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Key Success Factors for Improving the Sales and Marketing Department's Performance of Two International Hotel Chains in Hua Hin

Supreeya Ananprakrit¹, Sirichai Preudhikulpradab², Vutravee Charuvatana³

¹Master of Business Administration in Hospitality and Tourism Management Graduate School of Business and Advanced Technology Management, Assumption University, Thailand. E-mail: mook_1995@hotmail.com

²Program Director, Master of Business Administration in Hospitality and Tourism Management Graduate School of Business and Advanced Technology Management, Assumption University, Thailand. Email: sirichaiprd@au.edu

³Industry Expert and Instructor, Master of Business Administration in Hospitality and Tourism Management, Graduate School of Business and Advanced Technology Management, Assumption University, Thailand. Email: vutravee@hotmail.com

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Abstract

This study explores the key managerial practices that drive the performance of sales and marketing departments in the hospitality industry, with a specific focus on Hotel A and Hotel B, guided by qualitative interview. The research aimed to identify the best current and future practices related to empathy, discipline, motivation, team communication, and leadership, uncover commonalities across participants' insights into past, present, and future practices, and propose actionable recommendations for enhancing departmental performance. Data was collected through in-depth interviews with nine sales and marketing professionals. Thematic analysis revealed five core dimensions of effective management: leadership as the strategic driver of team direction and empowerment, empathy as a mechanism to maintain morale and reduce conflict, communication as a foundation for alignment and collaboration, motivation through both structured incentives and creative engagement, and adaptive discipline that balances accountability with flexibility. These findings underscore the interrelated nature of managerial practices and highlight the importance of emotional intelligence, cross-functional collaboration, and recognition systems in high-performance teams. The study concludes that sustainable departmental success in hospitality sales and marketing depends on a holistic balance of leadership, empathy, communication, motivation, and discipline. Practical recommendations include leadership development programs focused on emotional intelligence, structured communication systems, tailored recognition schemes, cross-departmental collaboration initiatives, and a balanced approach to discipline. These insights contribute to the body of knowledge on managerial best practices in the hospitality sector and

offer actionable strategies for fostering resilient, high-performing teams in a competitive global environment.

Keywords: Leadership, Empathy, Team Communication, Motivation, Discipline, Sales and Marketing

Introduction

In the hospitality sector, marketing and sales are one of the most important functions for direct impact on a company's profitability. The marketing and sales staff bolster a hotel's earnings by creating business plans and methods to drive revenue growth and maintain profitability for the company, offering various services of hospitality services ranging from restaurants, event venues, lodging facilities, and leisure centers. Reaching its sales target to maintain and grow overall revenue, the sales team must fully comprehend and internalize driving forces to strengthen departmental performance and long-term success.

Current Situation of Two International hotel chains in Hua Hin's Sales and Marketing Department.

The Hotel A is a luxury 5-star resort by the sea that combines Western and Eastern architecture with glistening Gulf waters. There are buildings dedicated to accommodation, each with a swimming pool and roomy suits, there are fine dining and drink selections in its several restaurants and bars, spa and fitness center. Discover Hua Hin, which will wow you with its breathtaking temples and cultural landmarks, top-notch golf courses, and wineries on the hillsides.

The Hotel B is recognized as the best place for relaxation, adventure, and a variety of food. In addition to being a family-friendly hotel in Hua Hin, the hotel provides contemporary, cozy rooms, all the conveniences, and lots of fun activities. Along with its well-known hotel waterpark which has coasters, slides, and other exhilarating water elements, the hotel is situated in a great region of Hua Hin. Hotel rooms and suites are modern, chic, and spacious, offering great views of Hua Hin beaches and all the amenities essential for a comfortable stay, such as a large bathtub.

The Sales and Marketing team faces several challenges, including revenue targets, competition, and strategies for acquiring guests. The full-year target for both properties is set at the beginning of the year. With the high budget, the Sales and Marketing team needs help reaching the monthly target. Moreover, the competition in Hua Hin is very intense. Hua Hin offers a wide range of hotels, from 5-star establishments to local accommodations, designed to cater to various customer needs. Many providers aggressively offer the most competitive and attractive packages to customers, especially in the hotel business. Given these dynamic

situations, guests have more choices, which puts more pressure on the hotel to highlight its unique selling points and develop promotions or special offers to attract and retain guests.

Problem Statement

Reaching the sales target is invariably challenging; the Sales and Marketing department must work closely with many departments to come up with a plan on how the hotel can best provide

its services to the guests. Although a strong and capable Sales and Marketing team is a key enabler of team success, the department's effectiveness is not consistently present due to both external and internal challenges, for example, team performance, individual emotions, and conflict among team members. The overall performance of both Hotel A and Hotel B is in line with the overall plan. Considering all the situations described above, this study aims to propose a set of actionable recommendations for Two International hotel chains in Hua Hin.

