulties.

The findings from this study show that B2B salespeople do not always demonstrate impaired cognitive ability when experiencing generalised worry or negative affect following second appraisals. In fact the finding from this study is that when B2B salespeople experience negative anticipatory emotions (before the call) and then carry the negative affect into the call, they more often than not, still report the call as being successful. Accordingly this finding is contrary to what the literature reports. This new discovery challenges existing sales theories and identifies the need for further research.

The third and final contribution this study makes is that by looking at the sales call through the lenses of complexity science, and in particular as a Complex Adaptive System, new insights are possible. Complexity has characteristics of non-linearity, emergence, self-organisation and sensitivity to initial conditions. All have been described in this and other chapters, however, what is important for sales call effectiveness is an understanding of how sensitivity to initial conditions can play a role. Stage 1 appraisals made by the salesperson before the call are critically important to how the call unfolds and the direction the call eventually follows. Factors impacting on stage 1 appraisal are subconscious anticipatory emotions and appraisals which shape volitional intentions within the salesperson, which can then result in less effective goal directed behaviours.

## 5.5.2    Methodological implications

This research offers a number of new approaches to understanding anticipatory emotions and B2B sales effectiveness.  A number of other research techniques could have been employed for this study, however, it was decided that a fundamentally qualitative, pre-hypothesis study was necessary if insight was to be gained into the emotional experiences of B2B salespeople.

Asking participants' questions about how they were feeling or what emotions they were experiencing, makes responding difficult for the participant because you are basically asking them to "bare their soul" and expose aspects of themselves which they might not normally wish to make known. The decision to employ a pre-hypothesis approach for the study was based on a number of considerations. Firstly it avoided expert opinion and bias which has traditionally been an issue when conducting research. Secondly by asking the participant to recall and write about a sales experience enabled the collection of un-biased, pure, unfiltered data from the participant in their own words.

The other methodological contribution which was a feature of the SenseMaker© "Collector" software module was the ability for participants to self-code their narrative based on choices presented to them in the form of six dynamic Triads.  The data selection options available in each of the Triads were based on particular aspects of interest in the study and were formulated following reviews of the literature. By self-coding or self-indexing their narratives, participants effectively contextualised and added meaning to their experiences.

This capability is cutting edge and is a unique method of collecting and coding data. No other research into anticipatory emotions in B2B salespeople has used this methodology before which means that this study is highly unique and 'one of a kind' in this field of study.

Overall the power of SenseMaker© and the use of a pre-hypothesis research approach together with the capability for participants to self-index their own data, has enabled a significant and original contribution to B2B sales research methodology.

## 5.5.3    Managerial implications

There is a critical view that academic studies rarely put forward relevant suggestions for practising managers (Ankers and Brennan 2002; Salminen, Oinonen and Haimala 2013). In fact  Gummesson (2006) goes so far as to say that the exclusive application of quantitative research methods is partly to blame and that a qualitative research design is more likely to provide more relevant research outcomes because they focus on lived experience and provide insights to more complex socially constructed realities. With the above comments in mind, the outcomes of this research are described in a way that has relevance to and is easily understood by Management.

Sales performance has been measured in many ways by sales management over the years but interestingly there is still no agreement on what the best measures are in order to identify high performers from low performers. Sales alone are not enough as a number of factors can mask the performance of some salespeople. Perhaps a more realistic indicator of sales performance is sales effectiveness. Sales effectiveness is related to sales performance but focuses more on what happens in every call and not on arbitrary measures which can so often be inaccurate because of the single focus on quantitative measures or sales metrics. There is a suggestion that a salesperson who is more effective in calls will bring performance results sooner.

This research has identified a number of important aspects of sales effectiveness which have received very little consideration in the past and will be significantly more useful to management when reviewing a salespersons 'performance'.

In order to better articulate how this research has implications for management, a summary of the main points is presented in Table 5.3.

**Table 5-3:    Summary of findings, practitioner implications and potential actions**

| What are the primary anticipatory emotions experienced by B2B salespeople? | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Aspect/Finding** | **Practitioner Implications** | **Potential Actions** |
| Anxious, Nervous, Apprehensive, Worrying, Fear, Afraid, Concern. | Be aware that half of the sales force may experience negative emotions before going in to a call. This could negatively impact on their sales effectiveness. | Psychologically assess existing salespeople for positive and negative affect. Implement psychological testing of all new B2B salespeople as part of the recruitment process. |
| Confidence, Optimism, Hope, Positiveness, Excitement, Determined, Self-assured | These salespeople may display resilience when faced with difficulties.  This is a positive attribute to nurture. | |
| How do these anticipatory emotions impact on sales effectiveness? | | |
| **Negative emotions** | | |
| Persistent negative thoughts potentially can impact on salesperson volitions and goal directed behaviours. Coping ability impacts on re-appraisals. | Worrying will result in anxiety which will self-perpetuate and impair the salesperson's ability to think clearly and to be flexible during the call. This will change the salesperson's volitions and can negatively impact on them achieving their call objectives. As a result their sales effectiveness declines. | Consider counselling in coping skills for salespeople identified as being worriers. |
| Stage1and Stage 2appraisals | It is to be expected that salespeople will experience anticipatory emotions. It is important that salespeople re-appraise the situation once in the call by being flexible otherwise sales effectiveness will be negatively impacted. | Train salespeople how to be flexible and use a sales strategy that progresses the call in a different direction to achieve the same outcomes. Develop salespeople to understand that in most cases calls go well and not to worry unduly. |
| **Positive emotions** | | |
| Confidence and self-efficacy. General feelings of positivity. | Generally positive emotions will contribute to effectiveness, however, an excess of confidence can be perceived as narcissism and have a negative impact on sales effectiveness. | Develop confidence in salespeople -  both product/service confidence and sales technique confidence Alert salespeople to customer perceptions of overconfidence. |

**Table 5.3 (cont.)**

| What can influence these anticipatory emotions? | | |
|---|---|---|
| Past experiences.<br>Worry and rumination. | A salesperson with a limited successful track record will be more likely to ruminate about past experiences which will initiate worry and negatively impact on sales effectiveness. | Modify recruitment and selection strategies to identify past track records of potential sales recruits.<br>Use scenario based interview techniques as part of the selection process. |
| Individual characteristics - trait | A salesperson may have a disposition towards negative affect | As part of recruitment and selection strategy, incorporate affective trait testing, particularly agreeableness and neuroticism tendencies. |
| The impact of uncertainty on anticipatory emotions (Complexity Theory) | | |
| Non-linearity, Emergence, Self-organisation, Sensitivity to initial conditions. | Uncertainty initiates negative anticipatory emotions which can impact on salesperson flexibility. Salespeople inclined to experience anticipatory negative emotions are more likely to worry about the unknown. Most worry and concern has proven to be unjustified once the salesperson is in the call. | Consider counselling / training salespeople on how to cope with uncertainty. |

Table 5.3 summarises the research questions and based on the findings of the research, identifies potential implications for practitioners.  Table 5.3 then offers

suggested actions that could be implemented by practitioners.

## 5.6    Limitations of the study

This study was an exploration and interpretation of anticipatory emotions in B2B salespeople.

Limited research has been conducted in the area of anticipatory emotions and in particular in B2B sales. The vast majority of research that does exist is in the B2C market but not specifically in the area of anticipatory emotions. This along with a general lack of research in the area of positive emotions has made it very difficult to reflect on past research, however, it has provided an opportunity for new discoveries which have contributed to theory in these areas.

In qualitative research, sample size is determined differently than in quantitative studies. In qualitative studies sample size is determined via the point of saturation where no new data or findings are emerging.  This research was unique in that it adopted a pre-hypothesis approach and used qualitative data analysis and quantitative data analysis at sequential stages of the study. In total there were 134 responses from B2B salespeople. Not all narratives were used in the final analysis because effort was focussed on areas that directly related to answering the research questions. This narrowing focus represents a potential limitation of the study as not all the data collected was utilised. Whilst this is a limitation, it is an expected by product of pre-hypothesis design. Irrespective of this limitation, there was a strong theme based around general negative affect and general positive affect which allowed this study to achieve its objective.

 Another limitation of this study was that the narratives provided by the participants were relatively brief and sometimes incomplete. This is a characteristic of narrative based research because narratives are often only fragments of stories which are elaborated upon when stories are told. Fortunately the study design incorporated a number of data collection methods which included narratives, narrative titles, Triad questions and Dyad questions which together provided enough information to enable the analysis to proceed.

## 5.7    Directions for future research

While this research has extended the current knowledge of anticipatory emotions in B2B sales, much more needs to be done. Further research needs to be conducted to especially investigate the role of affective trait on the formation of anticipatory emotions in B2B sales. There is a significant gap in the literature in this regard.

The other gap in the literature is to do with positive emotions, specifically how they influence anticipatory emotions and what effect they have on B2B sales effectiveness.  As mentioned previously, positive emotions have not been a focus of researchers in the past, let alone there impact in B2B sales or how they relate to the formation of anticipatory emotions.

An opportunity exists for further research concerning how cognitive flexibility or coping ability can moderate the volitional intentions of salespeople. There is ample discussion in the psychology literature but very little exists concerning B2B sales people.

Thirdly there is an opportunity to research the relationship between customer perceptions of over-confidence or narcissism in salespeople and its relationship with sales effectiveness. There is very little in the literature in this area and warrants further investigation.

Finally an opportunity exists for research to be undertaken to determine if longer term customer relationships, have an impact on anticipatory emotions.

## 5.8  Conclusion

This research investigated anticipatory emotions and their role in B2B sales effectiveness. 134 sales narratives were collected from B2B salespeople via a web based collection instrument which adopted a pre hypothesis research design.

The results identified 14 primary anticipatory emotions with equal numbers of negative and positive emotions. An analysis of the data revealed that B2B salespeople experience anticipatory emotions following pre-call evaluations. The data also revealed that pre-call evaluations and sensitivity to initial conditions impact on salesperson volitions which precede goal directed behaviours and a determination of sales effectiveness. A surprise finding from this study was that salespeople do not make a single appraisal of the call; they make a first appraisal before the call which results in anticipatory emotions and a second appraisal once the salesperson is in the call.

The literature suggests that generalised negative affect, most typically in the form of worry, leads to anxiety which impairs cognitive ability. This study found that B2B salespeople do not always appear to experience impaired cognitive ability. An interpretation of the narratives shows that even when a salesperson experiences anticipatory emotions in the form of generalised worry and anxiety they often report the call as being successful.

From the perspective of positive anticipatory emotions confidence, optimism and determination increase feelings of positive self-efficacy which contribute to improved sales effectiveness. This finding is in support of the limited literature available pertaining to positive emotions in B2B sales.

The application of Complex Adaptive Systems theory to B2B sales call analysis, enabled the identification of the CAS principle of 'sensitivity to initial conditions' to be the equivalent of the salespersons perceptive sensitivity to pre-call conditions. What the salesperson interprets, initiates anticipatory emotions which establish volitional responses from the salesperson. The volitional responses effectively reshape the upcoming call before they even begin, potentially taking the call in directions less favourable for achieving sales effectiveness.

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# Appendix 1    Pre study material and interviews

## Appendix 1A    Letter of introduction/request

Kingsley Dunstan

PO Box 1440

Midland

Western Australia 6936


Stephen XXXXX

Australia Post

Western Australia


14 September 2009


Dear Stephen

**Re: Pilot Research Project - Business to Business Sales**

Thank you for taking the time to speak with me today.

I am a Doctoral candidate (Doctor of Business Administration) at Curtin University Graduate School of Business. I am seeking to conduct a pilot research study in the area of B2B sales. The background details are as follows:


**CURTIN UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY**: Graduate School of Business


**SUPERVISOR:** Associate Professor Margot Wood


**CO-SUPERVISOR:** Associate Professor Des Klass


**THESIS TITLE:** "Exploring anticipatory emotions and their role in self perceived B2B salesperson effectiveness".


**NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS:** Minimum 1 but preferably 2

**PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

To achieve a better understanding of how anticipatory emotions in B2B sales organisations, impact upon salesperson effectiveness.

**PROCEDURES**

Interviews would be conducted and arranged at a time convenient to the participant's schedule. Interviews should be approximately 1 hour in duration. Participants will be asked open ended questions about their B2B sales experiences. To ensure accuracy, permission will be sought to audio record interviews.

**POTENTIAL BENEFITS**

The pilot study will form the basis of a more comprehensive, on line research programme that will be at least national and potentially international in coverage. The research findings will add to the literature and provide new knowledge in the areas of emotions research and sales performance and provide new insights of interest to management and sales management.

**PRIVACY AND CONFIDENTIALITY**

As the proposed research is for a pilot study only, there will not be any documented thesis of the Australia Post findings. The only documentation will be the transcribed interviews. It is hoped the interviews will provide insight into the types of questions I will need to formulate for a formal research project to be undertaken at a later date. Participant interview details will be kept strictly confidential. Individual names will not appear in any transcripts or on any documentation.

I welcome the opportunity to work with Australia Post on this important study. Please contact me at any time on dunstan1@iinet.net.au or 0411 712 955 should you wish to discuss any aspect of my proposal.

I look forward to hearing from you in due course.

Yours sincerely

Kingsley Dunstan (Grad.Dip.Bus., Grad Dip Ed., MBA., AFAIM)

# Appendix 1B   Example verbatim transcript of interview

## ONE ON ONE INTERVIEW

## DS400033

### INDEX:

| | |
|---|---|
| BOLD CONTENT: | KINGSLEY DUNSTAN |
| PLAIN TEXT CONTENT: | PARTICIPANT |
| TIME STAMP: | 9.30AM. 13 NOVEMBER 2009 |

### START OF RECORDING

**To begin with, let's find out a little bit about your job, what do you do and about yourself as well.  I believe you've been there for 39 years.  Is that correct?**

That's correct.

**So just tell me a little bit now about the job that you currently have.**

Okay. The job I currently have is called a Key Account Manager. It's basically a relationship manager's role. I have the top range of customers that deal with Australia Post, a portfolio worth about $24 million worth of revenue that my role is to protect against any competitor interference. Basically, by getting to know my customers, they aware me to a situation where competitors have come into their premises and start to look at work that we do to offer a quote. Then it's my job just to make sure they're happy with our service so that we keep them and we don't lose it to that competitor.  The other part of the role is also to look at the opportunities that lie within that organisation. I look after the universities, the five major ones. That would be Notre Dame, Curtin, Murdoch, UWA and ECU. They're within my portfolio now and Xxxxx and the major banks. I deal at all levels from mailroom staff to CEO and each time there's a different role to play when talking to those different types of people.

Each day I have a list of appointments. It may be just retention, renewal contracts, just socialising with the clients, actually being there on call to assist them whenever they ring. I also have to liaise within Post at all different levels as well, basically to take back the concerns of my customers, issues I have around getting services to provide to my customers, but also the concerns of internal customers – we'll call them that – that can't provide the service that we've been doing for a few years. Say for Curtin delivery, picking up of the mail, we just recently just changed an arrangement there where the mail was

being delivered by 7:00 o'clock because we moved out the contractors from that delivery centre. That meant that there was going to be an impact of two or three hours on top of Curtin for them to get their mail. So you have a different situation and concerns by people and from different parties.

**Well what is it that you like most about the job?**

I think I'm a people person so it's really an interaction with people. From my years of Post, I have done different roles where I've worked on the counter and you had set hours 9:00 to 5:00. Your lunch was an hour or a half an hour and you had to be back on time. This gives me more freedom and flexibility, but I feel I'm working harder in this role than the 9:00 to 5:00 because you do things when required.

**Okay.**

Like if the customer rings you at 6:30 in the morning – I'm on the road by 6:00. I'm at work by 7:00.  Our official time's not 'til 8:30, but I like to get in and catch up, get the paperwork out the way and then I can go to see customers.  It's just the way I do it.  But I think it's that interaction with the customer, the joy you get when you've just cracked a big deal, you can celebrate. There's a lot of highs and lows. It's certainly a roller coaster type of job, it's not a swings and roundabouts or that's the way I paint the picture because your swings and roundabouts, you go to work, you do your job, you come home. This one,  you're riding high at one stage and then you're down. I think for me, that's the type of person I am. I quite like that challenge. I've been in sales just over 20 years now into different roles I play as Account Manager, Sales Consultant, looking at not just the majors where I am now, but the lower end, just the small business.

Prior to going into this role which I've done for two years, I was the manager of the SME Group. I had a sales team of 10, but then they decided to change it around. So I'm back on the road again. But I'm more comfortable with that whereas you don't have the staff issues or I'd become an HR person.

**Now what do you like least about the job?**

It's everyone's hate I think, whoever you talk to in sales, is paperwork. The amount of time that you have to spend on paperwork. I know some of it's needed, but we seem to be going into an age where we've got all the technology to assist us to cut down our time and give us more time on the road, but I'm getting more reports to do. I have to do a report on every visit now. We call that a CAP report.  Basically, it's just where you spend your time and on what functions you spend your time. Then you have to duplicate that information into a pipeline report. At the moment, they're looking at how they can bring the two systems together so they populate each other, but at the moment you have to do this, this and this. Then the emails keep coming in, whereas before we only had a pager. So if the customer wants us, a number came up, it was great. But now you've got the computers, you've got all this technology and I've been working harder just answering that.

Yeah. So it's a sign of the times.

I think that's the thing I hate.

That aspect.

And procrastination I think. That's where I like to just move on quickly and get this done and "Let's take the next challenge." I hate it when it just rolls on. For four years I was the Account Manager for State Government and that's where it really slows down because you do your presentation and it could take four years before you actually get the sign. With Post, it's not just about going out and signing someone up straight away. Some of the things we put in place may take two years before it's implemented and starts to go. I suppose my feeling is when I had a job I did for xxxxx. It was the bank statements, took two years and I just said to my manager, I said "It just feels like you've had a son and you've seen it grown up and it's now going to school" because you've really nurtured it from here, here, here and at the end, you've seen it walk on its own. Then you've got to back off because it's not your role and I think that's some of the emotions you feel. You think "I've had this so long. We've had Monday meetings for the last two years. Now I've got to step back. What do I do now?" Then you move onto your next project.

**Yes, okay well that's good. Now, earlier you did mention that you're dealing with all levels in the organisation and therefore, you have to play different roles. Now what do you mean by that?**

It's basically, I can't talk to you as a CEO the same way as I've talked to the mailroom staff, or if I go to a warehouse, I can't just walk in with a suit and tie. In most cases once I've known the people, I just take the tie off and walk in, but I can't do that to a CEO. You've still got to watch your Ps and Qs. You still do that with the mailroom staff and that but it's a bit more relaxed. They're "G'day xxxx. How are you going?" and that. Then when you go to see a CEO, you have a structure of what you want to talk about. Sometimes they digress off that, but I always like to have an agenda when I go out to see them and I know exactly that this is the path I want to follow.

**Okay. Well, if say for example, you've got a meeting with the CEO, is that any different from an emotions' point of view or how you feel compared to meeting say, the Warehouse Manager or someone else in that type of role?**

Yeah. I always get myself uptight and every meeting, I'm just thinking for the worst things that could happen. I'm never late. I'm always there early, I just bring in today and I get there and I prepare myself. But I'm one of these guys that if I over prepare I muck it up and I get sweaty palms, I get the shakes but when I go out and see mailroom staff, because I basically just go in there and it's just off-the-cuff and talking to them, it's just a reaction to it. If they've got an issue about mail, they just want someone that's going to fix it. The CEO, I'm standing there thinking "Okay, well how am I going to start this off?" If I don't know him that well, I'll look for pictures on the wall and then I'll start to calm myself down, but it's just the preparation. I'm always like that before I go in. Once I'm in there and we start talking, I'm just calm and remember to breathe.

