

# **Persuasion in Corporate Sales**

**Onur Yılmaz**

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Prof. Dr. Elvan Yılmaz  
Director

I certify that this thesis satisfies the requirements as a thesis for the degree of Master Business Administration

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Prof. Dr. Mustafa Tümer  
Chair, Department of Business Administration

We certify that we have read this thesis and that in our opinion it is fully adequate in scope and quality as a thesis for the degree of Master of Science in Business Administration.

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Prof. Dr. Cem Tanova  
Supervisor

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Examining Committee

1. Prof. Dr. Cem Tanova

---

2. Assoc. Prof. Dr. Mustafa Tümer

---

3. Asst. Prof. Dr. Mehmet İslamoğlu

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## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to analyse the use of persuasion techniques in corporate sales and measure their effectiveness. Corporate sales representatives deal with fewer potential customers and the potential profit per customer is much higher when compared to sales representatives that deal with other customers. Therefore, it is worthwhile to investigate and analyse their communication and relationship building with the corporate customers in greater depth. Theories from previous research and recent publications are reviewed in this study.

The research ideas tested:

I1: Is being persuaded about the brand quality is important for decision makers in corporate purchase?

I2: Will a previous purchase from the same supplier make the decision maker feel more likely to buy, demonstrating the benefit of reminding buyers of previous purchases.

I3: Will sharing a common interest or hobby with the salesperson will make the buyer more likely to purchase from the supplier.

I4: Does sharing a political viewpoint with the salesperson will make the buyer more likely to purchase from that supplier. So learning about the political view of the decision maker in the buyer side and informing if there any common ones with the salesperson will make the decision maker will increase the success chance in the corporate sale.

I5: Does being informed about the corporation's competitors' purchases from the supplier will make the decision maker in the target corporation more likely to purchase. So finding out purchases that competitors of the corporation made from the supplier if exists and informing the decision maker about this will make the decision maker more likely to purchase.

I6: Will being informed about that the price offered is the lowest among competitors will make the buyer more likely to purchase.

I7: Does informing the buyer about the customised products and services and the benefits of customisation will make the buyer more likely to purchase.

I8: Does focusing on the purchaser's familiarity with the brand of product or service and putting an emphasis on this familiarity during the sales meeting make him or her maker more likely to purchase.

I9: Does informing the decision maker about the service or product support that will be provided after the purchase make him or her more likely to purchase.

I10: Would sending ethical gifts to buyer will make the buyer make him or her more likely to purchase.

The study subjects were conveniently sampled from a total of 95 decision makers in corporate purchasing from different companies in different sectors of business and surveyed. Participants varied in terms of gender, age, education and seniority. The survey consisted of 14 questions and was divided into two parts. The first part analysed the respondents characteristics and the second part analysed the effectiveness of the persuasion techniques under study.

The main findings show that most of the ideas in question are effective except for the sharing a common interest with the provider and using the familiarity of the decision maker with the brand name. Detailed analyses are carried out by grouping companies according to their sectors and annual revenues. Results from the Information Technologies and Telecommunications sectors showed similarities and differences between the results for other sectors. The importance of familiarity with the product's brand for these sectors was noticeably less than for other sectors. Similarly, results from these two sectors reflect that the importance that they put on after-sale support quality is higher than that of other sectors do. Results were analysed in more detail with the ANOVA test in order to compare the mean preferences of the companies when grouped according to the annual revenues, and then interpreted.

**Keywords :** Corporate sale, marketing, persuasion, methods, efficient

## ÖZ

Bu çalışmanın amacı kurumsal satış alanında ikna edicilik tekniklerinin kullanılmasını analiz etmek ve verimliliklerini ölçmektir. Kurumsal satış temsilcileri diğer satış kanallarına göre daha az sayıda karar verici ile görüşme yapmaktadır fakat karar verici başına kazanç oranı açısından değerlendirme yapıldığında diğer satış kanallarından çok daha büyük rakamlarda kazanç sağlayan çalışmalar yürütmektedirler. Bu durum müşteri ile kurumsal satış temsilcisinin arasındaki iletişim ve ilişki kurma yöntemlerini derinlemesine araştırmaya değer kılmaktadır. Bu çalışmada konu ile ilgili eski araştırma ve yayınlar incelenmiştir.

Araştırılan fikirler:

F1: Ürün veya hizmet kalitesi hakkında ikna olmak önemlidir.