Research questions

1. What are the current best managerial practices or success stories in terms of empathy, discipline, motivation, team communication, and leadership within the Sales and Marketing department?

2. What are the common managerial practices that enable the sales and marketing department to perform at their best?

3. Which specific managerial practices related to leadership, empathy, communication, motivation, and discipline are perceived by sales and marketing professionals at Hotel A and Hotel B to have the greatest impact on team performance, client satisfaction, and departmental effectiveness?

Research Objectives

1. To identify and describe the existing best managerial practices or success stories that demonstrate effective empathy, discipline, motivation, team communication, and leadership among sales and marketing professionals.

2. To analyze and compare the common managerial practices and behaviors shared among successful sales and marketing teams that contribute to high performance and productivity.

3. To evaluate and determine which managerial practices in leadership, empathy, communication, motivation, and discipline are most strongly perceived to influence team performance, client satisfaction, and overall departmental effectiveness.

Literature Review

In this chapter, the researcher presents the following topics: empathy, key success factors, discipline, motivation, team communication, and leadership, including the Conceptual Framework of the study.

Empathy

Emotional intelligence, particularly empathy, plays a crucial role in driving success across sales, marketing, and organizational leadership. Goleman (2006) highlighted empathy as a core component of emotional intelligence that enables individuals to understand and manage emotions, fostering stronger relationships and effective objection handling in sales.

Building on this, Ross (2019) positioned empathy as a competitive business advantage that enhances customer loyalty, brand trust, and internal culture, while cautioning against superficial displays of empathy. Stanley (2012) emphasized empathy as a trainable skill essential for active listening, self-awareness, and managing emotional triggers, all of which contribute to improved sales outcomes. Emotional labor involves managing one's emotions to display organizationally desired feelings, which is central to hospitality work, where positive emotional expressions like friendliness impact customer satisfaction. Grandey (2003)

In sum, these works suggest that empathy is of foundational importance in creating authentic connections with customers and cultivating long-term workplace success.

Key Success Factors

Collins (2001), Porter (1980), and Collins and Porras (1994) collectively highlight foundational elements that drive long-term business success and competitive advantage. Collins (2001) emphasizes disciplined people, disciplined thought, and disciplined action as crucial for companies to transition from good to great, underscoring the importance of having the right talent, and confronting harsh realities.

Porter (1980) identified competitive strategy principles such as understanding industry structure, leveraging differentiation, and pursuing cost leadership to achieve sustainable advantage. Meanwhile, Collins and Porras (1994) focus on visionary companies' enduring success through a strong core ideology, a culture of continuous improvement, and a commitment to experimentation.

In sum, these works provide a comprehensive framework for building organizations that not only achieve excellence but also sustain it over time through disciplined leadership, strategic clarity, and adaptive cultures.

Discipline

The works of Willink (2017), Oliu and Walter (2020), and Newport (2016) collectively emphasize that discipline and mental toughness are foundational to personal and professional success. Willink highlights the importance of daily habits and unwavering self-accountability as essential tools for overcoming challenges and achieving autonomy.

Similarly, Oliu and Walter (2020) indicated that self-discipline is a critical mechanism to conquer procrastination and maintain focus, reinforcing mental resilience. Newport (2016) complemented these perspectives by illustrating how disciplined focus, cultivated through incremental behavioral changes, enables deep work and productivity in a distraction-heavy environment. Rigby et al. (2016) examine how agile principles—such as iterative development, cross-functional teams, and customer collaboration—can improve organizational flexibility and responsiveness. They underscore the significance of leadership in cultivating an agile culture and present instances of firms effectively executing agile methods.

In sum, these authors advocate for disciplined routines and mental fortitude as key drivers for goal attainment and sustained success.

Motivation

The insights from SBI Growth (2023), Shawn (1999), Herzberg (1966) and Wolosz (2017) highlighted that motivating sales teams effectively requires a tailored approach that balances both intrinsic and extrinsic factors. SBI Growth's MOTIVE framework identifies key motivational drivers—including Money, Opportunity, Teamwork, Independence, Visibility, and Excellence—and stresses adapting strategies to generational and individual differences. Shawn (1999) emphasized the importance of aligning sales strategies with marketing efforts to enhance team motivation and performance. It also explores the integration of technology in sales processes, highlighting tools that can boost team efficiency. Herzberg (1966) concentrates on interpersonal issues inside an organization that attempts to address intractable hygiene concerns related to interpersonal discontent, while overlooking the manageable motivational issues of training and quality output, which contribute to enduring job satisfaction and well-being.