**So with the CEO, you're concerned about what?**

I think it's concern that you're representing the company and in the back of your mind think "Well if this doesn't work it's going to get back to my manager," and perhaps I've got a weakness there. I suppose you always think that you've got a weakness. You always think that you haven't done as good as what you should have done. "I should have picked up on

that you're using this brand or this," or "Have I given him enough information?" I don't know why I think that but I analyse things afterwards.

**Afterwards. Okay.**

After a meeting, I get in the car and I sit there and I have a few minutes. I suppose from the training I've had years ago that I don't run myself down, but I just sit there and think "Well Xxxxx, you could have done this better. You've done that."

**So is that a feeling of sort of, it wouldn't be anger, but would it be more of an anxiety feeling of sorts, worrying about what that other person may think, what your boss might think and have you done the right thing?**

I'm my worst own enemy for that. I've had people come out with me and said "Look, I don't know what you're doing, you probably don't know what you're doing, but it works well." But I'm always trying to pick faults with myself and I always want to do better. I think it's just a trait of all sales people that you over-criticise yourself. Instead of saying "Well, we did get a sale, we did achieve this. We are going to have another meeting," and you've got the outcomes, you've done a close. But I always think "Well, no. If I had perhaps done a bit more training on this, I'm going to be better than what I am," instead of really thinking "Well, you are good." But I've never been like that and I always strive for the next step.

**The next level, always looking there?**

Yeah.

**So there is job satisfaction though?**

Definitely, yeah. Yeah.

**Whatever happens, there's still satisfaction there? Okay, so those different roles... and you have highs and lows you mentioned earlier. You celebrate your highs and you have these lows. Now just elaborate a little bit more on these highs and lows you were talking about.**

Yeah, with the lows basically, some days I think "I can't sell snow to the Eskimos and those types of things" or "You've had a bad day" or something's happened on the drive in. On those type of days, I just use key things to motivate myself to lift. If I feel like I'm getting in a rut, I wear a good watch or a tie, something that I don't usually wear and just use that to motivate myself. The lows, you think some days perhaps a bit better off doing another job. Then suddenly you get that one phone call and then you forget about what you were thinking there and you're suddenly riding the crest of the wave again.

**Do you find that those lows and highs are sort of transitory, they're sort of short term, like only last a day or is it something that could actually go on for a number of days or a week?**

I think the lows, if you can control it for a day, that's fine. I think if you start going further than a day then you may have other problems that you need to address and perhaps sales isn't the job for you because it's quite a mental and stressful game. The way I see it, it's a game that "You want the best price, I want the best price for my organisation and where do we meet and what's the outcome?" And yeah, I've got to be mentally alert all the time.

**Even if I know the answer, I'll ask the question and then you know and you're playing the game with me as well.**

Yeah, it can be very stressful and I think what I've learnt now, but over time, was switching off, taking the issues home which could reflect back on personal life because you've had a visit that hasn't gone the way you want or you've just been chewed out by your manager and you take it home and think "Well, yeah I was at fault," or "No I wasn't." Then your wife or partner knows that you're still thinking about work, but that finished two hours ago. You've got to let it go and that's the hardest thing in sales because you take everything on board.

I think one thing I've learnt over the years is it's not my fault if something breaks down. "I represent Australia Post and I'm going to be the first person you see. So I'm your sounding board. You don't know me, but I'm Australia Post so I'm going to get everything that we've done to you in the last six months thrown at me." That's what some of the reps don't understand now that they take that emotion on board, but it's not their fault. We lose a contract and they feel that they lost the contract, but it could be transport haven't picked up the mail, the courier lost valuable items, a whole range of things have happened. Because you're representing Australia Post and you're the Account Manager, they're coming to you. They don't mean it to be personal, but you're the person that's sitting in front of them today, like I am with you. So you have to take all that emotion aside.

**Okay. So how do you do that though?**

Well, I used to get home and feel that I've done this and I'll try and work out how I could solve the problem, try and do things that will keep the contract. "Well, if I was to do this, can we keep the contract, if we improve that?" I still do that to a degree trying to find out how we can keep the contract, but I just say "Look, I understand your issues." All I can do is represent it back and that's all they want to hear. They're not going to say "I'm not really picking on you Xxxxx." But anyone that's new in sales, I'm sure that they would have that thought.

**That's right.**

I think that's the stressful thing. If you don't handle that, you become a mess.

**You need to be able to regulate your own feelings in that way quite consciously?**

Well that's right, yeah.

**Okay.**

Sometimes initially when something's sitting there, I think "Well, hang on a minute, I can park this now. What's the worst outcome this can be? Okay, we lose the customer however, but I may be able to do things that win them back." For my personal emotions, I can "No, it's not going to affect me. I'm not going to be seen that I lost that contract because we know that it's documented all here." The worst thing that could happen to me if I let this – I could get sick, I'd be off work. So I've now learnt just to let it go.

**Let it go.**

Yeah.

**Okay.**

But it wasn't easy. It's taken years.

**It's taken a while, then, to get to that point?**

Now, think of a sales call that you've done and in particular a successful one, a good successful call, right? We have varying degrees of success when we do a call. Why was that successful and perhaps give me an example or a story where it went really, really well and how you felt about that and what led to getting to that point.

I'm just trying to think back. I think the best ones are people that have done their homework, they're probably some of the best ones I think because you actually have listened or understood. They want to try and solve what their problem is. So basically, they've called you in and they advise you this is the issue they're having and that you've been able to find a solution that does suit that and it's just got a nice fit and you're able to work with that client and find that solution. I'm just trying to think of some of the things. I suppose the Xxxxx one with the statements was an ideal one where basically I was just cold calling one day. They've got a room that was just full of machinery and they did all their printing and everything in-house. By just talking to them, we suddenly found out that they were going to buy a whole lot of machinery that was going to cost millions.

From there, we started talking about our services through eSolutions and then we were able to find that there was some common ground there that we could actually work together because they had a need and I had a solution for them. Then from there, it was just an easy rolling one where you had someone that had a concern. They were easy to work with, they offered advice. They say "Well, you know we need to do this. Can we do that?" It was just check point all the way through and any hurdles, the gentleman that I was working with, he was suddenly helping me to get over those hurdles. He was my partner. Even though he's my customer, I suddenly found that I had an advocate there. He was running a shotgun for me through the company and then suddenly he said "Well okay, we've got a solution Xxxxx. For me to use this you need to talk to this person." So, he was taking me on that journey whereas if I'm doing something with Curtin at the moment because I've only just taken over the account, I'm trying to find people and at the moment, I haven't got that one person to say "Well, I'll take you here and I'll take you there." I'm jumping from pillar to post and I'm picking up small bits of business, but I don't have that one person at the moment who will say "Okay, well run ideas through me and I'll take you here, take you there…"

Take you to them.

I think to make it successful, you need that person in an organisation where you can just link onto and then they take it.

**You mentioned "they were easy to work with". So, what makes it easy? Is it a personality thing?**

I think personality and also some people have hidden agendas. I said before about CEOs. I find that the CEO is the most easiest person in the company to talk to and the 2IC is the worst person in the company to talk to. My reason behind that is that the CEO has made it.

He is more relaxed, he's got the top job and you're just talking one to one with them. Where the 2IC is still trying to become number one and he's trying to prove that you've got to look at the finance, you've got to look at this, you've got to look at that.

**Okay. Understood.**

And they really give me a hard time, but they're fun to work with because you know what they've got to achieve and what they've got to do.

**So give you a hard time, and how do you feel about that? What feelings do you have then?**

Well, I won't say "Hard time," probably difficult time. You know that you've got to do more work and you've got to make sure when you do your presentation and if you've got it right, they'll understand that you're the type of person that needs the I's dotted, T's crossed. You may come across the person that needs all figures, but then I may have got it wrong that "You just want a total solution. You don't want to hear all the fluffy stuff around, but then again you may be the person that's highly technical and that's why you want me to deliver all the technical specs." So, it's understanding what type of role or person you are, or a green bear, a yellow bear or whatever, all the different types of courses we've had over the years and that's something that … all you can do, I can pick up is how you've got your office set out, how you communicate with me. I think "Okay, well you're that type of person," and then I'll ask them. I'll say "Would you prefer me to present it in all the technical specs?" They may say "Yes" or "No, just give me the proposal based around this."

**Right, okay. Well what is it, in your opinion, then that makes a call successful? What is it? What are the key factors that make a call successful? I know you've mentioned that you've got someone with a need and you've got a solution, but as far as the actual mechanics of the actual call itself, is there anything there?**

Yeah. I think to make it successful, I want to be able to have something to put on the table so that they can see that there's value in the relationship with Xxxxx. When they're getting something for Post, they're also getting me and they know the value in that. Once they start to feel that they've got that trust, I think that's what makes it successful and it's basically leaving there thinking "Well, I've got information from that person and they've given me a lot of information to work on." When I feel it's not successful is when I think "Well, I've just wasted an hour. I don't think I was clear enough, I didn't get my message across. I really didn't understand what they wanted." Or that they're just fishing for pricing to make their boss feel good that they've gone around to three other people and I think "Well, I've just wasted my time." The successful ones are basically "Well, no we can help each other," and I get that satisfaction feeling inside that I'm actually useful and I can do something for you. I think that's something what makes it successful.

**So you mentioned earlier that some situations can be stressful. Now, can you just elaborate a bit more when you say "stressful". What makes it stressful and how do you feel? How does it manifest itself as stress in you?**

When I say about being stressful, I think it's because what demands they're putting on you or it may be that you're putting too much on yourself.

**Is it Expectation?**

I'm trying to think of a situation that was stressful. I think I had a meeting where I thought I was just going to go and meet one person. So I was prepared for that one person and then I walk in and I'm in a boardroom with ten people.

**Okay. So really it's about meeting your expectations and your expectations on that occasion was one person and of course that expectation wasn't met. So you've got ten people all of a sudden and it's stressful. So what feelings did that provoke?**

Well, I think there's a fear of rejection, fear that you're not going to deliver what's asked, that you haven't come prepared. For me, it's always fear of failure. I don't like to fail. I think I need to be successful all the time and I think that goes back to when I came out to Australia with my parents, I was 15. I went to school for one day and they broke for school holidays and I had to have two weeks to catch up two years. So I spent one week reading books and that and I thought "This is not for me." I had no friends when I came to Australia. So I had to go out and be the type that joined social clubs, football clubs. My brothers and sisters all went to school and they developed new friends. I've always been that type of person, I've had to go out and…

**Make it happen?**

…make friends and push myself all the time. That's come into my business career where I've not been happy just to get this. I then say "Well I need to move on." I think that's like my career I have with Post. I started off as a telegram boy and my success was that I want to be a Postal Manager and I'd be happy to be a Postal Manager. So, I became a Postie, Postal Clerk, Senior Post Clerk and I've got Postal Manager. So I understand that I got five promotions, but that wasn't enough. I'm thinking that would be enough and then I'd run into another role. I think I've had about 20 odd jobs within Post and all different levels from being a Sales Manager, then back onto the road again. I think it's just this year basically and I think "Well, I'm pretty high up in the tree in Post now." I'm an A6 which for WA is quite high because basically, you've got about four A7s and then you've got an executive and then the General Manager. So basically, you're not going to go any further unless you want to go over east. Now with family commitments, that's not what I want.

Now I've started to realise "What do I want? Why am I doing this?" but at the time because when we came out from England, I just had to keep pushing myself and be accepted. I didn't have the education. I had to go through TAFE and do things there. So I was doing night school and things like that. I don't regret it. I think it's made me a better person, but it's taken 39 years to realise why I'm doing that job. When I go out on a sales visit, I just want to keep getting the best results. Like this role I've got now, I've got double the workload now because we got rid of one of the positions where the gentleman retired. So I've got the whole private sector, so I've got all the banks. So it's quite a workload and every time I go and see someone, I'm always getting an opportunity and I'm thinking "Well, a lot of people don't seem to push themselves. Why do I do it?" But I think it's because I like success and I'm hungry for it. That's why I do and I enjoy it. If I don't do it I'm grumpy at home.

**That's why underpinning all that is your fear of failure. You don't want to fail.**

No.

**But you also mentioned "rejection". Now, why would it matter in a call if you felt that you were being rejected by a person and how would you deal with that?**

I don't know if star signs come into it or what. But I'm not that type of person whereas I like to be accepted all the time. It's not just sales, I think it's the person that makes you up. I'm a Capricorn. I'm quite emotional and I take everyone's word to heart. I don't growl back at someone. I did this morning. I had to ring the wife up and say "I just jumped down someone's throat," and I don't do that, but it just happened this morning, and that's the type of person I am. I just go with the flow and I like being around people. My wife's different. She likes to be on her own. So the two opposites do attract. If there's something going on I always put my hand up. So I'm involved with different committees and stuff like that.

Yeah. Well, as far as that rejection goes then, there is that fear of rejection because what? that might make you ….? Is it an internal thing that's not going to be satisfactory to you individually, or is it more of a corporate thing back at the office how they might see the situation?

I'm not being analysed here, but I think I feel like I could be seen as weak.

**Okay.**

Because every satisfaction survey we've done, I haven't got less than an 8.5, okay. Perhaps it will do me good to get a real low one. Saying that, I did get one year when one customer rated me as a four, but that only came at a time when my manager and I went out and we really upset this woman, didn't give her what she wanted. But normally, I'm quite high and everyone says about the survey, they say "Well, we know you're going to get nines or tens Xxxxx," so they expect that. Then I feel "Well I've got to achieve that."

**Understood.**

So you take that on board.

**Now that call that you just talked about where the lady didn't get what she wanted, can you briefly explain the circumstances and how that call went and what were the feelings that you were having in that call at that time?**

Yeah, it was a very difficult one. She basically wanted the service for nothing and they were a charitable organisation. We were just quoting the prices from the book, but in Post you don't have room to negotiate or move because you have government legislation, you're tied by it. Even though we're a corporation now, we're not free range like our competitors. Where if they see an opportunity, they can move off that price and come right down. We're going by government restraints of how far we can go and what we can do. So, until they deregulate that we have got no opportunity. So my manager at the time, he was quite out there, more livelier than me, I think type of his make up, so she labelled him as a car salesman and I was the type of person that just went along. But when you have the Sales Manager with you, I can't do much more about that. He's the one in charge actually of the meeting. He's the one that makes the decision.

**Well how were you feeling at the time when he's sort of taking that approach and you can see where the call's going?**

Your hands are tied and I felt, well not embarrassed, but you just feel that you can't do anymore. You just really have to go with what your manager is saying at the time and the way he's controlling the meeting. Then when he comes back and says "Is there anything else we could do Xxxxx?" "Well basically no, you're correct the way we're going. Perhaps we could have delivered it a little bit better," but you never know at the time how it's going to go.  At this stage, he just really want to just save dollars and didn't want to pay. I think what they were trying to do is say "Well, Australia Post is a big enough organisation, just wipe it off you know" and don't charge us." But you can't do that because if you do that for one you've got to do it for other customers and it's an industry that you'd love to be able to do that, but word of mouth gets around and you're in bigger trouble than what – so you've just got to take the hard stand sometimes and just say "No."

**Yeah.**

They have the right to see you as you are but the way around that was I made contact with other people and just still give them a level of service. But at the time, you do think "The walls are closing, get me out of here. Let's go and do something else."

**Now earlier you mentioned that you were an emotional type of a person. What do you mean by that?**

I think I take things to heart.

**Okay.**

I have a hearing problem as I said to you at the beginning. I've never been open with it like I have in the last ten years. Before that, I used to really try and hide it. I get very good at reading people's lips and I always felt that that was a burden and could be a reason to get rid of me because I've got a failure there.  But these days, I'm over that.  I'm actually to the stage now that when I do presentations I have someone in the room that if I miss a question they know straight away, bang. I'm getting these little tricks and that's the way I do it. Years ago, I would just try and wing it and think "Well okay…"

**Yeah, see how you go.**

"Poor me I've got the hearing problem."

**Okay. Well, do you think then that emotions do affect a sales call's effectiveness? Well actually I'll back up a little bit. First of all, the effectiveness of the sales call, what does that mean to you? That's the first part. When is a sales call effective and when is it not effective?**

I think you've just got to have a purpose why you're going on the call. I'd like to say "I think every sales call is effective," but sometimes people can waste time, but going there just to see their mate or just go in to 'chew the fat'. Call it customer management, and sometimes you have to do that but then sometimes you think "Well I've just gone in there. It's not an effective sales meeting," but at least you're being seen. I've had calls where I've just done cold calls. I'll probably do one after this meeting, just pop in and see the lady at xxxx and

that will just be a chat, a social catch up, but at least I've showed my face. She'll just ring me when something happens. Now that customer runs quite smoothly.

Two months back I did the same thing, I called in and she just opened up to me that she's having major problems with the couriers. It became an effective meeting because all of a sudden I was saying "Well I've got a solution for you. Come over to us."

**Are you suggesting then that perhaps the effectiveness is linked to the call objective, your call objective that you set?**

Yeah. I think it's got to be – because sometimes you think "I'll just call in and see Fred and just make sure it's running." It's not necessarily going to be that effective. Well my objective is just to make sure that they know you're still there and you haven't forgot them because you don't always have a reason to go and see a client. The account's running well, they're not ringing you, you can't see any opportunity. But, by going in there, just popping in, suddenly you may see something that has changed that you weren't aware of.

**So do you have much flexibility in setting your own call objectives or have you got specific objectives that the company sets for you?**

We have KPIs based around financial customer service, customer expectations and things like that and so many visits to do a day. My objective is really just to keep the customers aware of who I am, I'm there and I set my own aside from that. I suppose they are in line with the company's KPIs. You've got to do so many visits a day. There's nothing there about what the quality of the visit is or anything like that.

You have to get their bench …

Through that, I have a certain number where we meet monthly to review revenue out of the postage game. The other parts that I put on top of that is that I'll call in when I'm in an area. I've got say half an hour to spare after this, I'll just pop in there and just make sure. The car's in a car park there so it's safe. So I'll just walk down there. So that gives me an extra visit. So I set my own personal goals what I want to achieve.

**Right, okay.**

And what I'm looking at there. The effectiveness – I'm really trying to think of something that wasn't effective.

**Did you get out of it what you wanted?**

But I get out of it what I want and at the end of the day, I achieve a high satisfaction because they know I'm around whereas they turn to me and say "Well your predecessor, we only saw her once a year when she wanted to sign the contract. At least you pop in every five minutes."

**Okay yes.**

And that way all I've got to be careful of is how I spend my time there because it could be just quite easy to pop in and say "Well what happened with the kids this weekend at the football?" and that wasn't really an effective meeting. In the long term, it may turn out that because you've done all that, they've got trust in you. It's a real fine line I think that sales people walk because other staff in the business don't understand what you actually

do. They hear that "Xxxxx's going to lunch today," that "Xxxxx played golf last Monday." "Xxxxx goes to the football with clients six times a year. Oh, he's got a great job." What they don't realise is that when I'm at the football, I don't think I've ever sat and watched a whole match. I usually mingle in with clients making sure that they're okay, they've got drinks and then someone will say "I need to find out a bit about EDI post," or this and you're doing business in the box.

You're doing it there, yes.

**Now this is on a Sunday when it's supposed to be your day off and you're doing those types of things.**

That's right, yes.

So what we've got to also install is some type of image to the other people that yeah, you're doing this, but it's because of XYZ factor.

**Alright.**

I think the hardest emotion is the family balance because my wife gets fed up of going to these things now she's been going for twenty years. She said "Well, I don't see you on the weekend. You play bowls Saturday and then you've got to go to the football on Sundays and if I don't come with you I don't see you." So you've got that type of pressure on you as well.