F2: Ürün veya hizmet sağlayıcıdan yapılan önceki alımlar karar verme sürecinde fikri olumlu yönde etkiler.

F3: Karar vericinin kurumsal satış temsilcisi ile ortak ilgi alanı ve hobilere sahip olması satın alma kararını olumlu yönde etkiler.

F4: Karar vericinin kurumsal satış temsilcisi ile ortak politik görüşe sahip olması satın alma kararını olumlu yönde etkiler.

F5: Kurumsal satış temsilcisinin rakip firmaların kendi firmalarından yaptığı satın alımlar hakkında bilgilendirme yapması karar vericinin satın alma kararını olumlu yönde etkiler.

F6: Kurumsal satış temsilcisinin sunduğu teklifin alternatifler arasında en düşük fiyatlı olan olması karar vericinin satın alma kararını olumlu yönde etkiler.

F7: Kurumsal satış temsilcisinin özelleştirilebilirliği yüksek hizmet veya servisler sunup bu özelleştirme olanaklarının sağlayacağı faydalardan bahsetmesi karar vericinin satın alma kararını olumlu yönde etkiler.

F8: Kurumsal satış temsilcisinin satış görüşmesinde ürün veya hizmetin marka bilinirliğini vurgulaması satın alma kararını olumlu yönde etkiler.

F9: Kurumsal satış temsilcisinin ürün veya hizmetle beraber sağlanacak satış sonrası desteğinin kalitesine vurgu yapması satın alma kararını olumlu yönde etkiler.

F10: Kurumsal satış temsilcisinin özel günlerde karar vericiye etik hediyeler göndermesi karar vericinin satın alma kararını olumlu yönde etkiler.

Farklı sektörlerden firmalarda çalışan kurumsal satın alım kararı veren farklı cinsiyet yaş eğitim ve kademelerde çalışan 95 karar vericiden anket yolu ile alınan cevaplar değerlendirilmiştir. Anket iki bölüme ayrılmış on dört sorudan oluşmaktadır. İlk bölüm karar vericilerin karakteristiklerini ölçmek, ikinci bölüm ise kurumsal satışta ikna edicilik metodlarının verimliliğini analiz etmek için hazırlanmıştır.

Ana bulgular göstermektedir ki verimliliği araştırılan fikirlerden marka bilinirliğine vurgu yapmak ve karar verici ile ortak ilgi alanı veya hobi paylaşıyor olmak dışındaki tüm yöntemler verimli ve etkilidir.

Karar vericilerin çalıştıkları firmalar yıllık gelirlerine ve sektörlerin göre gruplandıktan sonra yapılan analizler sonucunda Bilgi Teknolojileri ve Telekomünikasyon sektörlerindeki firmaların oluşturduğu gruplara ait sonuçlar diğer gruplarla ait sonuçlara göre farklılıklar gösterip kendi içlerinde benzerlikler göstermektedir. Bu benzerliklerden öne çıkanlar marka bilinirliğine verilen önemin az ve satış sonrası servis ve deteğe verilen önemin yüksek olmasıdır.

Sonuçların gruplar bazında farklı metodlardaki ortalamalarını karşılaştırmak için ANOVA testi kullanılmış ve sonuçlar yorumlanmıştır.

**Anahtar kelimeler :** Kurumsal satış, pazarlama, ikna edicilik, yöntem, etkin



To My Family

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# **Chapter 1**

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Problem Statement**

Different methods of persuasion may be either useful, neutral or harmful in corporate sales. A rational approach needs to be defined for choosing which methods to use when persuading decision makers in corporate sales.

### **1.2 Objectives of The Study**

The goal of the study is to analyse and describe which persuasion methods to use in corporate sales. With the knowledge contained in this study, corporate sale representatives will be equipped with the right methods to use in order to increase their success rate. The study will also discover which methods for corporate sales representatives to avoid in order to be successful.

### **1.3 Literature Review**

Corporate sales differs from customer sales with respect to the higher sales volume of goods or services. The higher volume of sales that is made with a single customer entails the importance of the communication and relationship building with a that customer. The importance of the salesperson's communication is relatively higher in B2B marketing than in other marketing types.