Meanwhile, Wolosz (2017) emphasized a transformative approach to sales motivation by focusing on building a sustainable sales momentum mindset. It provides strategies to ignite and sustain motivation within sales teams, emphasizing the importance of leadership in fostering a motivating environment.

In sum, combining both types of motivation produces the best outcomes in addition to advocating comprehensive, personalized motivation to align individual needs with organizational objectives to enhance sales performance and employee engagement.

Team Communication

The studies by Smith and Johnson (2022), White and Brown (2021), Mintzberg's (1979) and O'Connor and Thompson (2019) emphasized that effective team communication is critical to project success and overall team performance. Smith and Johnson (2022) highlighted clear, open communication, alignment on goals to reduce misunderstandings while building trust for team cohesion and informed decision-making. They also stressed the importance of conflict resolution strategies to prevent interpersonal issues from undermining project outcomes.

White and Brown (2021) focus on the unique communication challenges faced by virtual teams, such as time zones, technology barriers, and cultural differences, recommending a blend of synchronous and asynchronous tools alongside regular check-ins to maintain engagement, trust, and collaboration. O'Connor and Thompson (2019) reinforced that structured communication systems enhance productivity by clarifying objectives, reducing errors, and boosting morale, with leadership communication playing a pivotal role in sustaining motivation. Strong communication is essential for effective cross-functional collaboration, supporting Mintzberg's (1979) findings in organizational behavior.

In sum, communication not only aligned team members around shared goals but also mitigated conflicts and supported effective decision-making, ultimately driving higher team performance and project success. The integration of conflict resolution, cultural sensitivity, and leadership communication further strengthens team dynamics, underscoring communication as a foundational element in both traditional and virtual project environments.

Leadership

The works of Maxwell (2007), Horowitz (2014), Brown (2018) and Bass (1990) presented a comprehensive view of effective leadership centered on influence, resilience, and authenticity. Maxwell emphasized that leadership is fundamentally about influence rather than position, developed progressively through consistent personal growth and learning. He also highlighted the importance of vision, strategic navigation, trust-building, and empowering others as core leadership practices to sustain long-term success. Horowitz (2014) focused on the realities of leadership challenges, underscoring the necessity of making tough decisions, managing crises, and maintaining transparency and communication to preserve team morale; he stressed that embracing uncertainty and execution over perfection, illustrating leadership as a demanding but essential role that requires emotional strength and decisiveness.

Brown (2018) added a vital dimension by framing vulnerability as a leadership strength, advocating for courageous conversations and the cultivation of trust through empathy and emotional intelligence. She argues that authentic leadership—marked by openness, self-awareness, and compassion—creates safe environments where innovation and engagement thrive.

Effective leadership aligns with transformational leadership theory (Bass, 1990), which highlights the role of vision in driving performance. Transformational leaders inspire and

empower employees through idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration.

In sum, these authors suggested that effective leadership is a dynamic balance of influence, strategic foresight, emotional resilience, and authentic connection, where leaders continuously develop themselves, confront difficulties head-on, and foster trust and empowerment within their teams to drive meaningful and sustainable success.

In conclusion, discipline, motivation, team, communication, and leadership are critical roles of intentional, adaptive, and authentic practices in achieving individual and team success.

Discipline, grounded in consistent habits, mental toughness, and focused effort, serves as the foundation for personal and professional growth. Effective motivation balances intrinsic and extrinsic factors, tailored to individual and generational needs, fostering sustained engagement and high performance. Communication, whether in traditional or virtual teams, must be clear, transparent, and adaptive to build trust, resolve conflicts, and align team goals, thereby enhancing collaboration and productivity. Leadership transcends perception and emotional intelligence, navigating challenges, prioritizing tasks, inspiring teams, and cultivating environments of trust and empowerment. These suggest that success in complex, dynamic settings largely depend on cultivating disciplined focus, personalized motivation, open communication, and authentic leadership to drive sustained achievement and growth.