**Okay. Now emotions and moods. Emotions are more transitory and short-lived where moods are more enduring. So in your opinion then, do you think that moods and emotions have an affect on a sales call's effectiveness? Do you think that it does and if so, how? Take moods and then…**

I want to jump in there and say "Yes, I do," but then on the other hand I think – Walt Disney used to say to his staff "When you walk out the door you're on show." I could go to a visit in a real foul mood or I've just had a row with my boss or a row with my wife. I get out there thinking "I don't want to do this, I feel crappy" but because I have this thing in my mind all the time, when I get out of the car and I shut that door, I'm on display. So I try and change and I go through…

**Self regulation sort of?**

Yeah I think so, but I do find sometimes that I wander. My mind's not exactly on the visit. There's an emotion there or a mood that's coming in and you're talking away and I'm starting to think "Well, I wonder if my wife's still at home?" you know that feeling and that's playing with it. So yeah, so I think it's a big factor but how you regulate that mood and that emotion is one of the hardest things because you can't always be the happiest person in the world every day when you're going to see a client. Even though you've got to act it out, I think you really – when I'm in front of you today, if I've had a real bad morning, you're not interested in that. You have an objective and we've got to achieve that. So I've got to ride up over that. When I leave you and go in my car I can then think "What a crappy morning I had prior to that."

**Yeah.**

And that's my time.

**Okay.**

But emotions can affect... I think your alertness as well, because I may not be as quick to pick up on something if I'm going through an emotion or I'm worried about something. All of a sudden "Kingsley mentioned this and I never picked up on it until now," and I've left the premises because my mind was elsewhere.

**Yeah, okay.**

Some days I think If I am like that, not to have any visits, stay in the office and do paperwork.

**Right.**

And what will I do now, like if I was still in the office now after I had that little argument that morning, I would have just gone for a walk around the block, come back and then faced it. They're the type of little things I do now and I think that's from the training what I've had and different courses I've attended. You start to pick these things up and learn how to let that go.

**Yes. So if you are regulating your emotions and you know that something is causing a bit of an emotional effect on you in a sales call and you are regulating yourself, do you think there's the possibility though, that you can't 100 percent cover that and that the client could actually be still picking up signals that there's something wrong? Is that a possibility?**

Yeah definitely.

**And if that is the case, how does that affect the call? Because this person's thinking "Something's wrong with this person" which then might affect you thinking "Well, there's something now wrong with that person" and you've got this spiral effect.  Is that a possibility?**

Yeah well it can come back to you in different ways. One, you don't get the sale. The next one, you don't get a request to come back or you get a message from your boss saying that "Kingsley's just rung up and said that he had some concerns when we met because you didn't seem – was anything worrying you?" So yeah, it can have that happen. I've seen it in other people and to me – I think one of the girls, her mum's had cancer and it was picked up. Then we found out about it because you can see in body language, you can see in people's faces. Now, I've got enough wrinkles on my face so you can pick something's wrong there.  Lines come when I'm tired. So, I don't know.

**So it can affect the call?**

It will affect the call, definitely. I can't see why it shouldn't, but I think it just depends on how the call's going. If it's a really new opportunity one and the client thinks you haven't shown interest in them, they'll either not use you, ring up and complain or I've seen requests come over my desk before saying "Please don't send this person back to me, he's rude, he does that."  When I was the SME manager, there was a gentleman there who was going through a marriage break up and a few other things.  I got that call and then it

allowed me to then investigate and find out because he was good at putting on a different act when he was around me because he didn't want me to know what was wrong because he'd think I'm going to tell him off, I'm going to tear strips off him and that, but you don't, you're just concerned for your staff and you want to find out how we fix it. But then again, you don't want him going out to the customer and loading all the trouble onto the customer. So all of a sudden, we either don't get that business or the opportunity because they don't want to deal with this person or the issue becomes bigger because they haven't really listened and understood what the customer was looking for. Suddenly it's blown out and I've had to go there and try and sort it out myself what the issue really was and what we need to put in place because the rep at the time – mind was elsewhere.

**Right, completely somewhere else?**

Yeah. But I think it has a lot to do with it. You've got to have a positive mind, but understand that you're there in front of the customer for an hour, may be less, but that time I've got to try and get you to use our product or be satisfied with our product or in me that I've done enough for you so we can keep the business. I'm being paid to do that. While I'm being paid for that, that's what I've got to focus on.

**Okay. Well now, is there a difference do you think in the way you might feel emotionally when you're dealing with an established customer, an account that you have versus someone that you're meeting for the first time, a new call?**

Yeah definitely.

**Where are the emotional differences there?  What are they?**

Well your confidence one, is high but if you know the gentleman, it's basically you're doing business with someone you know and you don't have to play a game with them to find out what type of person they're like. You don't have to watch the Ps and Qs to a certain degree because "I know you well, we've been doing business together for ten years. You know how I operate" and one of those gentleman – I don't know if you want names, but I'm sure he doesn't mind – xxxxxx  who used to work at Xxxxx, I've known him for twenty years.  When I first met him I thought "I don't know how to take this person," type of question as he was, he was a finance person.  But now basically, we know each other very well. He just rings me and advises me "This is the problem we've got," and I know exactly how to give it back to him. I know how he wants the information and there's no pressure on me whereas before when "I hadn't met you before, I don't know anything about you," there's a pressure or I put pressure on myself to think "Well, what do you want from me? How far have I got to go? Have I really got to sit up in the chair and just give you everything, bang, bang, bang type of thing?"

Whereas when you go out to an established one, it's more relaxed and you basically know each one's strengths and weaknesses. It just flows much easier and I think on yourself you know it's been an effective meeting. You know that you've achieved the objectives that xxxx or yourself want. But when I'm meeting you for the first time, I have no idea about your business. I think I've answered that question that way that I know your business after ten years and I'm actually seen as one of your staff.

I used to work for the finance industry many years ago now, but it got to a stage like with FAI, I actually walked in the staff entrance and everyone knows me. So, I was never stopped for security or anything like that. It was "There goes Xxxxx. We think he works for us," you know.

**Yes.**

But that was the stage it got to because they all knew you. Someone would stop you and say "After you've seen this guy can you come and see me? I've got this little issue I need to solve" and that's because of the relationship side of things. I had no problems. There was no emotion in the way that I walked through thinking "I'm going to be checked, I'm going to be stopped." But if you go to a new organisation, you've got to get past that gatekeeper.

**Right.**

So there's another emotion there straight away because your secretary's been told that "No one gets passed you. I don't want to see any reps. I don't want to do this." So the way I handle that is I take notebooks into the meeting. My first meeting with her or him, I just walk in like this. I have a notebook in my pocket and just a general chat. Then I get her to make the appointment and then go from there. Then she feels like she's being thought of highly and using her as the means to get into an organisation because what you don't want is those shutters to come down as soon as you go in with all your books. I've seen other reps do it, they go in, and I've done it in the past before, I'd try and change my style. Then you think "I don't want to be sold to her." I'm like that too.  When someone knocks on my front door, I don't want to be sold to.

**Yes.**

But going back to the question, it's much different knowing the person than not knowing anything about that empty chair.

**So would it come back to expectations again, what your expectations are?  Like you know someone, therefore your expectations are more likely to be met because you know how that call will go with that person because you know them, whereas if it's a new person your expectations are at a certain point and it's an unknown just how successful you'll be in achieving those objectives.  Is it that sort of thing going on?**

Yeah definitely that because if I'm dealing with xxxxx from xxxxx, I know what the outcome of that meeting's going to be. Okay?

**Yeah, so it's expectations.**

If I'm meeting with another CEO that I don't know, I really don't know where that's going to go to. It could be that it'll just squash there and nothing will happen or the outcome I would like is that he will put me onto another person that I can then talk to.  My approach has always been that I like to start from the top down.  Some people go from the mail room and try and go up that way, but I find it's easier going from the top.  You get the CEO on the side and then they can farm me out to other people. The other people then understand that Terry's involved, so it must be approved.

It has to happen.

**So it works.**

That's right, yeah. Good. Now call flexibility.  You go into a call with your own set call objectives, but the person that you're interviewing – this is more for a newer type of a client – they're taking the call in a different direction somewhat.  Are you flexible? Do you go with them? You might walk out of the call and your actual call objectives may not have been fully met and if that's the case, how do you feel?

Yeah. I can't think of a customer, but I do agree because I've been called to a meeting where I think we're going to be talking about say, parcels and I'm prepared for that. You get there and it works out it's completely different, it's about something else, I then just go with the flow myself. I just sort of allow them to talk and then if I can answer the question or where not, I'll say "Look I wasn't prepared for this. I didn't have that information with me. However, I can get this for you." Then I would always add – and I don't know if it's the right thing or not, but I will say "I was under the impression you wanted to talk about parcels.  Is that still an option you want to talk about later?" and I say "Yes" or "No" … "but this was a more important issue that I needed to talk to you about." I still get my point in, but I'm flexible to talk about anything that they want to.

**So you will move?**

Yes.

**Okay.**

So I let them control it, but at the end, I've brought it back to what I wanted to…

**Right and if they don't want to talk about it then the call finishes?**

Well I just let it go if they don't want to talk about it.

**And after the call do you have any thoughts about that?**

Well after the call, I send an email to them. Well I used to just write a note and thank them and put on the bottom "If you do wish to follow up on the parcels please let me know."

**No problem, okay.**

So I still do that. I was trying to think of something, where that did happen? I forget it, sorry about that. Yeah, but flexible - It can be whatever you want.

**Yes. You can just move with whatever's required.**

Yeah.

**Now what about say for example, you've had a call - you're doing a number of calls in the day and you've just had one call and it hasn't really been quite as good as you expected. Does that affect your emotional state or feelings for the next call?**

I don't think it does. I've had those type of calls and I've got off the phone and I've had a real grumble. Yeah, "They weren't listening," or "I just stuffed it up completely." So, once I've analysed it myself, I then have to work out how I'm going to rectify it.  If I get a call straight away after I've felt like this, for some reason and I can't remember where I've let that carry over into my call. I think I'm professional enough to say "It's a different call" but I think in the back of my mind that I answer their questions differently because I had this

tendency in the beginning that "You want to know the view of Australia Post. So I'd come out to you and I would give you Australia Post. You would get two encyclopaedias, follow that – you know." What I've learnt over the years, that I give you an overview, but what's interesting now, we'll do a step by step because if I give you everything now it's just going to go through.

**Okay.**

So that's the thing and I suppose when the next call comes in, I think "Okay, well this hasn't worked because I may have said the wrong thing or I let my mouth run away with me." So I'm really mindful when the second call comes in now and how I talk to them.

**Okay, alright.**

And it may be that if I am emotional and I can't really … I'll just say to them "Look, I can't help you at the moment. I need to call you back in five or ten minutes," and I go and… have a walk because…

**Okay. Well we're getting close to the end, but do you think that emotional states could be contagious in the sense that you're feeling quite happy and cheerful and pleasant? Can that impact and transfer to a client and vice versa, or, you're feeling negative, a bit down, you've had a bad morning, you're trying your best to regulate, but there's still some signals being sent off. So do you think emotions can be transferred and are contagious in that way?**

Yeah definitely. There's two parts to that. One with the client and one with staff sitting around you because we now operate in an open area. You don't have the privilege of having your own office or away from people. So, you can actually be affected by how another rep's emotions are and I have three or four people around me, all the same gender, not as me trying to be politically correct here, and they have their moments. Suddenly you're trying to talk to a client and you've got someone that's really having a bad day and I find myself a little bit more snappier on the phone and I'm thinking "Where have I got this from?" I think I've picked up that person's vibes at the next desk and I've turned grumpy, but I don't know why.

**Okay.**

Then that reflects to the customer. Now going back to the customer, I've had a client, they've just jumped down my throat "This has happened." When I'm thinking "Well it's not an issue, come on xxx step back, I can sort it out for you." Then I said "Okay …" because I know xxx, I say to them "Are you finished now?" He said "Yeah okay Xxxxx." I said "Well, this is what we can do for you."

**Yes.**

But after I analyse, I think "Well, I was a little bit rude there because I just jumped back down his throat as well." Yeah, I think it's the easiest thing to do is pass on one's emotion to someone else. Like you ring me up and you spoke to me with such a friendly voice, I thought "No problems, I can help you there." But then you've got a concern, I'm thinking "Well hang on, we've sorted this out. It's not my fault," and I jump back at you. Emotion just seems to flow. We pick up the vibes.

**So it's looking as if emotions can affect and can impact upon the effectiveness of a call?**

Yeah. I've walked out of the boss's office and I've been absolutely praised for something I've done and I'm firing on all cylinders. I get on the phone and then someone says "What drugs are you on Xxxxx?" I said "I'm just fine," and I'm giving this back. They say "This guy's really happy." I could have just been told off for something and then I walk – I may not be nasty to them, I get flat and they say "You sound really tired," and I'm thinking "Look I can't even hear my own voice, how can you tell I'm tired?" Look, emotions can really be passed on and I think over my career, I've seen all different types of emotions and how it's affected people and things like that. I've seen some of the worst customers suddenly change. I've just kept my same momentum and then all of a sudden, they've gone from being really grumpy and they turn out really nice. I think those ones you switch over become really good clients because they know that you've suddenly done everything for them and they start to recommend you to their friends and things like that.

**So does that happen over a period or have you seen this happen in a single call?**

Sorry?

**Have you seen it happen in a single call?**

Yeah.

**Where they've been a little bit unhappy or a bit grumpy and then they've come right across, quite pleasant, very cooperate and happy. So you've seen that happen in a call?**

Yeah, I've seen it happen.

**So what has caused that?**

They've had a gripe and then you've allowed them by listening and you don't have to say anything, just listen.

**Yeah.**

I joke about it. I just say "Well look, I just turn my hearing aids off while they do that and then we're fine", but I think it's just that, then I say "Okay, well …" then I'd give them a solution of how we can get over it, or I take the other approach. I'm just honest about everything. I'll just turn to you and say "Look, we have stuffed up. I can't do anything about it. We'll probably stuff up in the future because given the nature of your goods …" because some people think that Post can accept everything, so you get glass and fragile stuff and we're not a fragile service. The way that we sell up and you put stuff in a box and it goes in a bag. We can't see what's in that box.

**No.**

So once I know that we know the goods, I'll actually give you a solution and say "Well, have you thought about one of our competitors, they actually have that fragile service?" and they suddenly see that I'm not just after their business. My objective is that I am, but I'm doing it a different way, but I'm there to help them. Then all of a sudden they've changed and then I'd get phone calls saying "Can you look at this for me?" But it's because of my honesty and saying "Well, I'll tell you," and that's what they want. Then sometimes they turn to me and they've said "Just be honest about it, can you do it or can't you?" and I say

"Well I'd like to say yes we could, but I can see these problems," and I think that stems because I've had such a career in Post. I've worked in mail centres and right across the board. When I'm doing something, I like to see not how it affects you, but also Post because we make it something that doesn't fit within it, and I know we're going to have problems.

**Yes, and it's going to come back again.**

Yeah.  So I'd rather be up front with you and say…

**Yep, minimise it.**

"I won't do it."

**Good, alright.  Well look, is there anything else that you'd like to say with respect to the topic that we're talking about which was the effectiveness of a sales call with respect to emotions and how they might impact it? So the heading was "Exploring anticipatory emotions and their role in self-perceived business to business salesperson effectiveness." Is there any other aspect that you wanted to comment on because we've pretty much covered everything that I would like to cover?**

Well I hope I've answered the questions to what you've asked and I haven't gone too far off the line. But I think also it does come down to gender as well because we're talking about me and as I said earlier about some of the women that I work with, and there's a lot of things that do affect them. I've seen how emotionally they get when they are talking with a client and how it affects their sales calls. I've had some people I've worked with have said "We just can't get internal departments to work with them, to get things done."

**So are you're saying too emotional in a negative way?**

They are, yeah. They're negative the way they talk to people. They put too much emotion in it and demand things.  So then you get a transport branch, they just close the doors and say "Well hang on …" They don't even realise they're doing it themselves.

**So is it more of an internal customer issue or is it an external customer?**

I've seen mainly with internal.

**Okay.**

Because that's where I get to see how they operate. Unless I go out with them on a visit,  I can't see what happens there, but then I've had reports about customers saying "We've had this person come out and she doesn't seem to be on my wavelength or doesn't seem to be interested in me. She's just going through a routine. This is the script and that's it." There's no humanness in it.  We have a general conversation.  Even though I feel I've got a structure behind it, it's just like we're old mates and we're having a chat.

**Based on that comment then, you're saying "a gender thing". Do you think that there's evidence or a link with their sales performance as a result of that?  Has it affected their sales figures and results?**

I think so because we've got one person that's a high performer, an affiliate and they put such a high emphasis on themself and how they approach things.  They've found it hard to actually drop it back when they're dealing with people that don't have that high or same drive and where it's great for them and they're competitive, when they're actually trying to

manage people or do sales visits, it has a reverse affect and sometimes it can put people off.

**Okay.**

I've seen her with clients where it's actually been great when they have come back and said "Look, she's brilliant. She takes it to the next level" and other people saying "Well, it's the way she talks to me, it's as if she's talking down to me."  I think that's the emotion that comes into it.

**Right.**

So it does have an affect on the sales.

**So it would be good to do a session like this with a female to make some contrasting measurements and things like that?**

Yeah I think so.

**I've got one more question.  Was this participation a voluntary thing or did someone approach you?**

No, no, voluntary. We were actually asked if we'd like to participate and I said "Yes, I'd be happy to come and talk to you." I've got no problems with that at all.

**Okay.**

There are two A6s, the Account Managers. One looks after State Government. He has no problems in talking and confidence is way high. So you'll be fine.

**Good.**

But then we have three Sales Consultants.

**So there's five in total?**

There's four Sales Consultants and two Account Managers.  So there is six altogether.

**Okay.**

And three of them are away on holidays at the moment.

**So there could be another one or two there?**

At the moment we're very short staffed.  So we've got support staff that are just manning phones for us and everything like that. Yeah, so one girl is competing at the moment in an event overseas. I think they're all back, it will be in a week.

**Yes.**

But I don't know if that's gone out to them or xxxx just left it with me.

**Yes. So there's about the six sales people then?**

Yeah. There's two, yeah six of us.