Lynch and Chernatony (2007) state that even though the most common medium of brand communication is advertising, in business-to-business markets sales representatives are the key to effective communication. The advantage of the industrial salesperson from the other communication media is that the salesperson has a chance to use information gleaned during a sales meeting to adapt to the unique circumstances in the book, 'Winning Hearts and Minds: Business-to-Business Branding and the Role of the Salesperson', it is said to be possible to modify the salesperson's efforts during the marketing process in order to increase marketing success.

It has been suggested that the market should be divided into segments to formulate a good marketing strategy. Marketers can not satisfy everyone in the market using the same methods. Everyone has different tastes, values and feelings, so marketers tend to work according to *market segmentation*. This requires them to divide the group of buyers according to their demographic, psychographic, and behavioral differences, and then develop marketing strategies with different mixes of marketing methods, next the company chooses which group to focus on in order to find the greatest opportunity. This greatest opportunity can be found within the group that can be best satisfied by the company. For each group, the company provides a market offering. These offerings should provide some similar benefits to those sought by the companies in the group. For example, BMW develops cars for the group of buyers for whom the automobile's speed and luxury is a priority. Thus, BMW positions their one as the car providing the highest speed and luxury (Kotler, 2012).

This study examines the effectiveness of corporate sales methods, within marketing strategies and persuasion techniques. Using different methods, the success rate in corporate sales can be increased significantly. Therefore, the topics which will be covered in this thesis can be used to increase the success in corporate sales.

As Goldstein, Martin, and Cialdini (2008) state, that the “Answer Yes” is rare and it is hard to secure from others, maybe some people can but those people are just a small group who know the certain secrets of the persuasion process. According to his book, ‘YES! 50 Scientifically Proven Ways to Be Persuasive’ it is possible to manage people in a way that makes them say yes. Previous studies relate that the low interest buyer’s decision making process is highly related to his or her relationship with the provider. Ergo, we will need to focus more on the ‘low interest customer cluster’ in our work (Mudambi, 2002). This study differs from the previous studies through its focus on convincing the “low interest customer cluster”. Previous studies analyse the importance of branding and how to make people say yes. Our study focuses on using convincing techniques in corporate sales on the “low interest customer cluster”. This is achieved by surveying corporate purchase decision makers in corporations.

Susan Mudambi (2002) aims to investigate the importance of branding in her study. She analyses customers in three clusters: highly tangible, branding receptive and low interest customers. She discovers that branding plays a more important role in B2B decision making than has generally been recognised. She presents a five-step organisational buyer behaviour model (Mudambi, 2002). The first step of the model is

the recognition of the need for purchase. The second links buyer characteristics, then the third step connects purchase characteristics and the perceived importance of attributes. The last step of the model is the decision process. Therefore, this thesis can be located at the decision process of the organisational buyer behaviour model and is conducted in order to expand it.

Robert B.Cialdini explains the methods that are able to convince of just about anything with stories from his life experience (Goldstein, Cialdini & Martin, 2007). He uncovers the methods in his book, 'YES! 50 Scientifically Proven Ways to Be Persuasive'.

When studying the most sustainable form of persuasive marketing, the face-to-face interaction cannot be undervalued. Today's technocratic advances often make face-to-face interactions unnecessary, but effective persuasion is furthered by this form of interaction. The book, 'The Value of Face-to-Face Sales Interaction in United States, Canada and Latin America' (2007) goes into this fact in-depth. The advantages of technology are also a challenge. Businesses have many options when choosing whom to partner with or buy from. Charisma and relatability go a long way in this effort (Brynes, 2007, p. iv).

Understanding how to be persuasive without being damaging or bullying is imperative for successful sales (Lee, n.d., p. 5). Michael Lee's book, '21 Powerful Ways To Persuade People To Do What You Want' (n.d.), illustrates experience-tested techniques for helping people come to a profitable way of thinking. Some of these

techniques include highlighting urgent current trends, utilising the law of expectation to envision success, and various subliminal queues. Asking leading questions which imply interest while laying the foundation to give the client what they answer with and perceive to need is an age-old system (Lee, n.d., p. 5).

A large benefit of pursuing a career in corporate sales is that the global market is quite diverse, and supportive of many different interests. Once the fundamentals of proper persuasion are learned, such skills can be applied to any area of interest. This advantage is investigated in Elka Maria Torpey's (2001) writing, 'Paid to persuade: Careers in sales'. Appearing in the quarterly journal, *Occupational Outlook*, this literature details techniques, as well as the expected income to be gained from applying them. This preparation and foresight enables the salesperson to balance his or her interests, skill-set, and desired goals for employment (Torpey, 2001, p. 26).