Conceptual Framework

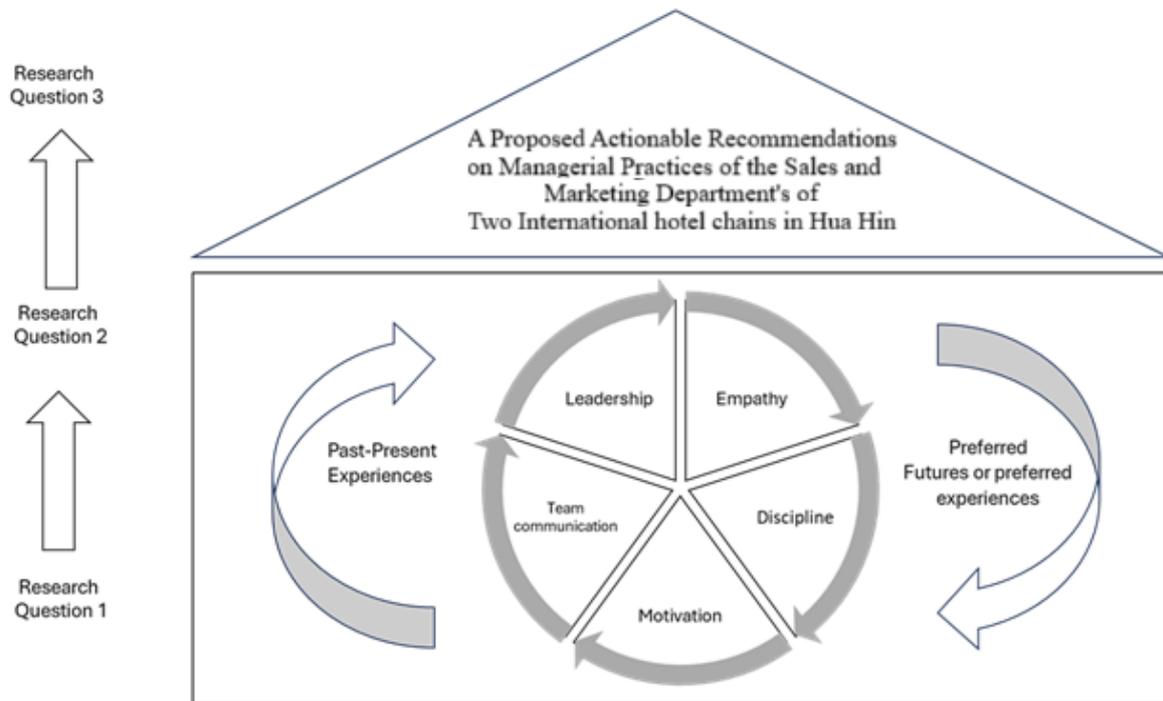
The conceptual framework of this study defines its scope, from which the researcher selected variables based on literature reviews and identified gaps in the current situation.

First, leadership positively influences team performance through clear direction and vision. Second, empathy improves motivation and communication, which enhances team cohesion and trust. Third, strong communication practices reduce misunderstandings and boost collaboration. Fourth, effective motivation strategies drive higher engagement and goal achievement, and fifth, discipline ensures consistency, reliability, and adherence to performance standards. These five dimensions interact with or reinforce each other for collective team performance.

Additionally, the conceptual framework serves as a process guideline for the scope of data collection and analysis, involving compilation of information from the key informants who are the full-time employees in Sales and Marketing department of Two International hotel chains in Hua Hin, and then analyzing the data to develop a set of actionable recommendations for future improvement.

Figure 1

Conceptual Framework



Methodology

This chapter comprises 1) Research Design, 2) Research Instrument, 3) Population and Sample, and 4) Data Analysis Technique.

Research Design

This research aimed to identify current – future preferred experience and success stories by analyzing the Sales and Marketing departments of Two International hotel chains in Hua Hin, focusing on five key terms: empathy, discipline, motivation, team communication, and leadership.

This qualitative research applied in-depth interviews and open-ended questions to understand the current situation and future preferred experience. The interview was conducted at the hotel’s office in Bangkok, Thailand. Each informant was interviewed individually on a different date and time.

The data were collected through in-depth interviews. The interview took approximately three weeks to complete, during which all collected and analyzed data were used to answer the research questions.

Population and Sampling

The research population consists of nine informants, representing the entire Sales & Marketing department staff of Two International hotel chains in Hua Hin. Given this small population, all key informants were selected.

In terms of sampling technique, this selection was categorized as purposive sampling. According to Creswell (2009), for a homogeneity type of population who have something in common, for example, members of the same group, job roles, and responsibilities, the minimum sample size for a qualitative-study is between 5-30 key informants.

Table 1

Interview date and profiles of key informants (n=9)

Interview Date	Interviewee
04 April 2025	Interviewee 1
07 April 2025	Interviewee 2
08 April 2025	Interviewee 3
10 April 2025	Interviewee 4
28 April 2025	Interviewee 5
30 April 2025	Interviewee 6
06 May 2025	Interviewee 7
06 May 2025	Interviewee 8
07 May 2025	Interviewee 9

Research Instrument

The study employed a qualitative research method, with the emphasis on exploring key insights of the interviewees on five key variables, consisting of leadership, empathy, team communication, motivation, and discipline. The process of data collection involved open-ended interview questions focusing on the past, present, and preferred future perspectives and experiences. Three interview questions were employed.