**Okay. Alright. Well thanks very much for that Xxxxx. We'll turn these off.**

## END OF RECORDING

## Appendix 1C   Pre study interview coding

# DS00033

| Assigned Word / Phrase | |
|---|---|
| happy | happy |
| relationship | know my customers |
| flexible | different role to play |
| personality | people person |
| social | interaction with people |
| social | interaction |
| joy | joy |
| emotions | highs and lows |
| Positive emotions | riding high |
| Negative emotions | down |
| personality | type of person |
| personality | procrastination |
| flexibility | can't talk to you as a CEO the same way as I've talked to the mailroom staff, or if I go to a warehouse |
| regulation | watch your Ps and Qs |
| structure | have a structure |
| anxiety | uptight and every meeting |
| personality | I'm never late. I'm always there early |
| anxiety | sweaty palms |
| relaxed | but when I go out and see mailroom staff |
| tense | The CEO, I'm standing there thinking "Okay, well how am I going to start this off |
| relax | calm myself |
| personality | I'm always like that |
| worry | "Well if this doesn't work it's going to get back to my manager," |
| pride | got a weakness |
| Self critical | always think that you haven't done as good as what you should have done |
| reflective | I analyse things afterwards |
| | I analyse things afterwards |
| High expectation self | you could have done this better. |
| Self critical | worst own enemy |
| Self critical | always trying to pick faults with myself and I always want to do better |
| personality | trait of all sales people |
| Self critical | over-criticise yourself |
| Self critical | I always think "Well, no |
| Self doubt | some days I think "I can't sell snow to the Eskimos |
| motivation | motivate myself |
| Negative emotions | lows |
| anxiety | mental and stressful game |
| anxiety | very stressful |
| Self blame | yeah I was at fault |
| personality | got to let it go |

| commit | you take everything on board. |
|---|---|
| guilt | not my fault |
| regulation | take all that emotion aside |
| stress | stressful |
| Self regulation | it's not going to affect me |
| regulation | learnt just to let it go |
| Personality relationships chemistry | easy to work with |
| relationship | value in the relationship |
| trust | got that trust |
| Self analysis | I don't think I was clear enough, I didn't get my message across. |
| achievement | get that satisfaction feeling |
| expectations | demands they're putting on you or it may be that you're putting too much on yourself. |
| Fear rejection | fear of rejection |
| Fear failure | always fear of failure |
| Emotional labour | make friends and push myself all the time |
| achievement | keep getting the best results |
| Achievement recognition | I like success and I'm hungry for it |
| Need for acceptance | I like to be accepted all the time. |
| sensitive | take everyone's word to heart |
| Worry others expectations not met | I feel like I could be seen as weak |
| Need to meet others expectations | "Well, we know you're going to get nines or tens Xxxxx," so they expect that. Then I feel "Well I've got to achieve that." |
| helplessness | just feel that you can't do anymore. |
| emergent | you never know at the time how it's going to go. |
| Self preservation | at the time, you do think "The walls are closing, get me out of here. Let's go and do something else." |
| insecurity | could be a reason to get rid of me because I've got a failure there. |
| Call objective | got to have a purpose |
| Call objective | my objective |
| expectations | customer expectations |
| Number of calls or visits | do so many visits a day |
| Quality concerns | nothing there about what the quality |
| Personal objectives | set my own personal goals |
| Need to achieve | achieve a high satisfaction |
| trust | they've got trust in you |
| Concern what others may think | What they don't realise |
| What others think | image to the other people |
| Life balance | family balance |
| moods | foul mood |
| Self regulation | I'm on display. So I try and change |
| Lack concentration | sometimes that I wander. My mind's not exactly on the visit |
| Lack of concentration pre occupation | an emotion there or a mood that's coming in and you're talking away and I'm starting to think "Well, I wonder if my wife's still at home?" |
| Difficulty regulating | how you regulate that mood and that |

| | |
|---|---|
| | emotion is one of the hardest things because you can't always be the happiest person in the world every day when you're going to see a client. , |
| Objectives are priority | an objective and we've got to achieve that. |
| Emotional labour | act it out |
| Emotions affect cognition | not be as quick to pick up on something if I'm going through an emotion |
| Post call thoughts | Kingsley mentioned this and I never picked up on it until now," and I've left the premises because my mind was elsewhere. |
| Self regulation | learn how to let that go. |
| Emotional intelligence | was anything worrying you |
| Emotional intelligence, body language | see in body language, you can see in people's faces. |
| Assessment of the call | but I think it just depends on how the call's going. |
| Pick up signals | Please don't send this person back to me |
| Positive mind | got to have a positive mind |
| confidence | your confidence |
| No game playing | don't have to play a game |
| familiarity | don't know anything about you," |
| Self induced pressure high expectations of self | I put pressure on myself |
| Fear unknown worry | How far have I got to go |
| Apprehensive unknown worry | meeting you for the first time, I have no idea about your business. |
| relationships | relationship side of things |
| Relationship selling | much different knowing the person than not knowing anything |
| Call objective | I still get my point in, |
| Call flexibility | I'm flexible to talk about anything |
| | . I've had those type of calls and I've got off the phone |
| Self analysis | , once I've analysed it myself, |
| | mindful when the second call comes in now and how I talk to them. |
| Emotional contagion | can actually be affected by how another rep's emotions are |
| Emotional contagion | and I've turned grumpy, but I don't know why. |
| Emotional contagion | Then that reflects to the customer |
| Aggressive, emotional contagion | I was a little bit rude there because I just jumped back down his throat as well. |
| Pick up signals emotions flow | Emotion just seems to flow. We pick up the vibes. |
| motivated | I'm firing on all cylinders |
| Negative emotions | I get flat |
| Emotional contagion | Look, emotions can really be passed on |

| Attitude change - change in emotions | I've just kept my same momentum and then all of a sudden, they've gone from being really grumpy and they turn out really nice |
|---|---|
| listening | They've had a gripe and then you've allowed them by listening and you don't have to say anything, just listen |
| Develops trust | they suddenly see that I'm not just after their business |
| Gender differences | I think also it does come down to gender |
| Affects of emotions, gender based | I've seen how emotionally they get when they are talking with a client and how it affects their sales calls. |
| High expectations of self | They're negative the way they talk to people. They put too much emotion in it and demand things. |
| Sales pitch, less flexible | She's just going through a routine |
| Task oriented | There's no humanness |
| pride | they put such a high emphasis on themself |
| personality, gold versus platinum | I've seen her with clients where it's actually been great when they have come back and said "Look, she's brilliant. She takes it to the next level" and other people saying "Well, it's the way she talks to me, it's as if she's talking down to me." I think that's the emotion that comes into it. |

# Appendix 1D   Request Emails

From: Merinda xxxxxxxx
Sent: Friday, February 03, 2012 3:41 PM
To: 'Kingsley Dunstan'
Subject: RE: trial questions


Hi Kingsley

 I hope I have provided you with enough information...I tried to be as open as possible.

 Warm regards

 Merinda xxxxxx


From: Kingsley Dunstan [mailto:dunstan1@iinet.net.au]
Sent: Wednesday, 1 February 2012 8:59 PM
To: 'Merinda xxxxx
Subject: RE: trial questions


Great and thank you.

Write as much as you want for each answer and be truthful. Answers need to be based on real life experiences of your own or another's.  Remember you are reflecting and recording your thoughts and feelings for each scenario so they are not opinions but actual feelings.

No major hurry but think about it over the next few days and let me know if you have questions.

Kingsley


From: Merinda xxxxxx]
Sent: Wednesday, February 01, 2012 8:31 PM
To: 'Kingsley Dunstan'
Subject: RE: trial questions


Off course my dear – to both.

 I will do your survey and you can take me out for lunch....can't wait to catch up again.

 Warm regards

 Merinda xxxxxx

From: Kingsley Dunstan [mailto:dunstan1@iinet.net.au]
Sent: Wednesday, 1 February 2012 8:00 PM

To: Merinda xxxxxx
Subject: trial questions


Hi Merinda

 Hope everything is going well. Yes! We need to catch up for coffee…

 I need an experienced salesperson to trial my research questions for the Doctoral research studies I am doing at Curtin and you were the first person to come to mind!

If you agree I will send you three questions which require you to reflect on some sales experiences and to write about them.  It would be in two parts, first the questions/scenarios and then some follow up questions. Nothing too involved, you would just need to think about and write about some actual, sales experiences you have had in the past and be as open and honest as possible. You would not need to identify companies or individuals as I am only interested in your sales experiences and feelings.

 If you agree coffee could turn in to lunch.

 Let me know.

Kingsley

# Appendix 1E   Three sample Scenarios

**Questions and responses in reply to email request**

<u>**Scenario 1**</u>

The Sales Manager has called a meeting to introduce the new sales people to the team. One of the new sales recruits says that they have heard that even experienced sales people sometimes have 'mixed emotions' before going in to a sales call. They have asked what is meant by 'mixed emotions' and they want to know what feelings can be experienced before going in to a sales call.

What would you or one of your experienced colleagues tell the new sales recruit?

Type your answer in the space below…

*Excitement*

*Anticipation*

*Curiosity*

*Nervousness*

*All of the above emotions are experienced at some time during the sales process. Excitement at meeting a new client, or elation from gaining a sale. Anticipation at meeting a client for the first time or when you have presented them with your proposal and you are anticipating their reaction to the proposal.*

*I am curious when I meet someone for the first time, I want to know about them. What makes them tick, why are they in the role, how many years, what are their loves outside of work. This allows me to make better conversation with them and relate the product/service I am offering directly to them.*

*Nervousness sometimes when you have perhaps had a visit or conversation with someone and it didn't go that well. The nervousness comes from wondering if I have done my homework and prepared for what the customer needs, do I have all the tools that can assist me with the meeting? I can be nervous when I need to speak / or see them again. These emotions are all normal and help me to focus on being a successful sales person.*

<u>**Scenario 2**</u>

Think of a challenging sales call you have done where you have felt uneasy about meeting with the customer. What happened? Why did you feel this way?

Write about this experience in the space below….

*I have a basic plan when I meet people, a sales process I go through. This enables me to be proactive and learn more about the customer.*

*Sometimes it occurs where the connection between me and the customer was not a good fit. Perhaps I hadn't ask enough questions of them, to really establish who they were, what made them tick and what will win me over the line.*

*When I first meet someone usually I try to mirror the customer to allow them to feel comfortable. Sometimes again this doesn't go to plan, and because of this the customer has not been made to feel comfortable in my presence. I know when they do, because they tend to tell me about their life….lol! it is at this stage I know I am in control of the sale and the outcome of the meeting.*

*Anyway I need to re-establish this confidence on the following meeting, go back to the beginning of my process, so I will need to ask the questions and find out how to make them feel comfortable.*

## Scenario 3

Think of a sales call you have conducted that you felt could have gone better, perhaps at the time of the call you were not feeling your usual self and you were not looking forward to the call. In the space provided below, briefly note the circumstances surrounding the call, how you were feeling at the time, and how you think this may have affected the call.

Write about this experience in the space below….

*Sometimes calls don't go that well. It could be because of limited time, or the client keeping me waiting (this is a definite negative). I believe if a time has been arranged then they have as much right to appear on time as I do.*

*It could also be because the prospect is distracted, they are not really interested in me being there and what I have to say. If this is the case, I usually will end the call quickly and make another time to visit them.*

*A quick mediation before you enter the clients premises, is very useful if I am not feeling the best. This usually enables me to get through the call. If I believe I really was bad, due to illness or whatever then I hope I would call them, or email to apologize and explain why.*

# Appendix 2  Participant requests

## Appendix 2A  LinkedIn groups

## Appendix 2B   Copy of business card used to promote survey collection site

I am conducting research as a Doctoral student with Curtin University of Technology into emotions and B2B sales call effectiveness.
If you have ever been in B2B sales, selling products or services, you are invited to participate in this important online study.

Please enter the below URL into your browser exactly as shown to access the online survey
**http://sg.sensemaker-suite.com/Project/html/index.html?projectID=B2B**

Thank you for participating.
**Kingsley Dunstan**
dunstan1@iinet.net.au
0411 712 955

# Appendix 2C   Copy of letter seeking participation in the research

Kingsley Dunstan

Management Consultant

PO Box 1440

Midland

WA 6936


Matthew xxxxx

Sales Manager - WA

xxxxxxxxx

2/40 Collingwood St

Osborne Park

WA 6017



Dear Matthew

I appreciate you taking the time to speak with me the other day when I called.

As I explained on the telephone I am an ex xxxxxxxx WA Manager, now lecturing and consulting in business. I am currently doing a research project with Curtin University of Technology in Western Australia and we are researching the impact of B2B sales people feelings, thoughts and emotions and how they might impact on the sales call.

In order to do this research we have developed an anonymous online survey for sales people to complete. We are using innovative software from Cognitive Edge called SenseMaker which is a cutting edge application designed to collect and analyse narratives and stories and to derive patterns and meanings from the stories.

To participate, the sales person accesses the collector site via the URL that will be provided for the survey.  The sales person briefly writes about an important sales story or encounter, describing what happened and how they were feeling about the call – either positive or negative.  A series of questions follow based on the story told. The survey would take 10-15 minutes depending on the length of the story.

Please note that the survey is 100% anonymous and there is no way of identifying individual participants. Indeed all data collected goes directly into the Singapore based database along with all other stories collected from around the world.

I am looking for any number of B2B sales participants and I am hoping that you will pass on my request to senior management with a view to  xxxx supporting the research by having their sales force participate in the study.  I am aiming for at least 200 participants in total for the study worldwide.

Brian xxxxxx – General Manager of xxxxxxx South Africa (RS SA) has agreed to the xxxxx sales team doing the survey. Brian was interested in comparing the finding of the research from xxxxx with the findings of other B2B sales forces from around the world. In order for that to be possible we modified the survey and allocated a unique URL for the survey to be completed by xxxxx salespeople. The modification will allow the results from xxxxxx to be isolated for comparison purposes against a number of survey variables. Even though the changes will allow the xxxxx sales force feedback to be identified, it will not be possible to identify the individual sales person responses.

Should xxxxxx Australia participate we will allocate a unique URL for the collection of xxxxxx data in the same way we are collecting the xxxxxxx Africa data. The data will form part of the overall database for the study but will allow the xxxxx data to be identified separately and compared against any combination of survey variables. A report to management will be made available once the study has been completed.

The benefits of participating in this study will be the potential to:

improve sales recruitment  and selection processes

identify sales force training needs

improve sales call effectiveness

improve customer relationships

improve sales person confidence

maximize sales

This is an opportunity to participate in an important worldwide study into B2B sales call effectiveness.  If other xxxxx sales people in any other country would like to participate I would be pleased to extend the invitation.

Please do not hesitate to contact me should you require any additional information.


Regards

Kingsley Dunstan

dunstan1@iinet.net.au


9 September 2013

# Appendix 2D   Copy of emails seeking participation in the research

GM  xxxx South Africa

http://sg.sensemaker-suite.com/Project/html/index.html?projectID=B2B&code=RSSA

Hi Brian

Thank you for the information. We have created a unique collection site for xxxxx SA which is below. Even though you have a unique URL, your data will still be part of the main collection database of the study so comparisons will be possible.

The survey first page is an information page and asks for your permission to participate. The survey then begins on the next page and asks for the participant to write a short story about an important sales call they have done. Following that are various questions and choices. The choices are intentionally 'different' and require the participant to make some choices. At the end of the survey, participants can choose to write about another sales experience if they so choose. The survey should take about 15 minutes.

I will be able to analyse any combination of events that are contained in the survey. The participants will be anonymous individuals but we will know they are from xxxx SA.

Please let me know if you have any questions. The survey URL for xxxx SA is:

On 07/31/13 5:45 AM, Brian xxxxx wrote:

--------------------

26 in total (8 Internal and 18 Fied Sales)

On 07/31/13 5:41 AM, Kingsley Dunstan wrote:

--------------------

Hi Andrew

How many sales people do you have in SA? It just gives me an idea as to how many I can expect if all were to do the survey.

Thanks and regards

Kingsley

On 07/29/13 7:21 AM, Brian xxxxx wrote:

--------------------

Hi Kingsley

That sounds good. We will be happy to participate. Send me the link when you are ready.

Regards

Brian

On 07/29/13 6:55 AM, Kingsley Dunstan wrote:

--------------------

Hi Brian

I have had discussions with the software developer and we can amend the software to meet the needs of xxxxxx. We can make changes so that we could extract just xxxx SA responses at a country or branch level whilst retaining anonymity at the individual staff level. That way we could see an overall picture of xxxx SA and that result could be compared to any other industries, countries or whatever.

I would welcome the opportunity to proceed with this project and if you agree, I will send you the URL that would be applicable to the study for xxxx SA.

Please let me know one way or the other if you would be willing to participate in the study. A confidential report would be made available to management and of course there are no costs whatsoever applicable to this project.

Thanks for your consideration Brian.

Regards

Kingsley

# Appendix 3    Survey instrument

## Appendix 3A    Screen copy of draft collection instrument with feedback

**Screen 1**



**Introduction**

Business to Business sales are characterized by typically longer sales cycles and requiring sound sales and relationship management skills. Emotion in sales is becoming increasingly important and the purpose of this study is to better understand their role in sales call effectiveness.

We aim to collect thousands of stories of real experiences from a diverse range of B2B sales professionals. Your participation in this study is very important and will significantly contribute to the study of emotion in B2B sales environments.

The survey uses new and innovative approaches to research, developed by Cognitive Edge Pte. Ltd. ( Please see www.cognitive-edge.com).

As this research project is being conducted online via a dedicated website, it would be greatly appreciated if you would forward the URL for this study to other B2B sales professionals who you know. The URL for this study is:xxxxxxxxxxxxxxx

All stories are treated as anonymous and all responses received will be combined and analysed to hopefully improve our understanding of how emotions impact on B2B sales call effectiveness.

When recalling your sales experience, please write as much as you want.

Thank you for participating in this important study.

**Comment:**

Change 5<sup>th</sup> paragraph from: All stories are treated as anonymous… to: All stories are anonymous…

Following on from this add: "and all responses received will be combined and analysed and used in research reports and other documentation, to hopefully improve our understanding of how emotions impact on B2B sales call effectiveness."

Add new sentence just before "thank you…." That reads "If you agree please continue to the next page." Then keep the last sentence: "Thank you for participating in this important study."

**Screen 2**



Share an experience when you were about to meet with an important customer. How were you feeling at the time? Why were you feeling that way? What actually happened in the call?

Please give your story a title:

2/14

**Comment:**

Change last sentence of the prompt from: "what actually happened in the call." to: "What actually happened?"

**Screen 3**

The answers to your story will be analyzed anonymously along with all of the other stories we receive.

We may also want to share your specific story with others, but we would like your permission to do so first.

**My story can be: (pick 1)**

○ shared and read by anyone (for example, shared in learning meetings or included in documents)
○ used only for analysis

3/14

**Comment:**

Delete this entire page. It does not seem to serve any purpose given the changes to the introduction will cover this.

**Screen 4**



Think about the narrative (story) you have just written and select up to two feeling states or emotions that would be applicable to the story:

| | |
|---|---|
| ☐ Anxious | ☐ Apprehensive |
| ☐ Fear | ☐ Anger |
| ☐ Proud | ☐ Frustrated |
| ☐ Embarrassed | ☐ Confident |
| ☐ Sad | ☐ Worried |
| ☐ Delighted | ☐ Disappointed |
| ☐ Guilty | ☐ Loyal |
| ☐ Trusting | ☐ Positive |
| ☐ Happy | ☐ Ashamed |
| ☐ Concerned | ☐ Regretful |
| ☐ Envious | ☐ Empathetic |
| ☐ Scared | ☐ Nervous |
| ☐ Negative | ☐ Controlled |
| ☐ Vulnerable | ☐ Inadequate |
| ☐ Optimistic | ☐ Determined |
| ☐ Upset | ☐ Moody |
| ☐ Pessimistic | ☐ Excited |
| ☐ Afraid | ☐ Appreciative |
| ☐ Hopeful | ☐ Self-assured |
| ☐ Uncomfortable | ☐ Dissatisfied |

Please write down any other feelings you think would be applicable, that are not listed above:

**Comment:**

Delete "that are not listed above" in the second part of the question.
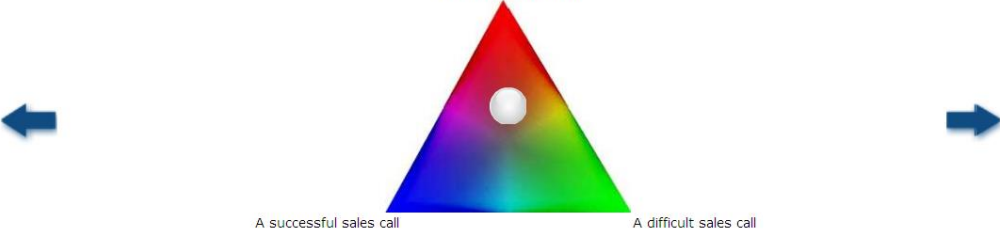
You cannot move past this screen unless you answer the second part and write down other feelings. This is not correct as participants may choose two feeling states in part 1 and not have any other feelings to add in the second part

**Screen 5**



For each question, draw a cross within each triangle where you feel it best describes your story. The position should reflect the balance between the three options at each point. You are not being asked to choose between one or another of the three options. Placing your cross in the middle means it is an equal balance between the three options. If a question does not relate to your story, then tick the box 'N/A - Not applicable'.

**1. In general, my story describes:**

A common situation

A successful sales call        A difficult sales call

☐ N/A

5/14
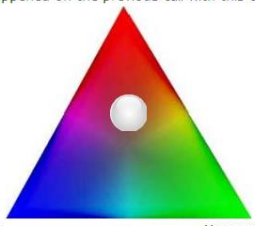
**Comment:**

Instructions should not say "draw a cross…" it should say "click on a point in the triangle…" this comment would apply to all Triad questions following.

