

# When do salespeople pursue and win deals? a two-stage model of sales opportunity outcomes

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## Abstract

### Purpose

The purpose of this study is to develop and test a two-stage model of sales opportunity outcomes, and thus identify the factors that influence the likelihood of a salesperson pursuing and winning a sales deal.

### Design/methodology/approach

Using a longitudinal design, the authors collect data on 330 sales opportunities at two different time periods from two distinct sources and conduct data analysis using hierarchical linear modeling.

### Findings

In the first stage, the authors find that the salesperson's decision to pursue the opportunity is influenced by the strategic value of the client's business and the concreteness of the opportunity. In the second stage, the authors find that the likelihood of winning the opportunity is influenced by the extent of the salesperson's specialization, closeness to the buying center, company's competitive position and fit with the client's value orientation.

### Research limitations/implications

The authors have examined discrete sales opportunities independent of ongoing business relationships; future research should explore transactions that are embedded within customer relationships.

### Practical implications

The authors highlight the importance of evaluating sales opportunities at the beginning of the sales process and suggest some specific variables that relate to the selling context.

### Originality/value

The authors analyze factors that influence the decision of the salesperson to pursue an opportunity or not, as well as factors that influence the likelihood of winning a deal or not.