Question 1: Revisiting the past-current experiences of managerial practices of the sales and marketing department. Based on your experiences today, as you recalled, what were/are the best managerial practices or success stories of the sales and marketing team in terms of the following dimensions;

- a. Empathy,
- b. Discipline
- c. Motivation
- d. Team communication
- e. Leadership

What impressed you the most? What were the events or situations? Why?

Question 2: Looking into the future or preferred experiences of the best managerial practices of the sales and marketing department. Based on your perspectives, which managerial practices listed below do you think the team should focus on in the future? Why? What different managerial practices in terms of the following could differ from today? What key improvements would you suggest, and any additional managerial practices that could be included besides these five?

- a. Empathy
- b. Discipline
- c. Motivation
- d. Team communication
- e. Leadership

Question 3: Do you have any recommendations that you think could help the team perform better?

Data Collection Technique

In this research, the researcher conducted an interview to gain access to the data. First, the researcher contacted the HR department and the Department Head, explaining the objective of the project and how data collection would be conducted, including the duration of data collection. Most importantly, confidentiality management required the researcher to obtain approval from the participating organization.

The table below presents actual activity to gain access from the participating company before the actual interviews were conducted.

Table 2

Date, Contact and Action/Activity

Date	Action/Activity
17 March 2025	Contact and inform about the project objectives which needs to collect the data from the Sales & Marketing department staff of both properties.
18 March 2025	Discuss and go through some of the questions with him to see the feedback and make sure that they will cover the research objectives and it would not make any informants feel uncomfortable.
20 March 2025	Making an appointment with each informant for interview.

Data Analysis Technique

The face-to-face interviews of Two International hotel chains in Hua Hin Sales and Marketing staff were conducted in April and May 2025 due to the tight schedule of the informants.

The researcher employed content analysis triangulation to identify emerging themes. First, the researcher started with open coding, axial coding, and thematic development.

Results and Discussion

The findings are from the thematic analysis of qualitative data gathered through in-depth interviews with key personnel from the Sales and Marketing departments of Hotel A and Hotel B. The aim is to explore the key success factors that enhance departmental performance. Through the process of thematic analysis, comprising open coding, axial coding, and theme development—five major themes emerged that capture the organizational enablers for success: Effective Leadership, Empathetic Culture, Strong Communication, Motivational Tools, and Adaptive Discipline.

Results of the current best managerial practices or success stories in terms of empathy, discipline, motivation, team communication, and leadership within the Sales and Marketing department?

The data gathered through open-ended interview questions were transcribed and systematically analyzed. Open coding was first applied to identify key ideas, followed by axial coding to cluster related codes into broader categories. The final step involved grouping these categories into core themes, which reflect the most frequently mentioned and strategically relevant success factors.

Based on the results of content analysis, the researcher employed the inter-coding technique by three coders to develop the initial theme and then the final themes for the current and preferred future best managerial practices.

Table 3

Final Themes of the current and preferred future best managerial practices or success stories

Source	Current Best practices	Future Best practices
Interviewee 1 Interviewee 2 Interviewee 3 Interviewee 5	Leadership as direction, Empowering, supporting under pressure	Effective Leadership
Interviewee 9	Empathy after failure, Active listening, Root-cause awareness, Empathy over blame	Empathetic Culture
Interviewee 7 Interviewee 8	Feedback loops, Regular debriefing, and Interdepartmental communication.	Strong Communication
Interviewee 6	Incentives, Creative team motivation	Motivational Tools
Interviewee 4	Flexible rules, Proactive expectations, Self-responsibility	Adaptive Discipline

Current Best Management Practices

Upon content analysis of the current best management practices in the sales department through open-ended questions, five emerging themes were identified among the nine key informants. The five emerging themes are;

Theme 1: Leadership as direction, Empowering, supporting under pressure

Four informants/interviewees expressed that leadership from top management and a clearly communicated vision were found to be crucial for departmental alignment and motivation. Meanwhile, they recognized that leadership is a means of setting direction, empowering and supporting team members despite challenging times.

Quotes

“Character of leader should listen to their subordinates by having open communication, understanding.”

(Interviewee #1)

“Everyone can learn to be leader, not only the management level, but also the line level.”

(Interviewee #2)

“Leader of the department need to have clarity in leading the team to make a successful team.”