**Screen 6**



2. Prior to seeing the customer, the salesperson's thoughts were focused on...

What happened on the previous call with this customer

Their call objectives

How well the call would go

☐N/A

Next

6/14
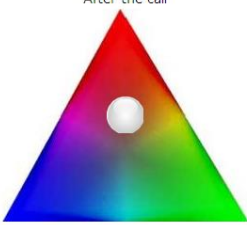
**Comment:**

Change top Triad comment from "What happened on the previous call with the customer" to "What happened on the previous interaction with the customer"

**Screen 7**



**Comment:**

OK

**Screen 8**



4. As it turned out most of the thoughts the salesperson had before the call were ...

Justified

Unjustified

Of no significance

☐N/A

8/14

**Comment:**

OK

266
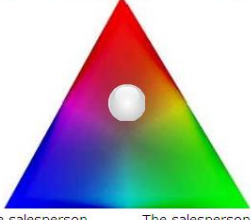
**Screen 9**



**Comment:**

OK

**Screen 10**



6. After the sales call, your thoughts were that :

The customer had been very co-operative

The customer was somewhat difficult     The call went as you expected.

☐N/A

**Comment:**

OK

**Screen 11**



**About your story (Salesperson effectiveness)**

Slide each bubble to a position that best relates to the context of the story. If a scale does not apply to the story, select N/A. Not moving a bubble is the same as selecting N/A (the bubble remains grey if the response is N/A.

**1. How well the call went was determined by :**

What the salesperson did
during the call

What the customer did during
the call

☐N/A

**2. In this story the thoughts of the salesperson before the sales call impacted:**

On the salespersons behavior

On the customers behavior

☐N/A

**3. Thoughts the salesperson was having before the call were mainly:**

Thoughts about themselves

Thoughts about the customer

☐N/A

**4. The call objectives for this sales call were:**

Well defined

Not that important

☐N/A

11/14

**Comment:**

Delete instruction: "Slide each bubble…" and replace with "Click the relevant point on the scale…"

**Screen 12**

Some information about you ....

What is your age group (in years)....

[                              ▼]

In what country do you do most of your selling?

[                              ▼]

Gender

[                              ▼]

How many years have you been in sales?

[                              ▼]

How many people are employed in your entire organisation?

[                              ▼]

**Comment:**

OK

**Screen 13 (A)**



**What is your highest level of education?**

Other - please specify

**In what type of industry are you currently employed?**

Other - please specify

**Which of the following best describes your current function?**

Other - please specify

13/14

**Comment:**

First drop down box has a choice: "Masters Degree High". Delete the word "high" to read "Masters Degree."

See next page also Screen 13

**Screen 13 (B)**



What is your highest level of education?

School certificate

Other - please specify

sadfadsf

In what type of industry are you currently employed?

Engineering

Other - please specify

adfg

Which of the following best describes your current function?
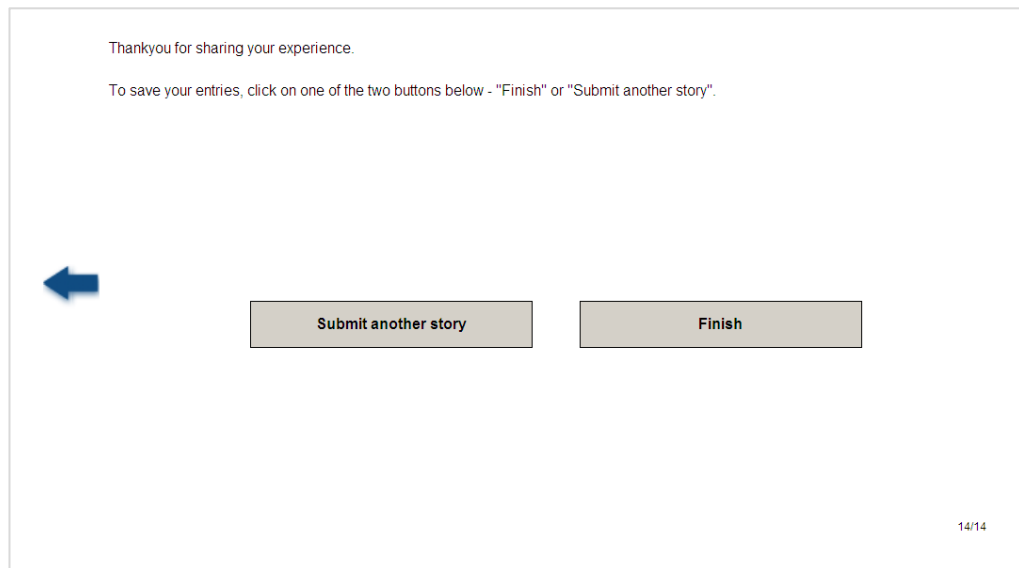
Sales person

Other - please specify

sgsfd

13/14

**Comment:**

It appears here that you can select a drop down answer as well as specify 'other' therefore allowing two choices when it should only be one.

**Screen 14**

Thankyou for sharing your experience.

To save your entries, click on one of the two buttons below - "Finish" or "Submit another story".

| Submit another story | Finish |

**Comment:**

OK

**Final screen**



Your experience is now saved to the server
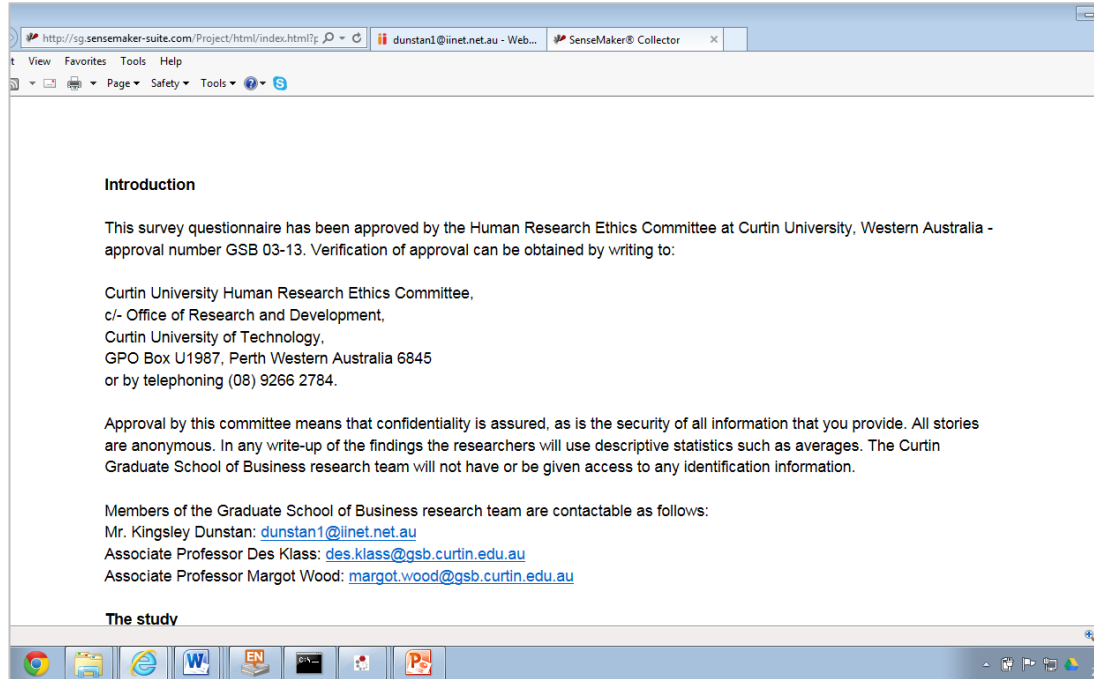
Copyright ©2007-12 Cognitive Edge. All Rights Reserved.US
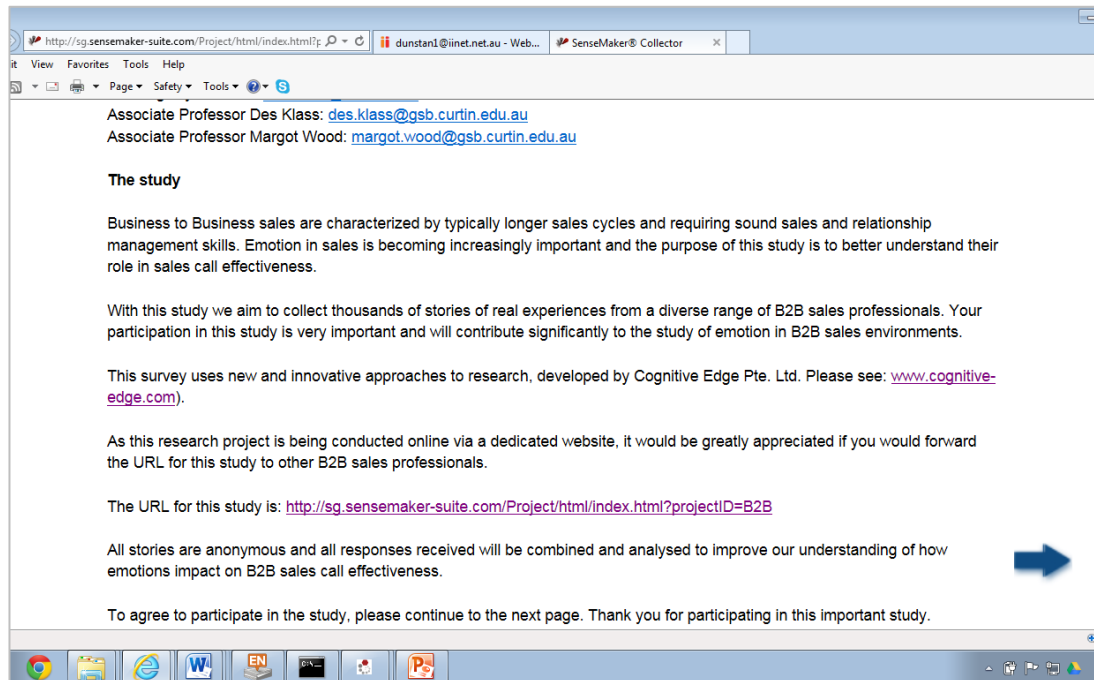Pat.8,031,201

## Comment:

Would it be better here to have a comment saying something like: Your experience is now saved to the server. You may now exit.

# Appendix 3B   Screen shots of final version of Sensemaker© collection instrument

**Page 1**



**Page 1 cont.**

**Page 2**

Share an experience when you were about to meet with an important customer. How were you feeling at the time? Why were you feeling that way? What actually happened? Describe this as if it is a story you might share over a dinner table conversation.

Please give your story a title:

2/14

**Page 2 cont.**

Consider the story you have just told. From the following list, choose the two emotions that best apply to the salesperson at the time :

- [ ] Anxious
- [ ] Fear
- [ ] Proud
- [ ] Embarrassed
- [ ] Sad
- [ ] Delighted
- [ ] Guilty
- [ ] Trusting
- [ ] Happy
- [ ] Concerned
- [ ] Envious
- [ ] Scared
- [ ] Negative
- [ ] Vulnerable
- [ ] Optimistic
- [ ] Upset
- [ ] Pessimistic
- [ ] Afraid
- [ ] Hopeful
- [ ] Uncomfortable

- [ ] Apprehensive
- [ ] Anger
- [ ] Frustrated
- [ ] Confident
- [ ] Worried
- [ ] Disappointed
- [ ] Loyal
- [ ] Positive
- [ ] Ashamed
- [ ] Regretful
- [ ] Empathetic
- [ ] Nervous
- [ ] Controlled
- [ ] Inadequate
- [ ] Determined
- [ ] Moody
- [ ] Excited
- [ ] Appreciative
- [ ] Self-assured
- [ ] Dissatisfied

Please write down any other feelings you think would be applicable:

**Page 2 cont.**



**Page 3**

**Page 4**



**Page 5**

**Page 6**



**Page 7**

**Page 8**



**Page 9**

**Page 10**



**Page 11**

**Page 12**



Thankyou for sharing your experience.

We would really appreciate hearing about some of your other experiences. If you have time, please click on 'Submit another story'.

Otherwise, click Finish!

Submit another story     Finish

# Appendix 4   Initial narrative interpretations

## Appendix 4A   Initial interpretations of narratives with negative affect coding

**Customer turned friend**

| | |
|---|---|
| Emotion 1 (E1): | Nervous |
| Emotion 2 (E2): | Anxious |
| Other feelings: | |
| Age: | 36-45 |
| Location: | Australia |
| Gender: | Male |
| Experience: | 11 to 15 years |
| Triads applicable to this narrative | 1a, 2c, 5b, 6b |
| Self-coded strength : This story describes a - successful sales call | 1a=57 |

**Narrative:**

> *"I was to do a call to a university to meet with a visiting professor of micro electronics. On the way to the call I was feeling <u>nervous</u> meeting with a professor from Germany. <u>Upon arrival I was pleased to meet a very likeable person </u>who was easy to talk to and who was genuinely interested in my products. We talked about the computer terminals I was selling and he told me he would be placing an order for some. The order cam through and was valued at just under $100 000. Our <u>relationship was very good</u> and I ended up inviting the visiting professor to my rural property for a BBQ and to see some Australian Wildlife we had on the property. We keep in contact to this day even now he has retired and returned to Germany. This was an unusual customer relationship that turned from customer to friend".*

**Key attributes interpreted from the narrative**:  Nervous, anxious, pleased, surprised.

**Initial interpretation**: Because the customer had not been met before, the salesperson was worried about meeting them to the extent they were feeling nervous. When the salesperson eventually met with the customer they were pleased with what they discovered; that the customer was likeable and easy to talk to. The nervousness and worry the salesperson was feeling turned into surprise and pleasure once they met with the customer. They became long term friends and still keep in contact. It could be argued in this sales narrative that the salesperson was anxious and nervous and the worry they were experiencing was not really warranted as it turned out.

**Don't worry unnecessarily**

| | |
|---|---|
| Emotion 1 (E1): | Worried |
| Emotion 2 (E2): | Concerned |
| Other feelings: | |
| Age: | 46-55 |
| Location: | Australia |
| Gender: | Male |
| Experience: | 16 to 20 years |
| Triads applicable to this narrative | 1a, 2c, 3a, 6b |
| Self-coded strength : This story describes a - successful sales call | 1a=56 |

**Narrative:**

> *"I wanted to show my client a commercial property that had recently come on the market. My client was looking for a 1500sqm factory/office/warehouse facility to set up prestige car servicing facility. On the way to show the client the premises <u>all I could think of was how the client would react</u> to the fact that there was a 10 year + 10 year lease option requirement. When we arrived at the premises it was clear that he was very impressed with the location and general exposure of the property. He commented that as he was concerned it was ideal but at that point we had not discussed the lease arrangements. I then discussed the lease and <u>to my surprise</u> he was not at all concerned about the extra-long lease requirement. As it turned out I had been <u>worrying unnecessarily</u> and <u>I should have been more confident</u> about the outcome. The client signed later that month".*

**Key attributes interpreted from the narrative:** Worry that was unjustified, concern, lack of confidence.

**Initial interpretation:** The sales person was worrying about the long lease requirement. Their concern was based on thoughts and anticipatory feelings that the customer would react adversely.  Worry about this is based on past experiences with clients who have not approved of long lease arrangements. Indeed it may have been the same client looking at another property which caused the salesperson to ruminate about the past experience and to then worry that the customer would react in a similar manner. The salesperson states that they worried unnecessarily about the situation and that they should have had more confidence in the offer they presented.

**Don't you worry**

| | |
|---|---|
| Emotion 1 (E1): | Anxious |
| Emotion 2 (E2): | Nervous |
| Other feelings: | |
| Age: | 18-25 |
| Location: | United Arab Emirates |
| Gender: | Female |
| Experience: | 1 to 5 years |
| Triads applicable to this narrative | 2c, 3a, 6b |
| Self-coded strength : This story describes a – common situation | 1b=84 |

**Narrative:**

> *"I was a bit nervous and excited. I was nervous about how I would impress the client and how I would be able to establish rapport with them. But my superior went with me, and we were really prepared, and I dressed well for the meeting which got me feeling confident. The new client we were meeting was very polite and engaging. He was quite impressed with the materials we brought for the meeting, and was interested in the contents of the book that we published, and that has got the ball rolling and the conversation and meeting went really well. I would never be able to get over the anxiety of meeting a new potential client, even though I know that we can always make things work and that I have the ability to engage them in conversations".*

**Key attributes interpreted from the narrative:** Worry, nervous, lacking confidence, anxiety, and impression management.

**Initial interpretation:** The sales person was very concerned about how they would be perceived by the customer (impression management). They were worried about their appearance and how they could establish rapport. By dressing well, the salesperson was able to feel more confident. The salesperson acknowledged that they are always anxious about meeting new customers even though they know things always work out.

**Healthcare**

| | |
|---|---|
| Emotion 1 (E1): | Anxious |
| Emotion 2 (E2): | Nervous |
| Other feelings: | |
| Age: | 18-25 |
| Location: | Australia |
| Gender: | Female |
| Experience: | 6 to 10 years |
| Triads applicable to this narrative | 1a, 2c, 6b |
| Self-coded strength : This story describes a - successful sales call | 1a=51 |

**Narrative:**

> *"I came to royal Perth hospital Shenton park to meet with a OT to discuss modifications that were being made to different items of equipment in the hospital to help rehabilitate there patients. I was nervous as I had only done a few of these in the past. we ran through the options that needed to be added to the equipment in the hospital as each patient was different. We ran through each one and one by one we ticked off what we needed to achieve".*

**Key attributes interpreted from the narrative:** Nervous, initial lacking in confidence and anxious. Confidence improved as call progressed.

**Initial interpretation:** The sales person was nervous about their ability to advise the customer about the modifications to the customer's equipment. The salesperson was lacking in confidence because they had limited experience in recommending the equipment modifications. The salesperson was anxious as a result but by taking a measured and logical approach to the sales call they were able to meet the customer's needs.

**Important customer**

| | |
|---|---|
| Emotion 1 (E1): | Anxious |
| Emotion 2 (E2): | Concerned |
| Other feelings: | |
| Age: | 46-55 |
| Location: | Australia |
| Gender: | Female |
| Experience: | 6 to 10 years |
| Triads applicable to this narrative | 3a |
| Self-coded strength : This story describes a – common situation | 1b=82 |

**Narrative:**

*"I was feeling quite <u>nervous</u>. I was feeling <u>nervous</u> as this customer was vital to the business to survive <u>and if they were not happy it could cause a huge loss to the business</u>. Also, word of mouth advertising. <u>If this customer was not satisfied they would pass this on to other potential customers:</u>*

*Story:*

*I had a big appointment with an important customer and I was feeling very nervous and didn't want to sound unprofessional, have limited product knowledge where I could not answer all of their questions and find solutions and didn't want to lose them as a customer. Once we met, friendly greetings were made and I acted very professional and treated them with respect. I was able to answer all queries. The sale went ahead".*

**Key attributes interpreted from the narrative:** Nervous, concerned, initial lacking in confidence and anxious, impression management.

**Initial interpretation:** Even though it was not specifically mentioned in the narrative, the salesperson was worried about the customer not being happy. The concern was notable to the salesperson because the customer was perceived as being a very important customer to the business and they could spread the word to others about their dissatisfaction. The salesperson was acutely aware they had limited product knowledge and that caused anxiety and nervousness. The salesperson was concerned they may not perform well in the sales call as a result. The anxiety and concern was unjustified and the call successfully went ahead.