However, understanding the psychology of persuasion is especially beneficial when seeking long-term relationships with corporate clients. The books, *Influence: The Psychology of Persuasion* by Robert B. Cialdini, (2009), and *Covert Persuasion: Psychological Tactics and Tricks to Win the Game* by Hogan and Speakman (2006), both go into great detail about the advantages and risks of influencing the mind. This literature insists that every gain in life e.g., (relationships, promotions, etc.) is the result of correct persuasion, and that nothing comes completely freely given. "The world is the ultimate context for persuasion", in the view of Hogan and Speakman (2006, p. viii). This text implies that the greater insight that a salesperson has

regarding his or her psychology, the greater his or her flexibility will be when persuading others.

Once this is understood, persuasion is then finessed into negotiation in order to close the deal. The book 'Handbook on Business to Business Marketing', edited by Lillen and Grewal (2012), highlights the need to assume support when going for the close; "Find the customer benefit. Sell that benefit. Answer any objections. Close the sale" (Lillen & Grewal, 2012, p.174). This is most effectively done face to face. However, the roles of corporate reputation, brand loyalty, and position in the news appears to be just as important when pondering new sales relationships. The study, 'Who Are You and Why Are You Being Nice?: Investigating the Industry Effect on Consumer Reaction to Corporate Societal Marketing Efforts', by Lisa R. Szykman (n.d., p. 306) reveals that, "the harmful nature of the firms' products and production methods may influence the consumers' evaluation of their cause-related marketing efforts". Consumers and clients alike are under a larger spotlight today, and are less likely to succumb to persuasion if the end goal does not reflect their perceived corporate identity. This is best understood before attempting to persuade, and used to craft the approach.

Indeed, preparation before persuasion is half of the battle. The Harvard Law Review special article, 'Major sales: who really does the buying?', By Thomas V. Bonoma (2006, p. 172) addresses the fact that no matter how polished persuasion techniques are, it does not matter if you are talking to the wrong person; "Identifying the decision makers and their purchasing motives often requires a psychologist's eye".

Finding common ground with the decision maker is absolutely essential. A working knowledge of the culture of sales allows for a firm understanding. The book, 'Advertising, The Uneasy Persuasion', by Michael Schudson (2013) provides the history of persuasion through advertising, and how some decision makers have come to distrust advertising. Understanding why customers make the choices that they do gives the salesperson the insight that is required to persuade authentically, which will strike a more lasting cord with his or her audience.

Authenticity in persuasion is often a challenging goal when the aim is money. 'Persuasive communication: the case of marketing', by Marie-Odile Talliard (n.d., p. 1) addresses the fundamentals of this predicament; "Two of the goals of human communication are; to be understood and to be believed. In persuasive communication, both of these acts are fulfilled". This paper examines the marriage of pragmatism with psychology to form a working hypothesis for effective and authentic persuasion.

When the balance between pragmatism and psychology has been achieved, proper persuasive writing must have been utilised. The book Advice From the Top edited by the Business Marketing Association (2011), is a collection of essays from elites in the field of B2B marketing. Chapter 9 details persuasive writing, and the passion that needs to come of the page to grip and entice prospective customers. When this is forced to be done online, the resource 'Complete B2B Online Marketing', by Leake, Vacarello, and Ginty (n.d.) is an exhaustive study of the many avenues of this type of marketing. When online is the route being traveled, the persuasive skills that were

found to work the best in person are appropriate to use online, but some tweaking is needed to reach online customers.

Dan Ramsey has written many books on sales. His 2012 work, 'Selling: 60 Second Solutions', addresses the fast-paced nature of marketing today, both online and off. This work is a crash course which includes important elements from each persuasive tool that is referenced in this review. Specifically, Ramsey highlights the attributes of a persuasive salesperson: product knowledge, knowledge of competitive products, knowledge of product features and benefits, communication skills, listening skills, persuasion skills, and professional skills.

The near opposite of Ramsey's approach is the book, 'Integrated Communication: Synergy of Persuasive Voices', by Thorson and Moore (1996). This work goes deep into the many persuasive approaches available, including how to synthesise them in various sales scenarios. Qualitative studies of integrated communications are presented, as well as the vulnerabilities of integrated marketing communication i.e., (the boomerang effect). Brand equity, consumption rates, and the company voice are each investigated extensively in an attempt to understand persuasion's ethics.