(Interviewee #3)

“I feel that good leadership can drive the team easily and the flow of the work is much smoother. The framework is clear on the goal and where to do next.”

(Interviewee #5)

Theme 2: Empathy after failure, Active listening, Root-cause awareness, Empathy over blame

One informant/interviewee noted that teams demonstrated understanding, emotional intelligence, and empathy by actively listening and seeking to understand the root cause of the problem, thereby developing effective solutions.

Quotes

“Empathy is one of the points that make me still working here. The team has empathy for each other. I have two children and sometimes I might have to leave early or have urgent leave. The supervisor and colleagues are understanding and willing to listen to one another.”

(Interviewee #9)

Theme 3: Feedback loops, Regular debriefing, and Interdepartmental communication

Two informants/interviewees expressed that there was clear and timely communication to help the team align their understanding and expectations. Some of the best management practices included a feedback loop, regular debriefing, and interdepartmental communication.

Quotes

“. This is not only communicated in the team, but also to other departments like the front office team which will be the ones who assign rooms for our clients.”

(Interviewee #7)

“With strong team communication, we can close the deal easier and receive positive feedback from the client after the service. This helps to increase guest satisfaction.”

(Interviewee #8)

Theme 4: Incentives, Creative team motivation

One informant/interviewee expressed that motivation in terms of both financial and emotional encouragement was experienced and morally promoted team performance.

Quotes

“Although, we are not motivated in terms of incentives or rewards, mentally motivated is also significant.”

(Interviewee #6)

Theme 5: Flexible rules, Proactive expectations, Self-responsibility

One informant/interviewee noted that discipline is present. Yet, everyone was encouraged to exercise autonomy and respect, which promoted self-responsibility, proactiveness in ensuring expectations are met with flexible rules.

Quotes

“Sales are quite flexible. However, we still need to be disciplined. For me, I put this point last because I think everyone knows what they are doing, we know our job and responsibility.”

(Interviewee #4)

Based on the above, key insights observed was that leadership was frequently described as the primary force driving the department’s performance, empathy was used as a tool to recover from setbacks, reduce blame, and maintain morale, communication was described as frequent and essential, especially across departments, motivation was driven by both structured incentives and creative internal engagement, and discipline was important, but applied in a flexible, proactive, and respectful manner.

In sum, it is noted that these discoveries of the five themes were commonly experienced by the members within the department, serving as key success factors for short and long-term team performance.

Preferred Future Best Management Practices

Upon content analysis of the preferred future best management practices in the sales department through open-ended questions, five emerging themes were identified among the nine key informants. The five emerging themes are;

Theme 1: Effective Leadership

Leadership quality, especially clarity in direction, decisiveness, and a proactive mindset, was highlighted as a central force behind team performance.

Quotes

“When we have good leadership, it’s clear on the Family tree (Organization chart) where we know who we should talk or discuss with, then the next process will be passed to whom. Our leader always has a clear direction with information for us to do.”

(Interviewee #5)

Leaders who are visible, decisive, and vision-driven establish trust and operational efficiency in the sales and marketing function.

Theme 2: Empathetic Culture

The presence of an empathetic and supportive workplace culture promotes emotional well-being, teamwork, and job satisfaction.

Quotes

“We are caring of everyone in the team and keep an eye on everyone to make sure that we all are ok and doing fine.”

(Interviewee #6)

A culture of empathy contributes to employee retention, morale, and resilience, especially under the high-stress environment of hospitality marketing.

Theme 3: Strong Communication

Frequent, transparent, and cross-functional communication ensures alignment and prevents misunderstandings across departments.

Quotes

“More team discussion and listening to everyone by heart without bias is truly required. Even though the staff might be in a lower position, they are the ones who face and meet the clients.”

(Interviewee #6)

Clear and strong communication develops team performance and delivers the best service.

Theme 4: Motivational Tools

Incentives, recognition, and personal development opportunities were mentioned as drivers of individual and team performance.

Quotes

“Motivation is a part of success. In this hotel, there is nothing much to motivate the staff. The only program that motivates us is a program where we can share the business enquiry to other hotels in the chain and receive compensation”

(Interviewee #9)

“Motivation, like incentives, can be one thing that helps to drive and inspire the team.”

(Interviewee #3)

Motivation is essential to success; the limited availability of structured incentives and recognition programs may hinder overall team performance, highlighting the need for more consistent and meaningful motivational tools.

Theme 5: Adaptive Discipline

While flexibility is appreciated, consistent enforcement of standards, accountability, and time management also play a major role in sustaining productivity.

Quotes

“For discipline, I don’t think it affects our working life that much. Having too strict rules is not that effective.”