**Journey**

| | |
|---|---|
| Emotion 1 (E1): | Afraid |
| Emotion 2 (E2): | Worried |
| Other feelings: | |
| Age: | 36-45 |
| Location: | Saudi Arabia |
| Gender: | Male |
| Experience: | 16 to 20 years |
| Triads applicable to this narrative | 3a, 4b |
| Self-coded strength : This story describes a – difficult sales call | 1c=42 |

**Narrative:**

> "I am responsible for the company's sales per sales channels, including b2b and there is a very large company consume large quantities of a particular product you MY COMPANY production similar to it was this company imports of this product from abroad. The company's headquarters was located about 1200 kilometers from the seat of my company where I worked in Saudi Arabia and the vast distances and I was in the capital Riyadh and this company in Jeddah. It was these quantities consumed during the Hajj and Umrah season. I have to contact the company and make an appointment with the manager of the company. He was known for this _company it does not alter or change the items_ that deal has been a great _challenge and great fear_ of this interview especially I am _a role model_ for the Kingdom if the sales team failed to achieve this deal will be a big problem in the management of my sales team. I was a private _shudder of fear_ that this transaction is in the millions, and if successful it will be a deal-old so I've _studied well before the customer's request_ to go to him and brought me samples have been prepared scenario to his requests and what I can maximum facilities oldest him. Has the interview in the client's office - today's highly temperature - _sweat me_ - I do not know because of the weather _or because of the prestige of the position and the client_. And I smiled entered for the client in a timely manner and initiated in pulling attention to new items in product samples and ask him and explain the importance and advantage to cooperate with us In the end, the grace of God _I got the deal_. _It was a journey_".

**Key attributes interpreted from the narrative:** Challenging customer, fear, afraid, pride, well prepared, worried, sweating due to important customer, successful outcome.

**Initial interpretation:** The salesperson perceived this sales call had a lot at stake and he was afraid that if he was unsuccessful, it would impact on the motivation of his sales team as he was a role model to them. The customer was known to not change products so the salesperson was worried they would not consider his company as an alternate supplier. The salesperson was sweating but he was not sure if it was because of the hot weather or the importance of the customer. He stated he was afraid and worried and in this call it is highly likely the salesperson was nervous and was anxious about the outcome of the call. As it turned out the salesperson secured the deal and the call was successful.

**Learning from the customer**

| Emotion 1 (E1): | Worried |
|---|---|
| Emotion 2 (E2): | Nervous |
| Other feelings: | |
| Age: | 36-45 |
| Location: | Australia |
| Gender: | Male |
| Experience: | 6 to 10 years |
| Triads applicable to this narrative | 2c, 3a, 6b |
| Self-coded strength : This story describes a – successful sales call | 1a=46 |

**Narrative:**

> "I had a potentially embarrassing call once when I had to show a client a new technical product. I <u>did not fully know how to use the product so</u> I was <u>very nervous and worried</u> that <u>I would look incompetent</u> to the customer and when in technical sales it is necessary to know what you are talking about. I turned the unit on and let it warm up and then asked the customer what his application was. He brought out a piece of his equipment and we connected it to my equipment. No sooner had we connected it, and the customer immediately started operating my new product. I was amazed at what was happening and I actually learnt a lot from the customer without them ever knowing".

**Key attributes interpreted from the narrative:** Lack of product knowledge, nervous, worried, impression management.

**Initial interpretation:** Even though the salesperson had limited product knowledge of the equipment they were selling, they were able to achieve what they wanted out of the call by letting the customer use the equipment. The lack of product knowledge made the salesperson feel nervous and worried that they would look incompetent to the customer.

**Lost sales not my fault**

| Emotion 1 (E1): | Apprehensive |
|---|---|
| Emotion 2 (E2): | Afraid |
| Other feelings: | Worried, Nervous |
| Age: | 36-45 |
| Location: | Australia |
| Gender: | Male |
| Experience: | 11 to 15 years |
| Triads applicable to this narrative | 2c, 3a, 4b, 5b |
| Self-coded strength : This story describes a – difficult sales call | 1c=56 |

**Narrative:**

*"In my business sales success is* <u>*dependant on the support and delivery*</u> <u>*functions of my company*</u>*. I have* <u>*good relationships*</u> *with my customers but sometimes* <u>*when my company does not deliver*</u> *to the expectations of my customer it creates a big problem for me. This happened once to a customer who was always a bit pedantic but this time they became very annoyed. Knowing this I was* <u>*afraid of what to expect and was very apprehensive*</u> <u>*visiting the customer.*</u> *I did and discovered that I had lost a big order because my company did not deliver when promised"*.

**Key attributes interpreted from the narrative:** Afraid, apprehensive, personal pride, disappointment, worried, nervous, good customer relationship.

**Initial interpretation:** The salesperson in this call was been let down by his company causing the loss of a large order. The salesperson was afraid to make the call on the customer and felt apprehensive in doing so. In this case the salesperson's call effectiveness was impacted upon by factors out of their control. Continuing issues of this type could impact on the salespersons confidence and sales effectiveness

**Lots on concern but no issue.**

| Emotion 1 (E1): | Anxious |
|---|---|
| Emotion 2 (E2): | Worried |
| Other feelings: | Concerned |
| Age: | 36-45 |
| Location: | Australia |
| Gender: | Male |
| Experience: | 6 to 10 years |
| Triads applicable to this narrative | 3a, 6b |
| Self-coded strength : This story describes a – successful sales call | 1a=49 |

**Narrative:**

> *"There was a time when I had to visit a customer who had dealt with us before but when they worked for another company. <u>Their experience was not a good one</u>. On the way to the customer I was <u>worrying</u> about how the customer would be. I did not know what the previous problems had been so <u>I was nervous</u>. zeven though I did not know anything about the earlier issues I could not help <u>feeling anxious about the call</u>. My objective for the call was to allow the customer to lead the way and for me to address issues if and when they were raised. <u>Surprisingly</u> when I met the customer they were welcoming and as the call went on there was no mention of the previous problems. I therefore was <u>determined</u> to make sure everything about the call/sales went well".*

**Key attributes interpreted from the narrative:** Worry, nervous, anxious, concerned, surprised, determined, unjustified worry.

**Initial interpretation:** The salesperson was worried about how the call would go because they knew about the past experience the customer had with his company when they working for another company. The worrying made the salesperson anxious and they did not know what to expect when meeting the customer. The salesperson was surprised when the customer did not mention the past problems, which made them feel determined to make sure everything went well.

**Meeting clients**

| | |
|---|---|
| Emotion 1 (E1): | Nervous |
| Emotion 2 (E2): | Apprehensive |
| Other feelings: | Trusting, Proud |
| Age: | 36-45 |
| Location: | Australia |
| Gender: | Male |
| Experience: | 6 to 10 years |
| Triads applicable to this narrative | 5b, 6b |
| Self-coded strength : This story describes a – common situation | 1b=62 |

**Narrative:**

> *"slightly nervous and apprehensive. Mainly concerned I would have enough information for any unprepared questions. Meeting important clients can always be nerving times. I always want to make sure I present myself, and my company in the most professional way. The meeting went well. More informal and friendly in the dialogue".*

**Key attributes interpreted from the narrative:** Nervous, apprehensive, concerned, proud, trust, impression management.

**Initial interpretation:** The salesperson was nervous and apprehensive because they were concerned about whether they would have enough information to answer the customer's questions. This suggests a lack of confidence in their ability. The customer was identified as being very important which made the salesperson feel more in need of being well perceived by the customer. The cyclical nature of the customer being an important one, worrying about whether you will be able to answer the customer's questions and how you will be perceived by the customer all contributed to the salesperson being nervous and apprehensive prior to the call.

**Meeting Turn Around**

| Emotion 1 (E1): | Anxious |
|---|---|
| Emotion 2 (E2): | Fear |
| Other feelings: | |
| Age: | 26-35 |
| Location: | South Africa |
| Gender: | Male |
| Experience: | 11 to 15 years |
| Triads applicable to this narrative | 1a, 4b, 5b |
| Self-coded strength : This story describes a - successful sales call | 1a=91 |

**Narrative:**

> *"The Day that I was on my way to meet the engineers and GM from the SAB Plant everyone reporting to them has <u>warned me that they are very tough people</u> to deal with, <u>I prepared for the meeting</u> and was placed at the head of a 20 seater conference table, to my <u>suprise</u> al three of them are <u>extremly relaxed and down to earth individuals</u>"*

**Key attributes interpreted from the narrative:** Worried, anxious, fear, prepared, surprised.

**Initial interpretation:** The sales person had been told prior to visiting the customer that they were very difficult to deal with. The salesperson compensated for this by being well prepared. Ruminating about what they had been told prior to the call, initiated greater contingency planning on the part of the salesperson. The salesperson was surprised when they met the customer that they were friendly and relaxed people. In this case the anxiety about meeting the customer was unjustified but may have made the salesperson more confident by being better prepared.

**Nerves and being able to joke**

| Emotion 1 (E1): | Fear |
|---|---|
| Emotion 2 (E2): | Nervous |
| Other feelings: | Concerned, Scared, Afraid, Worried |
| Age: | 36-45 |
| Location: | South Africa |
| Gender: | Male |
| Experience: | 11 to 15 years |
| Triads applicable to this narrative | 2c, 6b |
| Self-coded strength : This story describes a – common situation | 1b=48 |

**Narrative:**

*"One of my first sales calls many ears ago was with the outside broadcast group for Multichoice. My feelings at the time was that of extreme nervousness and concern if I would be able to offer the customer the service and product that they would need and require from me. Upon our first meeting I was greatful that we were meeting in a air conditioned room as I was sweating profusely and my nerves felt like they were on fire. The meeting started off very shakily and slowly but surely got better. As we carried on discussions it occurred to me that the people I was in discussion with were very friendly and liked to joke as well. This put me at ease and by the end of the meeting through the use of sales techniques as well as a number of jokes we came to an agreement on the products an services that we mutually agreed was best suited to their requirements and at the end I the day my first year of business with this customer yielded orders totalling R3.5M"*

**Key attributes interpreted from the narrative:** Lacking confidence, nervous, concerned, fear, scared, afraid, unjustified worry, successful outcome.

**Initial interpretation:** The salesperson in this call felt extremely nervous and concerned about whether they would be able to provide what the customer needed. The salesperson was sweating and nervous to begin with but as the call progressed they discovered the customer was friendly and liked to share a joke. This made the salesperson more at ease which enabled them to successfully progress the call.

**Nervous day at corporate client**

| Emotion 1 (E1): | Anxious |
|---|---|
| Emotion 2 (E2): | Concerned |
| Other feelings: | |
| Age: | 26-35 |
| Location: | South Africa |
| Gender: | Male |
| Experience: | 11 to 15 years |
| Triads applicable to this narrative | 5b |
| Self-coded strength : This story describes a – successful sales call | 1a=43 |

**Narrative:**

> "I am now working for xxxxxxx for 3 months. It is a new industry with new products and new chalanges but with the same function, SALES. I have been in the sales industry for a long time and been in almost every sector of sales you can think of, Retail, Direct selling, account management, Technical sales and services and now Territory Manager. Although I had the skills and tools to do my job well I was _still very nevous about my incounter_ with this _huge corporate client_ because I still had _very little knowlege_ about what presicely I am selling and what the structures are of the company I am currently working for. _What if I say the wrong thing? What if I over promice and under deliver? What if he asks something I am supposed to know and don't know what to say?_ But when I sat in front of the client _he was actualy very helpful_ and was very open and was more than happy to share his work experiance, needs, wants, threats, and opportunities with me. I walked out there knowing it was a _sucessful meeting_ and got a RFQ the following week".

**Key attributes interpreted from the narrative:** Nervous, lacking confidence, worrying, anxious, concerned, ruminating and unnecessary worry as it turns out, successful outcome.

**Initial interpretation:** The salesperson has a lot of past experience but still feels nervous when meeting an important customer. The anxiety and nervousness felt by the salesperson was mainly related to their self-confidence about product knowledge and concerns about how they would be perceived by the customer and their ability to answer their questions. These concerns proved to be unjustified as the customer was found to be helpful and open and willing to discuss their needs with the salesperson.

**Perseverance and tenacity**

| | |
|---|---|
| Emotion 1 (E1): | Apprehensive |
| Emotion 2 (E2): | Nervous |
| Other feelings: | Positive |
| Age: | 36-45 |
| Location: | Australia |
| Gender: | Male |
| Experience: | 6 to 10 years |
| Triads applicable to this narrative | 1a, 3a, 6b |
| Self-coded strength : This story describes a - successful sales call | 1a=52 |

**Narrative:**

*"I had a relatively <u>large account</u> compared to the others I had so I had <u>a lot at risk with one customer</u>. My sales manager was always nervous about losing the account and never being able to make up the shortfall. I decided I would develop one of my smaller accounts that had potential just in case I did lose the big one for some reason. I went to see them one day with <u>clear and specific call objectives</u> but at the same time <u>apprehensive</u> about how I would go trying to get more out of the account. The first visit went as usual. the second visit I started to get more information as the relationship developed. On about the 7th visit and a lot of <u>perseverance</u> I hit the big one and got a huge order which was the start of many more".*

**Key attributes interpreted from the narrative:** High risk large account, worry, clear call objectives, apprehensive, nervous, positive, success through perseverance.

**Initial interpretation:** In this call there is not mention of the word worry, however, it is clear from the narrative that the salesperson and his sales manager were worried about losing a large account and not being able to fill the void. The apprehension experienced by the salesperson was related to how they could increase sales in the account. Over time and through perseverance and regular calling, the account grew and the salesperson met their call objectives.

**Product failure**

| | |
|---|---|
| Emotion 1 (E1): | Worried |
| Emotion 2 (E2): | Concerned |
| Other feelings: | |
| Age: | 36-45 |
| Location: | Australia |
| Gender: | Male |
| Experience: | 6 to 10 years |
| Triads applicable to this narrative | 2c, 3a, 4b, 6b |
| Self-coded strength : This story describes a – difficult sales call | 1c=44 |

**Narrative:**

*"A customer once called with <u>a complaint</u> about one of the products we supplied them. It was a part that performed a critical function and whilst not expensive was critical to their production. Before calling on the customer I looked back over their sales history and confirmed there had been no faulty products in the past. They had been a customer for around 3.5 years. <u>I dropped around not knowing what to expect</u>. I was <u>feeling very worried</u> that there <u>may have been more to it</u>, so <u>I prepared myself for the worst</u>. When I got to see the customer he was not looking all that happy. We sat down and he explained that the faulty part had cost his company 3 hours downtime which amounted to many thousands of dollars in lost time. I was very apologetic and assured the customer that our products were of a very high quality but there was always the chance of a rare failure. The customer understood and everything seemed OK. I suggested to the customer that I could come back and spend time with him and identify a list of critical parts that he used and arrange for spares to be stocked on his premises so that should a failure occur then they could minimize the downtime. The customer was very happy with this".*

**Key attributes interpreted from the narrative:** Worried, concerned, prepared, successful outcome.

**Initial interpretation:** The salesperson was worried that there may have been additional problems other than a faulty part complaint. They did not know what to expect and were having thoughts before the call that there may be other issues. As a consequence the salesperson prepared for the worst. Even though the customer was unhappy with what had happened with the faulty part, the salesperson had a solution for the customer that would avoid a similar thing happening in the future.

**Save face**

| Emotion 1 (E1): | Apprehensive |
| --- | --- |
| Emotion 2 (E2): | Concerned |
| Other feelings: | Confident |
| Age: | 46-55 |
| Location: | United Kingdom |
| Gender: | Male |
| Experience: | 16 to 20 years |
| Triads applicable to this narrative | 2c, 3a, 4b |
| Self-coded strength : This story describes a – difficult sales call | 1c=54 |

**Narrative:**

> *"the company I worked for a few years ago specialised in food additives. I went to a customer who thought our products were inferior to a competitors.* <u>*I knew I was in for a hard time*</u> <u>*before I got to the customer and was feeling*</u> <u>*apprehensive.*</u> *When I got there I asked the customer why they thought the products were inferior and they could not explain why. I made sure I did not pursue this too much otherwise the customer would have looked silly, so I offered to send them some technical research data confirming the quality and effectiveness of our products. The* <u>*customer was happy*</u> *with this and continued to buy our products".*

**Key attributes interpreted from the narrative:** Apprehensive, concerned, worry, confident, successful outcome.

**Initial interpretation:** The salesperson was concerned and apprehensive about meeting with the customer because they were expecting the customer to give them a difficult time about their products. When the salesperson arrived at the customer's premises, the customer was unable to explain why they felt the products were inferior to a competitor offering. The salesperson followed up the call by sending the customer some technical data about their products. The customer was satisfied and continued to buy products from the salesperson.

**Success with a grumpy receptionist**

| Emotion 1 (E1): | Apprehensive |
|---|---|
| Emotion 2 (E2): | Nervous |
| Other feelings: | Hopeful |
| Age: | 36-45 |
| Location: | Australia |
| Gender: | Male |
| Experience: | 6 to 10 years |
| Triads applicable to this narrative | 2c, 3a, 4b, 6b |
| Self-coded strength : This story describes a – successful sales call | 1a=40 |

**Narrative:**

> *"Much of my time is spent prospecting for new sales. One time I stopped off in an industrial area and decided to walk around door to door in other words cold calling. One of the businesses I went to was a manufacturer of air-conditioning ducting that they sold to air conditioning installers. When I first knocked on the door and entered the reception I was greeted by a grumpy older receptionist who snapped "do you have an appointment?" I said no and that I was in the area and as my company was a supplier of sheet metal and associated products that I thought they may have an interest in my products. She glared at me and said "wait there." I <u>nervously waited</u> and an elderly gentleman came out. I ran through my usual introduction and he said to come through into the factory. I went with him and proceeded to discuss my products. As it turned out <u>he was very interested</u> and wanted me to quote on a range of sheet metal and fastners. I went back to the office did the quote and within  a week I had an initial small order. I have taken the time to nurture and <u>develop a good relationship with this customer</u> and the <u>business has continued to grow</u>".*

**Key attributes interpreted from the narrative:** Nervous, apprehensive, hopeful, successful outcome.

**Initial interpretation:** The salesperson was apprehensive and nervous about doing cold calls because they arrived unannounced and did not know what to expect. The initial reception received by the salesperson is what reinforces feelings of apprehension and nervousness but on this occasion, the salesperson was able to meet with someone who was interested in the products. A good relationship developed and sales followed.

**The evil emperor**

| Emotion 1 (E1): | Anxious |
|---|---|
| Emotion 2 (E2): | Fear |
| Other feelings: | |
| Age: | 56-65 |
| Location: | United Kingdom |
| Gender: | Male |
| Experience: | 11 to 15 years |
| Triads applicable to this narrative | 2c, 3a, 4b |
| Self-coded strength : This story describes a – difficult sales call | 1c=72 |

**Narrative:**

*"Early in my selling career with xxxxxx, I was on my last day of introductions to customers with the representative whose territory I was taking over. It was Friday afternoon, around 2.30 pm. It had been a long day so far and I was eager to get to the weekend. We parked outside the last customer's premises and waited. After a few minutes of silence I asked why we were still sitting in the car. My friend replied that he hated calling on this particular customer because he was basically scared of him (as were his staff). Mentally I chuckled, but my friend was really distressed so I said nothing. We left the car and made our way to the receptionist who after checking invited us through to the customer's office. In we went...and there he was! It was surreal, the customer was an arrogant, ignorant man who barely acknowledged our presence other than to indicate that we should sit, all the while not even glancing at us. The charade that followed was almost too absurd to be true, but it was. The customer's desk was on top of a plinth about six inches off the ground. He was seated in quite a high chair behind an enormous, ornate, wooden desk. Our two seater leather couch faced him directly. The couch sank downwards at the back so that we sank into it and ended up with our knees level with our eyes looking up at the customer, and he looking down on us. The couch was very narrow and we found ourselves squeezed together a little too close for comfort for two men. We were feeling a great deal of discomfort and the customer with hardly a glance at us, relayed his order and then summarily dismissed us. Awkward is an understatement of how we felt trying to get out of, rather than off, the couch. Back in the car, my friend turned to me and said, "now you know why I hate seeing that customer." I agreed that he appeared to be an arsehole, but my subsequent visits were totally different.*

*I would enter with quite loud salutations and would politely refuse the offer of sitting, advising him that as he was busy I would just take his order then leave him to get on with his work...as he was a very busy man. The truth was that I wanted to maintain eyelevel contact with him, and to control the time element. The first time I left, he asked for my card and than shook my hand. Not such a bad sort after all???"*

**Key attributes interpreted from the narrative:** Worried, scared, anxious, fear, distressed, awkward.

**Initial interpretation:** The salesperson had been told by his colleague how difficult the customer was and why he hated calling on him. The call proceeded and both salespeople attended the call. The salesperson taking over the territory from the other was surprised to learn that the customer was indeed very unusual and difficult and made them feel of lower importance by having them sit low down in an uncomfortable couch. The salesperson was made to feel anxious about the call prior to attending the call. As it turned out, the customer was exactly as what had been explained to him. The salesperson tried a new tactic when next visiting which worked and which made the salesperson more of an equal and made future calls more successful.