From a different perspective, the work, 'FCS Marketing Communication L2', from Pearson Education Australia, addresses the complex role of persuasion when working with the farm credit system (FCS). Defining the role of persuasive communication in its relation to marketing is the purpose of this literature (Donaldson et al., 2007, p. 94). A good companion to this work is 'YES! 50 Secrets

from the Science of Persuasion', by Donaldson, Cialdini, and Steve Martin (2007). The table of contents highlights the, questions that drive the discovery of persuasive power: "How can you increase your persuasiveness by inconveniencing your audience? What shifts the bandwagon effect into another gear? When does a bonus become an onus? How can a new superior product mean more sales of an inferior one?" (p. v). This literature brings humor into the marketing discussion.

Jay A. Conger's (1998) seminal work, 'The Necessary Art-of-Persuasion' appeared in the Harvard Business Review. Nowadays, cross-functional teams of peers and peers populated by baby boomers and their Generation who does not show much tolerance for unquestioned authority runs businesses (p. 85). This work defines persuasion, and details its place in the marketing arena. This work has a special section dedicated to four ways not to persuade: the hard sell, resist compromise, great argument, and assume it's a one-time effort (p. 87). The art and nuance of persuasion is illustrated in this work.

The work, 'The New Science of Selling and Persuasion: How Smart Companies and Great Salespeople Sell', by Brooks (2004), details the specific attributes of a successful persuasive salesperson. This book is filled with lists of questions that will clarify whether the proper attention to detail has been paid, and the persuasion tactic is known knowledge to be appropriate. He, comments, "There is little doubt that self-discovery and realistic self-appraisal is key to forging a successful and profitable sales organisation" (p. 211).



The work, 'Marketing: Essential Principles, New Realities', includes much market research illuminating new trends. These tools allow the persuasive salesperson to craft his or her message appropriately. Buyer behaviour is investigated, and strategies are enumerated.

Lastly in this literature review, the work, 'Persuasion IQ' by Kurt Mortenson (2008), gives the reader tests in order to determine his or her persuasion skills. Going through the book will reveal what areas are lacking, and what elements of persuasion techniques are overbearing. Gaining a proper balance in the art of persuasion is the aim of this work. Mortenson (p. 17) emphasises, that "The worst time to learn a persuasion skill is when you need it. Persuasion must be mastered before it is needed, or the opportunity is lost forever". This is a fact in sales.

## **Chapter 2**

### **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

This chapter proposes to examine the effectiveness of the many decision making theories on corporate sales and, to that end, proposes a conceptual model as a framework for investigating the effectiveness of methods of persuasion in corporate sales.

Our model can be divided into three ideas, the salesperson's effectiveness, on the costs and benefits of the sale and the reflecting customisation benefits to the customer.

#### **2.1 Decision Making Process in Corporate Sales**

The decision making process in corporate sales is strongly related to the behavioural decision theory which is discussed by Workman (2012), which combines rational and non-rational processes in decision-making. It analyses decision matrices and states that previous successes levidence future ones. This displays an irrational commitment to previous decisions, even when they are costly. With rational models, the probability of success can be computed but people often do not trust in and nor decide according to the results from those computations. Humans decide according to their mood and previous impressions about the subject of decision. In this study, those variables which build up the mood and impression of the decision maker will be investigated in more detail.

## **2.2 Classic Dual Process Theory of Human Cognition**

The feature detection and pattern recognition, classic dual theory of human cognition clarifies the difference between conscious and unconscious information processing (Syagga, 2012), where the necessary information at any given moment is sometimes transferred to the long-term memory for future analysis Syagga, L. (2012).. The perceptual data is combined with the long term memory and processed while actively using working memory. In reaction to a stimulus event, a response is generated and committed to the long-term memory for future use. At this point, if no stimulus event occurs to create a response, then the perceptual ideas are not recorded to the long-term memory and, after some time, they are removed from the working memory. This makes the perceptions volatile unless they are combined with a stimulus event and a response is generated and encoded into the long-term memory.