(Interviewee #6)

A balance of flexibility and discipline supports a sustainable, high-performing environment where standards are upheld without stifling creativity.

Recommendations

To answer the third research question, specific managerial practices related to leadership, empathy, communication, motivation, and discipline are perceived by sales and marketing professionals at Hotel A and Hotel B to have the greatest impact on team performance, client satisfaction, and departmental effectiveness. The researcher utilized the data from the content analysis of the current and preferred future best management practices to formulate a set of recommendations based on the most mentioned experiences of the current situation and perspectives of the future management practices.

Upon content analysis of the current and future best management practices in the sales department among the nine key informants three recommendations for the participating department are developed based on the most mentioned experiences of the current and perspectives of the future as follows;

First recommendation: The department should continue its leadership as a key success factor, ensuring clear direction, a sense of empowerment, and a supportive environment.

Second recommendation: The department should strengthen its communication, ensuring regular feedback, debriefings, and interdepartmental communication.

Third recommendation: The department should continue reinforcing an emphatic culture, adaptive disciplines, while leveraging motivational tools.

In sum, the articulation of current best management practices has affirmed that future best management practices will be established to ensure continuity as they move forward. The findings revealed similar patterns between their current experiences and their future visions, an upgrade is essential, making it a lasting key success factor for the sales team performance.

Discussion

The key success factors identified through thematic analysis contribute to improving the performance of the Sales and Marketing departments at Hotel A and Hotel B include: Effective Leadership, Empathetic Culture, Strong Communication, Motivational Tools, and Adaptive Discipline.

Comparison with previous research

The themes identified in this study—Effective Leadership, Empathetic Culture, Strong Communication, Motivational Tools, and Adaptive Discipline—reflect a combination of well-established organizational practices and emerging managerial values within the hospitality industry. To better understand the broader relevance and validity of these findings, it is essential to compare them with insights from previous academic literature and industry studies.

This section discusses how each theme aligns with, supports, or extends existing research in leadership, organizational behavior, human resource management, and hospitality management.

Through this comparison, the study highlights the continued importance of human-centered leadership, emotional intelligence, communication systems, and adaptive structures in achieving high team performance. It also reveals how evolving expectations in workplace culture, especially around empathy and flexibility, are increasingly critical in modern hotel operations. By linking the current findings to prior research, this section positions the study within the existing body of knowledge and strengthens the credibility of its conclusions and recommendations.

Table 4

Comparison with Literature

Theme	Comparison with Literature
Effective Leadership	Aligns with transformational leadership theories (e.g., Bass, 1990) that link vision to performance.
Empathetic Culture	Supports hospitality research on emotional labor and employee satisfaction (e.g., Grandey, 2003).
Strong Communication	Echoes findings in organizational behavior on cross-functional collaboration (e.g., Mintzberg, 1979).
Motivational Tools	Similar to Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory – recognition and growth are key motivators.
Adaptive Discipline	Extends work on agile management (e.g., Rigby et al., 2016), showing that flexibility improves responsiveness.

In hospitality, transformational leadership style builds trust, encourages learning and adaptability, and enhances employee satisfaction and service quality (Bass, 1990). By focusing on influence rather than authority, transformational leaders foster strong relationships and empower employees to take initiative in dynamic, customer-focused environments.

An empathetic culture in hospitality supports research on emotional labor and employee satisfaction, as emphasized by Grandey (2003). Supportive environments characterized by empathy and social support reduce emotional exhaustion and enhance job satisfaction by encouraging deep acting—genuinely feeling the emotions expressed—rather than surface acting, which can lead to burnout. Thus, fostering empathy within organizational culture not only improves employee well-being but also enhances service quality and competitive advantage in the hospitality industry.

Mintzberg's highlights that coordination relies on informal communication and mutual adjustment among specialists rather than a strict hierarchy. Clear communication aligns diverse teams, resolves uncertainties, and enables timely decision-making, making it a key driver of organizational performance and adaptability (Mintzberg, 1979).

Motivational tools align with Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory, which highlights recognition and growth as key drivers of job satisfaction and engagement (Herzberg, 1966). These motivators—such as achievement, responsibility, and personal development—fulfill intrinsic needs and promote long-term commitment. Unlike hygiene factors that prevent dissatisfaction, recognition and growth actively enhance motivation, productivity, and employee retention.

Adaptive discipline emphasized flexibility to improve responsiveness, as shown in Rigby et al. (2016) research. This approach encourages organizations and teams to tailor their processes to specific contexts, enabling quicker adjustments to changing requirements and priorities. By combining disciplined frameworks with adaptive practices, teams can maintain focus on delivering value while remaining agile in dynamic environments, ultimately enhancing project outcomes and organizational.