**Too relaxed**

| | |
|---|---|
| Emotion 1 (E1): | Apprehensive |
| Emotion 2 (E2): | Concerned |
| Other feelings: | |
| Age: | 26-35 |
| Location: | United States of America |
| Gender: | Male |
| Experience: | 6 to 10 years |
| Triads applicable to this narrative | 1a, 2b, 3a, 4b, 5b |
| Self-coded strength : This story describes a - successful sales call | 1a=53 |

**Narrative:**

*"I was to visit an <u>important client</u> who I had been working with over the past year. Unfortunately I was going to be out of town so I asked my area sales manager to do the call. On my return from my trip I had a message to call my contact. I phoned and she said she wanted to meet, so we arranged a time for later that week. <u>I went to the call a little apprehensive as I did not know why she was wanting to meet so soon.</u>*

*My area Sales Manager had not mentioned anything unusual about the call he did with her so <u>I was a little unsure what it was about.</u> I met with the customer and she started telling me how <u>she was unhappy</u> with my Area Sales Manager and his attitude. This <u>surprised me</u> as he had a jovial attitude and was often relaxed and friendly. I delved further to find out what actually happened and she was saying that he did not take things seriously and was more interested in having a joke and being in her opinion too familiar. I explained to her that his personality was such that he was a friendly, type who liked a joke and was very relaxed. She said she did not like him and to not send him again. I agreed and continued to manage the account. <u>Our relationship did not suffer</u> and we continued our association".*

**Key attributes interpreted from the narrative:** Worried, apprehensive, concerned, surprised.

**Initial interpretation:** The sales manager in this call asked a salesperson to visit a customer in his absence. The salesperson that did the call created some problems which needed to be sorted when the sales manager returned. The sales manager was apprehensive about making the call so soon after getting back because they were unsure why the customer wanted to meet so soon. The apprehension was caused by not knowing what the problem was. The call was made and the issue was sorted and the relationship continued successfully.

**Unnecessary fear**

| Emotion 1 (E1): | Fear |
|---|---|
| Emotion 2 (E2): | Afraid |
| Other feelings: | |
| Age: | 26-35 |
| Location: | Australia |
| Gender: | Female |
| Experience: | 11 to 15 years |
| Triads applicable to this narrative | 1a, 2c, 3a, 6b |
| Self-coded strength : This story describes a - successful sales call | 1a=72 |

**Narrative:**

*"I went to see a <u>new prospect</u> about some products I felt they would be interested in. I phoned before hand and made an appointment. I arrived about 5 minutes early and waited in the car until 1 minute before the call. Whilst in the car <u>I started having negative thoughts</u> about whether the prospect would be open to my companies products.*

*<u>I started to feel fearful</u> of this and also began to think of ways to change my approach. I do not know why I did this at the last minute as I have <u>done these call many times.</u> When I left the car for the meeting <u>I felt vey uneasy and certainly not confident</u>. I entered reception and asked for the person I was to meet. I was soon meeting <u>the person who was very welcoming and open to discussion</u>. I sat down, he offered me coffee or tea and we got down to discussions about what his company was doing and what his product needs were. As it turned out he identified 2 products he was interested in and I discussed this and provided a quote. <u>I was starting to feel more confident</u> as the call progressed and felt that I liked this person, not because they had bought some products from me but because <u>he was just a nice and welcoming person</u>. I was able to continue supplying this company and <u>my relationship was very good from then on</u>".*

**Key attributes interpreted from the narrative:** Negative thoughts before the call, fear, afraid, uneasy, lacking confidence, successful outcome, unnecessary worry and fear.

**Initial interpretation:** The salesperson in this call had a lot of past sales experience but still fearful and lacking in confidence. The call was to a new customer, and even though the salesperson had previous experience they still felt uneasy and afraid. The reason for this is due to not know what potentially could happen. The unknown in these circumstances causes fear and makes the person worry about perceived possible outcomes that may never eventuate. In this case, the salespersons confidence grew as the call progressed and after the salesperson discovered that the customer was a nice welcoming person. The fear and concern was not justified in this instance.

**Whatever it takes**

| Emotion 1 (E1): | Anxious |
|---|---|
| Emotion 2 (E2): | Worried |
| Other feelings: | |
| Age: | 46-55 |
| Location: | Australia |
| Gender: | Male |
| Experience: | 1 to 5 years |
| Triads applicable to this narrative | 2c, 6b |
| Self-coded strength : This story describes a – difficult sales call | 1c=75 |

**Narrative:**

"XYZ Pty Ltd (not real name) is a mining company and <u>my biggest customer</u>. However, due to a new accounts system recently installed by them, I must adhere to their new invoicing and ordering policies which basically means I need to match the pricing on their purchase orders with our invoices to the cent!

If these documents do not match, I will not be paid and if in breach multiple times, the chance of losing this account (my largest and most important customer) is certain. They are also looking for more competitive discounts. I decided to meet with XYZ's senior accounts staff personally to discuss this issue and to assure them that I do not want to lose their account and will basically do anything possible to retain my position as one of their favoured suppliers. They agreed that their demands for accuracy were "over the top", however, with their new accounting system, they had little alternative but to insist these new policies be met! As I am confidentially in the process of selling my business, I absolutely must retain this customer otherwise my sales figures will be disastrous. I have decided I will look after this account personally, offer exceptional discounts and triple check all transactions both inwards and outwards for accuracy. <u>I am feeling very stressed</u> about this situation and <u>the chance of losing this account</u> prior to sale of this business, however, by taking over the account personally, offering competitive discounts and checking that all transactions match their requirements, I will minimise this possibility and keep the monthly sales figures looking positive for potential buyers of the business. Basically, <u>I'll do whatever it takes to keep this customer</u>, however, the early indications of my "personal" strategy is very positive".

**Key attributes interpreted from the narrative**: Stressed, worried, anxious

**Initial interpretation:** The salesperson in this case felt worried and anxious because they were required to comply with a tedious task required by the customer when invoicing and paying accounts. The salesperson knew the request from the customer was going to be demanding but they felt it was extremely important to comply particularly as the business was to be sold. The salesperson personally looked after the account to ensure the customer's needs were met. There was not a lot the salesperson could do in this situation especially if they wanted to retain the customer's business.

**Cluster themes applicable to negative affect narratives**

| No. | Narrative Title | Negative affect emotion themes taken from initial analysis of narratives in Appendix 4A | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Worry | Lack Confidence | Nervous | Rumination | Concerned | Anxious | Apprehensive | Unnecessary |
| 1 | Customer turned friend | | | ✓ | | | ✓ | | ✓ |
| 2 | Don't worry unnecessarily | ✓ | ✓ | | | ✓ | | | ✓ |
| 3 | Don't you worry | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | | ✓ | | |
| 4 | Healthcare | | ✓ | ✓ | | | ✓ | | |
| 5 | Important customer | | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | | |
| 6 | journey | ✓ | | | | | | | ✓ |
| 7 | learning from the customer | ✓ | | ✓ | | | | | |
| 8 | lost sales not my fault | ✓ | | | | | | ✓ | |
| 9 | Lots on concern but no issue. | ✓ | | | | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ |
| 10 | Meeting clients | | | ✓ | | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ |
| 11 | meeting turn around | ✓ | | | ✓ | | ✓ | | ✓ |
| 12 | Nerves and being able to joke | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | | | ✓ |
| 13 | Nervous day at corporate client | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ |
| 14 | perseverance and tenacity | | | ✓ | | | | ✓ | |
| 15 | Product failure | ✓ | | | | ✓ | | | ✓ |
| 16 | Save face | | | | | ✓ | | ✓ | |
| 17 | Success with a grumpy receptionist | | | ✓ | | | | ✓ | |
| 18 | The evil emperor. | | | | | | ✓ | | |
| 19 | Too relaxed | | | | | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ |
| 20 | unnecessary fear | | ✓ | | | | | | ✓ |
| 21 | Whatever it takes! | ✓ | | | | | ✓ | | |
| Total | | 11 | 7 | 10 | 2 | 9 | 9 | 6 | 11 |

# Appendix 4B  Initial interpretations of narratives with positive affect coding

**Arcelor Mittal**

| | |
|---|---|
| Emotion 1 (E1): | Optimistic |
| Emotion 2 (E2): | Excited |
| Other feelings: | |
| Age: | 36-45 |
| Location: | South Africa |
| Gender: | Male |
| Experience: | 16 to 20 years |
| Triads applicable to this narrative | 1a, 2a, 4b, 6b |
| Self-coded strength : This story describes a – successful sales call | 1a=76 |

**Narrative:**

> *"My Meeting with xxxx buyers. I was scheduled to meet with xxxx buyers, <u>I was excited and postive</u> to meet these buyers. Upon meeting them they were very hesutant of xxxx and there had been afew past issues that put them off about xxxx, I assured them I would sort out any issues and would be their contact point for business. <u>It took a bit of time to win their confidence</u> and now since I have they are buying a lot more and view xxxx in different light".*

**Key attributes interpreted from the narrative:** Excited, positive, optimistic, tenacious.

**Initial interpretation:** In this call there was reluctance on the part of the customer to purchase from the salespersons company xxxx because of past issues. The salesperson was positive and optimistic and over a period of time was able to convince the customer that he would personally sort any issues out and be their point of contact should there be any problems. The salesperson developed confidence in the customer and approached the challenge in a positive and enthusiastic manner. The salesperson had extensive past experience of 16-20 years which would have assisted the salesperson achieve the positive outcome

**Be Honest**

| | |
|---|---|
| Emotion 1 (E1): | Confident |
| Emotion 2 (E2): | Positive |
| Other feelings: | Sympathetic |
| Age: | 56-65 |
| Location: | Australia |
| Gender: | Male |
| Experience: | More than 20 years |
| Triads applicable to this narrative | 1a, 4b, 5c, 6b |
| Self-coded strength : This story describes a – successful sales call | 1a=92 |

**Narrative:**

> *"Post Sales Call. We had a <u>customer that had a poor experience</u> and I was sent out to discuss the situation with the customer. I also performed our service in person a few times to insure we did our best to retain the customer. <u>I felt fine</u>, <u>I listened and insured we did our best</u> to put the best foot forward. In the end <u>everything went well</u>, <u>we retained the customer</u> and it had a good ending".*

**Key attributes interpreted from the narrative:** Felt fine, confident, positive, sympathetic, listened, did their best, successful outcome.

**Initial interpretation:** In this call, the salesperson went to a customer who had a poor experience with his company. The salesperson had a positive attitude, was at ease, listened carefully to the customers concerns and was committed to ensure everything was done to correct the problem. The salesperson had been to the customer before so a pre-existing relationship existed. Listening skills and the ability to remain calm and relaxed assisted achieve a successful outcome.

**Coffee lover**

| Emotion 1 (E1): | Optimistic |
|---|---|
| Emotion 2 (E2): | Hopeful |
| Other feelings: | |
| Age: | 36-45 |
| Location: | New Zealand |
| Usual country: | Australia |
| Gender: | Male |
| Experience: | 11 to 15 years |
| Triads applicable to this narrative | 1a, 3a, 4b, 5b, 6b |
| Self-coded strength : This story describes a – successful sales call | 1a=53 |

**Narrative:**

> *"I took a customer who was a coffee lover out to a gourmet coffee shop to discuss an upcoming order. The order was valued at $350K and was for a range of high end computer equipment. The customer was very appreciative of me taking him to this special venue which they had not been to before. After a few coffees the customer got down to business and was keen to give me the opportunity to visit the user place and discuss our offering. I did visit and the people and they were very interested in our products. After a few visits and consultations with key players I quoted and won the order".*

**Key attributes interpreted from the narrative:** relationship development, optimistic, hopeful, confident, successful outcome.

**Initial interpretation:** The salesperson in this call was aware of the customer's love of coffee. Taking the customer to a gourmet coffee shop appealed to the customer and succeeded in 'opening the door' and to provide an opportunity for the salesperson to meet the users of the product the salesperson wanted to sell. The salesperson was able to quote on some products after a few visits to the users and was successful in winning the order for the supply of the products.

**Cracking a New Market**

| | |
|---|---|
| Emotion 1 (E1): | Optimistic |
| Emotion 2 (E2): | Hopeful |
| Other feelings: | |
| Age: | 56-65 |
| Location: | Australia |
| Gender: | Male |
| Experience: | More than 20 years |
| Triads applicable to this narrative | 4b |
| Self-coded strength : This story describes a – successful sales call | 1a=43 |

**Narrative:**

> *"I recently went with a demo artist to see a client to attempt the <u>first Australian sale of a major piece of equipment.</u> While the equipment has seen lots of success in Asia, we had been <u>unable to penetrate the Australian market</u> due to <u>entrenched competition and local bias</u>. <u>One previous attempt with the same client had been unsuccessful</u>, but the use case was different this time, and we felt it was our best chance ever. <u>I was slightly nervous</u>, but it <u>made me feel more focused, and sensitive</u> to every nuance of feedback from the client during the demo. The <u>feedback from almost all of the attendees at the demo was positive</u>. Subsequent to the demo I held discussions with the Engineering Manager about support, and the decision is now pending".*

**Key attributes interpreted from the narrative:** Competitive market, previous attempt unsuccessful, perseverance, nervous, optimistic, hopeful, focussed.

**Initial interpretation:** The salesperson was attempting to sell a product for a second time to the same customer. The salesperson was a little nervous which provided a more focused approach to the call and enhanced the salesperson's sensitivity to signals from the customer. Feedback from the customer was positive following the demo which led to further discussions with the engineering manager. It is likely the heightened sensitivity to the customer's behaviour and buying signals during the call contributed to an initial positive outcome. The sale is pending however the salesperson is hopeful of winning the sale

**First contact**

| | |
|---|---|
| Emotion 1 (E1): | Positive |
| Emotion 2 (E2): | Excited |
| Other feelings: | Optimistic, Hopeful |
| Age: | 26-35 |
| Location: | Australia |
| Gender: | Female |
| Experience: | 6 to 10 years |
| Triads applicable to this narrative | 3a |
| Self-coded strength : This story describes a – successful sales call | 1a=40 |

**Narrative:**

> *"I was contacted directly by email to stock my product a retail store. <u>I had very few contacts</u> as a small business so when i was directly approached by an already established retail shop <u>I was very excited and happy </u>that someone looked at my items".*

**Key attributes interpreted from the narrative:** Excited, positive, optimistic, hopeful, happy.

**Initial interpretation:** Positive feedback and an enquiry to potentially stock the salesperson's product left the salesperson feeling excited, and positive. These positive motivational feelings would assist the salesperson achieve a successful sales outcome.

**First meeting**

| | |
|---|---|
| Emotion 1 (E1): | Positive |
| Emotion 2 (E2): | Self-assured |
| Other feelings: | |
| Age: | 46-55 |
| Location: | Australia |
| Gender: | Female |
| Experience: | 16 to 20 years |
| Triads applicable to this narrative | 1a, 4b, 6b |
| Self-coded strength : This story describes a – successful sales call | 1a=60 |

**Narrative:**

> *"I make sure <u>I prepare first and know what I want out of a meeting</u> -I am not usually scared or apprehensive. they are only people".*

**Key attributes interpreted from the narrative:** Prepared, positive, self-assured, clear call outcomes.

**Initial interpretation:** The salesperson in this sales call is confident and self-assured with a positive outlook. Preparation and having clear call outcomes or objectives before the call is the key to success for this salesperson.

**Fishing trip secures order**

| | |
|---|---|
| Emotion 1 (E1): | Optimistic |
| Emotion 2 (E2): | Confident |
| Other feelings: | Excited |
| Age: | 36-45 |
| Location: | Australia |
| Gender: | Male |
| Experience: | 11 to 15 years |
| Triads applicable to this narrative | 1a, 3a, 4b, 6b |
| Self-coded strength : This story describes a – successful sales call | 1a=67 |

**Narrative:**

> *"An opportunity arose with a mining company to supply aluminium pipe. I went to Karratha in Western Australia to meet the mining company purchasing officer. I got their on the Friday afternoon and met with the contact at the airport. To my surprise the contact asked if I would like to go fishing that evening with a few of the staff. I eagerly accepted as I love fishing. The fishing trip went well and I was dropped off about 10pm that night. On the Monday morning I went to their offices to meet the contact to discuss the supply of the pipes. I was feeling optimistic and confident before the call and had clear objectives to meet. The call went really well and the relationship with the contact was strong especially since we had been out fishing a few days before. The order I got was substantial and it just goes to show how important relations with the customer can be".*

**Key attributes interpreted from the narrative:** optimistic, confident, excited, clear call objectives, relationship was good, successful outcome.

**Initial interpretation:** A friendly gesture by the customer to go fishing assisted the salesperson develop a good relationship with this customer. The fishing trip happened before any meetings and discussions about products and services so the salesperson had a great opportunity to build rapport with the customer. The salesperson was optimistic and confident that the business meeting on the Monday morning would go well. The opportunity to establish a good relationship with the customer was key to the success of this call, together with the salesperson's confident and optimistic attitude.

**Focusing on the game**

| Emotion 1 (E1): | Determined |
| --- | --- |
| Emotion 2 (E2): | Positive |
| Other feelings: | Optimistic, Self-assured, Confident, Proud |
| Age: | 36-45 |
| Location: | Australia |
| Gender: | Male |
| Experience: | More than 20 years |
| Triads applicable to this narrative | 1a, 2a, 5b |
| Self-coded strength : This story describes a – successful sales call | 1a=65 |

**Narrative:**

*"I remember when my wife was pregnant and how her hormone induced emotional roller coaster of a temperament was affecting our relationship. Me coming home late and her waiting for me to come home and unleash her built up anxiety on me was not a pleasant situation. We argued more than talked and hissed more than kissed. The negative energy and restless nights left me tired and emotional strained. But <u>when it came down to working with clients or customers I knew to suppress my inner emotions and create a positive persona</u>. Remove the personal from the business and put the game face on. It was <u>always about maintaining focus on the objective through creating positive relationships and encounters"</u>.*

**Key attributes interpreted from the narrative:** Emotion regulation, determined, optimistic, self-assured, confident, proud, positive appearance, good customer relations. Focus on call objectives and relationship with customer.

**Initial interpretation:** In this call the salesperson was able to manage their feelings during sales calls and always put forward a positive outlook to the customer. By maintaining a professional approach and confident style enabled this salesperson to develop sound relationships with the customer. His focus was on call objectives.

**Little things can build the relationship**

| Emotion 1 (E1): | Confident |
|---|---|
| Emotion 2 (E2): | Optimistic |
| Other feelings: | Determined |
| Age: | 46-55 |
| Location: | Australia |
| Gender: | Female |
| Experience: | 11 to 15 years |
| Triads applicable to this narrative | 2a, 3a, 4b, 5c |
| Self-coded strength : This story describes a – difficult sales call | 1c=46 |

**Narrative:**

*"A lot of sales people fear making calls to unhappy customers. I remember a call that I had to make to <u>an unhappy customer</u> and <u>I was determined to make the call a success</u> and to turn the customer around. The <u>customer was unhappy</u> because their usual sales representative had been moved to another sales territory within the company. The original sales rep. had built a good reputation with the customer over a six year period. I explained to the customer that sometimes the territories need to be balanced and it was not a common practice but it was necessary this time. The customer continued to express their dis-pleasure so <u>I asked them what was the thing they liked most about the old sales rep</u>. Their reply was that they got on well with them and that the old rep. <u>used to bring morning tea when they came</u>! I suggested to the customer that given time the new rep. may well do the same. The customer seemed unsure about this so I arranged to bring the new rep. to meet the customer and we took along morning tea. The customer was beaming with smiles when he saw what we had and it was clear everything would work out. <u>The new rep. established a good relationship</u> with the customer and sales continued".*

**Key attributes interpreted from the narrative:** Determined, confident, optimistic, good relationships, strategic, successful outcome.

**Initial interpretation:** In this call the original salesperson established a good working relationship with the customer by taking morning tea when he visited. This strategy worked and enabled a strong relationship to be built between the customer and salesperson. The new salesperson followed the lead of the original one and the sound relationship with the customer continued. In this instance, the salesperson got to know what the customer appreciated and wanted which assisted in the successful management of the account.

**My B to B Sales Style**

| | |
|---|---|
| Emotion 1 (E1): | Optimistic |
| Emotion 2 (E2): | Self-assured |
| Other feelings: | Comfortable |
| Age: | 46-55 |
| Location: | Australia |
| Gender: | Female |
| Experience: | More than 20 years |
| Triads applicable to this narrative | 2a, 5a, 6b |
| Self-coded strength : This story describes a…………………….. | na |

**Narrative:**

> *"I have been involved in business to business sales in the Training Environment for 16 years. I used to get excited and nervous before 'pitching ' to a client, however, now <u>my selling style is one of relaxed confidence. I</u> enjoy the open ended creativity. A good salesperson must be confident in themselves as well as their product as I never quite know what opportunity and/ or potential may be. My experience has taught me that <u>one should do some broad research into the company and the contact</u> and <u>feel confident in</u> one's generalist knowledge -but not think too far ahead. Having an open, relaxed attitude free from personal opinion and personal agenda allows the client to express their thoughts, experiences and needs. I have had to learn to <u>actively listen and spend time asking questions</u>. The client is therefore investing their time and confidence with you. I can then and confirm their opinions and <u>build some commonality and rapport</u> rather than reeling off a set presentation. <u>Flexibility and an ability to adapt</u> to the individual business is far more important than being 'over prepared' and having a list of expectations. The <u>relationship comes first</u> and business then follows. I think having good 'emotional intelligence' and reading the client's personality style is very important".*

**Key attributes interpreted from the narrative:** relaxed, confident, optimistic, self-assured, comfortable, prepared, listen, ask questions, build rapport, flexibility, adaptability, relationship first.

**Initial interpretation:** Whilst this is not a narrative of an actual sales call, the following aspects are noteworthy: A relaxed and confident selling style is recognised as important to this participant. Equally doing research on the customer and preparing for the call is important. Listen and ask questions and develop a relationship with the customer. Flexibility during the call is important.

**Never be too confident**

| | |
|---|---|
| Emotion 1 (E1): | Confident |
| Emotion 2 (E2): | Self-assured |
| Other feelings: | |
| Age: | 26-35 |
| Location: | Australia |
| Gender: | Male |
| Experience: | 1 to 5 years |
| Triads applicable to this narrative | 3a, 5b |
| Self-coded strength : This story describes a – difficult sales call | 1c=78 |

**Narrative:**

*"Some customers can be difficult. I recall a time when I visited a customer who had a clear need for a product my company sold. I had not called on this customer before. I had the phone call from the customer requesting a sales rep visit. I made the call the following day. I was confident about the call as the customer had explained what they were looking for and it appeared our product was ideal for the application. I met with the customer only to find the customer was difficult and reluctant to commit. I at first thought there might be an objection to the product and how it would do the job but it turned out the customer was not overly happy with my company, not because they had bought before but because of what they had heard from an acquaintance. It turned out the customer did not buy. I followed through later and asked why and he said the company was British and he had heard something about one of the Directors of the company being on some kind of charge in the UK. This came as a surprise to me as the head office of my company was in another country and there was no evidence of what he was saying was true. Oh well!"*

**Key attributes interpreted from the narrative:** new customer, confident, self-assured, difficult customer, unhappy customer, unsuccessful call, surprised.

**Initial interpretation:** The salesperson in this call was confident and self-assured because the customer had requested a visit and their needs could be met by the products the salesperson sold. Unfortunately the sale did not proceed because of some bad publicity the customer was aware of in the head office of the salesperson's company overseas.

**New service**

| | |
|---|---|
| Emotion 1 (E1): | Confident |
| Emotion 2 (E2): | Optimistic |
| Other feelings: | Excited |
| Age: | 36-45 |
| Location: | United States of America |
| Gender: | Female |
| Experience: | 11 to 15 years |
| Triads applicable to this narrative | 1a, 3a, 4b, 5c, 6b |
| Self-coded strength : This story describes a – successful sales call | 1a=80 |

**Narrative:**

> *"I went to a customer whom I had been to only once before to see if I could obtain more new business from the account. Met with my contact once before who was relatively new to the job of Recruitment Manager. My company provides a range of recruitment support services which takes a lot of the repetitive tasks from the recruiter enabling them more time to focus on testing and selection. On my way to the customer I got a call from my manager saying a new service had been launched by head office and to start promoting it on my calls. I thought the timing was great as I was on my way to my customer and she could use these new services. <u>I was excited and confident</u> I would be able to make some new sales. I got to the customer and <u>had some general chit chat</u> and then discussed my services especially the new one my boss had called me about. My customer was very excited and said that it would save them a lot of time and money and that they would be interested. <u>A great call"</u>.*

**Key attributes interpreted from the narrative:** Excited, confident, optimistic, bridge to business, successful outcome.

**Initial interpretation:** In this call the salesperson got a call from their manager advising of a new product release that was ideally suited to a customer the salesperson was calling on. The salesperson was excited and confident that the sales call would be successful because their knowledge of the customer's business needs was good. The customer could see the value in the new product and expressed interest in the product. In this case the right product at the right time and a confident and optimistic salesperson was the key to this successful call.

**Out for dinner to get to see the customer**

| | |
|---|---|
| Emotion 1 (E1): | Optimistic |
| Emotion 2 (E2): | Confident |
| Other feelings: | |
| Age: | 26-35 |
| Location: | United States of America |
| Gender: | Female |
| Experience: | 6 to 10 years |
| Triads applicable to this narrative | 1a, 2a, 4b |
| Self-coded strength : This story describes a – successful sales call | 1a=54 |

**Narrative:**

> "I sell drugs to doctors and find that many doctors are pushed for time to spend with me. One time I could not get to see an important doctor with a lot of potential so I asked them out for dinner one night. It is not usually done as I am a female medical rep and the doctor was male. I just felt it was important to get into the account as it had big potential. We met for dinner and as expected the doctor was interested in more than the sales of medications. I knew where it was heading so I suggested that we meet again one day in his office when he has time. He agreed, we finished dinner and went on our way. We did meet about a month later and the doctor was a little embarrassed but I told him not to worry about it. He felt better and we had a good professional relationship from then on. I now get to see him and I get good orders".

**Key attributes interpreted from the narrative:** Strategic, tenacious, focused, optimistic, confident, successful outcome.

**Initial interpretation:** The strategy used by this female medical represented was unconventional but proved to be successful. The salesperson knew what they were doing, asking the male customer (doctor) out for dinner in order to get a meeting with them. The salesperson was confident their strategy would work but realised that control of the situation was necessary. Following the dinner and a subsequent meeting some time later, the doctor was embarrassed but willing to make time to see the salesperson when she called. The strategy resulted in sales orders being received.

**Pitching a new idea to a large retailer**

| | |
|---|---|
| Emotion 1 (E1): | Positive |
| Emotion 2 (E2): | Excited |
| Other feelings: | Confident |
| Age: | 36-45 |
| Location: | Australia |
| Gender: | Female |
| Experience: | 11 to 15 years |
| Triads applicable to this narrative | 2a, 3a, 5b, 6b |
| Self-coded strength : This story describes a – common situation | 1b=42 |

**Narrative:**

> *"Excited, organised and confident as the research completed indicated it would be perfect for the retailer. The innovative idea was presented and they really liked it, committed to it and ordered it".*

**Key attributes interpreted from the narrative:** Excited, positive, confident, organised and prepared, innovative product successful outcome.

**Initial interpretation:** In this sales scenario the salesperson did their homework by researching the customer and their needs. The product or service was innovative and the customer liked it and ordered it. The success of this call is linked to the salesperson being organised and confident and because they thoroughly researched the customer prior to the call. The salesperson had 11-15 years' experience and had learnt what was necessary to maximise the success of the call.

**Planning is everything**

| | |
|---|---|
| Emotion 1 (E1): | Confident |
| Emotion 2 (E2): | Optimistic |
| Other feelings: | |
| Age: | 26-35 |
| Location: | Austria |
| Gender: | Female |
| Experience: | 1 to 5 years |
| Triads applicable to this narrative | 1a |
| Self-coded strength : This story describes a – successful sales call | 1a=67 |

**Narrative:**

*"Two days ago I have had an appointment with a <u>very important customer</u>, for this meeting it took <u>1 month preparation</u> for presentation and other arrangements to make sure we get him/her on board. As everything was <u>planned in professional manner</u> I was <u>confident and certain that I will close the deal</u>".*

**Key attributes interpreted from the narrative:** Important customer, well prepared, confident, certain, optimistic.

**Initial interpretation:** The salesperson in this call took considerable time pre planning the call and making sure everything was prepared. They were confident and optimistic of success because of the preparation they put into the call.

**Sales Consultant**

| Emotion 1 (E1): | Excited |
|---|---|
| Emotion 2 (E2): | Hopeful |
| Other feelings: | Optimism |
| Age: | 46-55 |
| Location: | United States of America |
| Gender: | Male |
| Experience: | More than 20 years |
| Triads applicable to this narrative | 1a, 4b, 5a, 6b |
| Self-coded strength : This story describes a – successful sales call | 1a=95 |

**Narrative:**

> *"I had made <u>several cold calls</u> by telemarketing to a prospect and <u>finally got an appointment</u> there.  I knew from our telephone conversation that there was need for a change so <u>I was very excited</u> about the potential opportunity.  My feelings were of <u>optimism,</u> as this was the <u>first large prospect</u> in a new company.  Although <u>I had 20 years of experience I was still curious on the new business sales cycle</u>".*

**Key attributes interpreted from the narrative:** Tenacious, excited, optimistic, hopeful, certain, confident, unsure, curious.

**Initial interpretation:** In this call, the salesperson had considerable experience of over 20 years. They displayed tenacity by continually trying to get an appointment with a customer they had been telephoning for some time.  After finally getting an appointment, the salesperson was excited and optimistic they would be successful. The salesperson was still very curious about how the sale would proceed even though they were a seasoned salesperson.

**Selling to DJs**

| Emotion 1 (E1): | Hopeful |
|---|---|
| Emotion 2 (E2): | Positive |
| Other feelings: | |
| Age: | 46-55 |
| Location: | Australia |
| Gender: | Female |
| Experience: | More than 20 years |
| Triads applicable to this narrative | 1a, 3a, 5c, 6b |
| Self-coded strength : This story describes a – successful sales call | 1a=62 |

**Narrative:**

> *"When I worked for a large fashion house in Sydney, I was responsible for designing one of their many labels. Our main customer was David Jones, who over the year had spent a substantial amount of their OTB on the range I designed. We had a had a great previous season with them with <u>label I designed being the top selling label</u> in the specific category. The buyer had requested I produce an extra story for them due the previous season's success. <u>I did a inspiration trip</u> to Hong Kong, and from that I designed a small collection and created mood boards. On the day of the meeting I met with my manager and we visited the buyers office in David Jones HQ . <u>I was nervous</u>. Although I had met the buyer previously I had never sold to her directly - that was usually the role of the sales team and my manager. <u>The office was much smaller than I expected and so was less intimidating.</u> I did my presentation, discussed my ideas in depth to the which the buyer responded positively . <u>The outcome was positive</u> and a great way for me to discuss my ideas with buyer and <u>develop a relationship</u> with her".*

**Key attributes interpreted from the narrative:** Confident, hopeful, nervous, not so intimidated, positive, successful outcome and good customer relationship.

**Initial interpretation:** The salesperson in this call was a fashion designer who gave a presentation to a buyer of a large retail outlet. The buyer was suitably impressed and a good relationship developed. The salesperson was nervous about meeting the buyers in the head office, but they were hopeful of a positive outcome. The outcome was positive and the relationship progressed.

**Sign on the dotted line please**

| Emotion 1 (E1): | Determined |
|---|---|
| Emotion 2 (E2): | Self-assured |
| Other feelings: | |
| Age: | 26-35 |
| Location: | Australia |
| Gender: | Male |
| Experience: | 6 to 10 years |
| Triads applicable to this narrative | 2a |
| Self-coded strength : This story describes a – successful sales call | 1a=49 |

**Narrative:**

> *"Making a sales these days is a lot more difficult because it is more competitive and customers have more information and choices. When I sold a contract for services last year the customer was very informed and very particular about the contract details. They seemed to know many of the issues with such a contract which in some ways made my job easier and in other ways more difficult. I worked through the contract offer and met all their concerns. They seemed very happy and there was no hesitation signing".*

**Key attributes interpreted from the narrative:** competitive market, informed customer, committed, determined, self-assured, successful outcome.

**Initial interpretation:** The salesperson in this sales scenario was aware the customer was knowledgeable with relation to contracts. By working through all the contract concerns the customer had, helped established a good working relationship with the customer. The salesperson was determined to secure the contract so the time working with the customer addressing their concerns was well spent. The successful outcome was based on working closely with the customer and the salesperson having a sense of determination.

**The A.D.D. VP**

| | |
|---|---|
| Emotion 1 (E1): | Confident |
| Emotion 2 (E2): | Positive |
| Other feelings: | |
| Age: | 18-25 |
| Location: | United States of America |
| Gender: | Female |
| Experience: | 6 to 10 years |
| Triads applicable to this narrative | 2a, 4b, 5a |
| Self-coded strength : This story describes a – common situation | 1b=84 |

**Narrative:**

> *"We had a meeting with a VP of a large fitness branch and <u>had heard that the leader was touch and ADD prone and would not listen for long</u>. <u>I was feeling invigorated and excited</u> to share the value we were bringing to the table for his company. <u>The meeting went amazingly</u>. We were able to align and redirect him and engage him by feeding into his significance needs".*

**Key attributes interpreted from the narrative:** Prior knowledge of customer, invigorated, excited, challenge, confident, positive, successful outcome.

**Initial interpretation:** In this sales call the salesperson was aware of the customer's condition and pitched their sales call accordingly by making sure the VP was kept interested in what they had to offer. The salesperson was confident and positive and perceived the situation as a challenge. The call outcome was positive.

**The commitment roller coaster**

| | |
|---|---|
| Emotion 1 (E1): | Excited |
| Emotion 2 (E2): | Optimistic |
| Other feelings: | |
| Age: | 36-45 |
| Location: | Australia |
| Gender: | Female |
| Experience: | More than 20 years |
| Triads applicable to this narrative | 5b, 6b |
| Self-coded strength : This story describes a – common situation | 1b=44 |

**Narrative:**

> *"When I had to meet with an important client it was an exciting but nerve racking experience. You wonder if you have all the answers even though you feel prepared, have sound product knowledge and are confident of your product. Are they really interested? Will they commit? Is there trust in this relationship? Will it be a difficult journey? What haven't I thought of? When they do commit it is a feeling of relief and then responsibility to get the job done and deliver all the things you have said you are going to do. You are then determined not to let them down as you have a reputation to protect and someone who is relying on you to meet the terms of the agreement".*

**Key attributes interpreted from the narrative:** Nervous, doubt, lacking confidence, determined, pride, optimistic, excited, commitment, reputation.

**Initial interpretation:** The salesperson was excited but nervous meeting with an important customer. They were questioning whether they had done everything necessary and planned everything they could. There was some lacking in confidence but in this scenario it was the salesperson running through in their mind all the things they needed to be sure about to maximise the opportunity. The salesperson demonstrates commitment and expresses concern that they must follow through with everything they have said should the customer place an order. Even though they were constantly checking everything in their mind, the salesperson remained optimistic.

**Together we succeed**

| | |
|---|---|
| Emotion 1 (E1): | Positive |
| Emotion 2 (E2): | Determined |
| Other feelings: | |
| Age: | 46-55 |
| Location: | Australia |
| Gender: | Male |
| Experience: | 11 to 15 years |
| Triads applicable to this narrative | 1a, 2a |
| Self-coded strength : This story describes a – successful sales call | 1a=68 |

**Narrative:**

> *"print newspaper advertising is becoming more difficult to sell. My job is to sell advertising space to small business. Most people these days advertise on the internet and less in a newspaper. I had a call recently when a business was having difficulty as sales were dropping. I approached them and suggested the advertise in one of our local newspapers. I offered them a very special deal because they didn't have a big budget and we needed the advertising as well so it was in both our interests to do business with each other. The manager finally agreed and we put a campaign together that ran over 8 weeks. the results were slow but by week 5 the business was getting double the business. needless to say the manager was very happy and we continued the campaign. That business is now a regular advertiser with me and it was <u>mainly due to offering a good deal and working closely with the customer and keeping in regular contact</u>".*

**Key attributes interpreted from the narrative**: Customer relationship, positive, determined, difficult market, good deal, working closely and regular contact.

**Initial interpretation:** In this call the salesperson was determined they would succeed selling to the customer. Even though the market was tough they remained positive and worked closely with the customer devising a plan that would help them with their limited budget. Working closely with the customer and within their limitations proved successful and resulted in repeat business.

**Cluster themes applicable to positive affect narratives**

| No. | Narrative Title | Positive affect emotion themes taken from initial analysis of narratives in Appendix 4B | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Confident | Optimistic | Hopeful | Positive | Excited | Determined | Self-assured |
| 1 | Arcelor Mittal | | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | | |
| 2 | Be Honest | ✓ | | | ✓ | | | |
| 3 | Coffee lover | | ✓ | ✓ | | | | |
| 4 | Cracking a New Market | | ✓ | ✓ | | | | |
| 5 | first contact | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | |
| 6 | First meeting | | | | ✓ | | | ✓ |
| 7 | fishing trip secures order | ✓ | ✓ | | | | | |
| 8 | Focusing on the game | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ |
| 9 | Little things can build the relationship | ✓ | ✓ | | | | ✓ | |
| 10 | My B to B Sales Style | ✓ | ✓ | | | | | ✓ |
| 11 | never be too confident | ✓ | | | | | | ✓ |
| 12 | New service | ✓ | ✓ | | | ✓ | | |
| 13 | Out for dinner to get to see the customer | ✓ | ✓ | | | | | |
| 14 | Pitching a new idea to a large retailer | ✓ | | | ✓ | ✓ | | |
| 15 | planning is everything | ✓ | ✓ | | | | | |
| 16 | Sales Consultant | | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | | |
| 17 | Selling to DJs | | | ✓ | ✓ | | | |
| 18 | Sign on the dotted line please | | | | | | ✓ | ✓ |
| 19 | The ADD VP | ✓ | | | ✓ | ✓ | | |
| 20 | The commitment roller coaster | | ✓ | | | ✓ | ✓ | |
| 21 | Together we succeed | | | | ✓ | | ✓ | |
| Total | | 11 | 13 | 5 | 9 | 7 | 5 | 5 |