Limitations of the Study

This study has several limitations that should be acknowledged. First, the small sample size—comprising only nine staff members from two resorts based in the office—limits the generalizability of the findings to broader populations or different geographic contexts.

Second, the qualitative nature of the research introduces subjectivity in interpreting data, as analysis depends heavily on the researcher's perspectives and may be influenced by bias.

Finally, the study is time-bound, meaning that its findings may not fully apply in rapidly evolving market conditions, such as those following the COVID-19 pandemic or during economic downturns, which can significantly alter industry dynamics and employee experiences.

Suggestions for Future Research

Future research should incorporate quantitative methods such as staff surveys and performance metrics to complement qualitative insights, enabling more robust and generalizable findings. Conducting comparative studies between chain hotels and independent hotels would provide a deeper understanding of how organizational structure influences sales and marketing effectiveness. Additionally, exploring the impact of emerging technologies and AI tools on hotel sales and marketing performance could reveal new opportunities and challenges in the evolving hospitality landscape. Finally, longitudinal research tracking how success factors develop and change over time would offer valuable perspectives on the sustainability and adaptability of strategies in response to shifting market conditions.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This study explored key managerial practices that support high performance in the Sales and Marketing departments of Hotel A and Hotel B. Data was analyzed thematically based on in-depth interviews with department personnel. Key findings are summarized according to each research question:

Research Question 1: What are the current best managerial practices or success stories in terms of empathy, discipline, motivation, team communication, and leadership?

Participants highlighted several successful practices that are already in place or are considered aspirational for the future:

- **Leadership:** Clear direction from management, strategic alignment with brand goals, and a hands-on approach were recognized as key to operational effectiveness.
- **Empathy:** Emotional support during high-pressure periods, respectful management styles, and caring peer relationships contribute to a positive work environment.
- **Team Communication:** Regular cross-functional meetings, transparent goal-setting, and real-time feedback were seen as essential tools for productivity and alignment.
- **Motivation:** Recognition programs, growth opportunities, and performance-linked incentives keep employees engaged and driven.
- **Discipline:** A structured yet flexible environment—where expectations are clear but staff have autonomy—promotes responsibility and creativity.

Research Question 2: What are the common managerial practices that enable the sales and marketing department to perform at their best?

Across all interviews, five core success factors emerged consistently:

- **Effective Leadership** that fosters clarity and trust.
- **Empathetic Culture** that supports emotional and mental well-being.

- **Strong Communication** across teams and roles.
- **Motivational Tools** that recognize and reward contributions.
- **Adaptive Discipline** that balances consistency with flexibility.

Participants agreed that these elements, whether drawn from experience or future aspirations, collectively create an environment where individuals and teams can thrive. Many emphasized the importance of combining emotional intelligence with strategic control as a foundation for sustained success.

Research Question 3: Which specific managerial practices related to leadership, empathy, communication, motivation, and discipline are perceived by sales and marketing professionals at Hotel A and Hotel B to have the greatest impact on team performance, client satisfaction, and departmental effectiveness?

To sustain and improve department performance, both resorts should consider the following actionable steps:

- **Formalize leadership development** programs that emphasize emotional intelligence, strategic thinking, and proactive decision-making.
- **Foster an empathetic work culture** by encouraging peer support, wellness initiatives, and respectful management behavior.
- **Enhance communication systems**, such as weekly team huddles, open feedback channels, and inter-departmental alignment meetings.
- **Implement diverse motivation strategies** that blend short-term recognition (e.g., staff-of-the-month) with long-term development (e.g., career pathing and training programs).
- **Maintain accountability** through consistent rules and KPIs while giving teams the flexibility to propose new ideas and work methods.

Conclusion

This study concludes that high-performing Sales and Marketing departments are shaped not just by strategy or process, but by **human-centered managerial practices**, particularly those grounded in empathy, communication, motivation, discipline, and leadership. These elements are interconnected and mutually reinforcing, and when intentionally developed, they form a foundation for consistent performance improvement.

Reflection on the Study

This research provided a focused look into the lived experiences and professional insights of staff within two leading resort brands. By examining both current practices and aspirational goals, the study offered a holistic understanding of what makes Sales and Marketing teams successful in a dynamic hospitality environment.

While the findings are meaningful for similar luxury resort settings, the study is limited in scope to two properties and a specific organizational context. Future research could include other hotel tiers, guest perspectives, or quantitative performance data for triangulation.

Nevertheless, this study demonstrates that when **empathy, motivation, discipline, communication, and leadership** are integrated purposefully, they form a strong internal foundation for competitive and sustainable success.

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