### **2.2.1 Adaptive Control of Thought model**

Activation, in the Adaptive Control of Thought (ACT) model, differs from one single conceptual unit to another one through multiple connections, as concurrently allowing other nodal points through the system. Deliberative withitness relies on the amount of cognitive activation by the stimulus stimulus currently being processed. However, insensate processing is not available to introspection. (Epstein, 1996).

### **2.2.2 Parallel Distributed Processing Model**

The Parallel Distributed Processing model assumes that there are a large number of processing units for different tasks, which are in mutual communication with each other. Some time after activation, the whole system reaches a steady state.

Afterward, the whole information being processed brings about conscious awareness.

This model differs from the ACT model. Since here conscious awareness is measured by the time passed to reach a steady state, whereas in ACT model, it is measured by the amount of activation (et al.).

This model is the theoretical framework for the mutual interaction of dual processes. Slow and serial processing results from conscious deliberation, while fast and parallel processing results from unconscious processing. Conscious deliberation causes the deliberation mode and unconscious processing causes the intuitive mode. (Khaneman, 2012).

### **2.2.3 The Rational Decision Making Model**

The Rational Decision Making model is defined as selecting among alternatives to maximise values within certain limitations. A six-step decision making process is assumed to be followed while making decisions, which can be defined as follows:

- 1) Defining the problem in order to analyse and rationalise the problem.
- 2) Identifying decision criteria which will limit the choices. Any criteria not considered in this step will neither affect nor limit the solution.
- 3) Defining weights for the criteria in order to use them in decision making calculation.
- 4) Identifying potential alternatives which can be considered as good solutions for the problem.

- 5) Calculating the scores for the potential alternatives as solution according to the criteria and their weights.
- 6) Selecting among alternative solutions according to the total calculated scores from step 5).

The rational decision making model contains some assumptions. The first one is that it is developed assuming that the problem to be solved is clear and comprehensible so that the decision maker would have all of the information that is required during the decision making process. The decision maker should consider all criteria, and list all of the feasible alternative decisions and be totally aware of the all possible results among the different alternatives. In this model, it is also assumed that criteria and alternatives solutions can be ranked and weighted according to their importance; the decision criteria and their assigned weights will not change over time. Another assumption regarding this model is that there are no time limitations, and therefore, of all the necessary information about the criteria and alternative decisions can be obtained; the individual will chose the alternative with the highest perceived value (Robbins, 2005). It is not always possible for human beings to follow the Rational Decision Making model in the real world since human beings are not completely rational and sometimes decide according to their feelings and their mood. This makes the model good theoretically, but hard to follow most of the time.

### **2.3 Salesperson Effect**

The salesperson effect can be divided into of four main ideas: the importance of brand quality in corporate sales, the importance of sharing common interests and

views with the decision maker, the importance of providing reminders of previous sales to the decision maker and the importance of the providing information about purchases made by the competitors of the decision maker's company.

## **2.4 Focusing on the Cost Benefits in the Sale**

Focusing on the costs and benefits of the sale is an important theory which is about to showing the decision maker that the benefits of the product or service outweigh the costs.

## **2.5 Reflecting Customisation Benefits**

Customisation is an important issue in corporate sales since the service or product is usually purchased in high volumes. The cost of unnecessary functionalities of the goods or services becomes an important as their volume increases. Therefore, customisation becomes crucial since it allows unnecessary functionalities and options to be removed from the service or good. Consequently, the theory reflecting the decision maker's customisation options seems to be an important aspect of persuading the corporate purchase decision maker in the process of corporate sales. To measure the effectiveness of these theories, an online survey will be applied to the people who play a decision-making role in corporations. The survey consists of two sets of questions. The first part of the survey consists of questions which are prepared in order to measure the multiplier for the results of the second part. This will assist the understanding of whether the participant plays a decision maker role. The first part of the survey also measures the size of the corporation, while second part of the survey will analyses the effectiveness of the theories of persuasion in

corporate sales. Sample scenarios are used to explain the theories that are being analysed to the participants.

## Chapter 3

### RESEARCH QUESTIONS

In a previous study importance of branding is found to be greater than it is usually recognised (Mudambi, S., 2002). An additional study demonstrates that theories of persuasion can be used to make people say “Yes”. Both of these studies state that by, reflecting brand quality and using some other methods, it is possible to increase the success rate in corporate sales. The questions on the survey to test the effectiveness of these methods are:

-The research ideas tested:

Q1: Is being persuaded about the brand quality is important for decision makers in corporate purchase?

Q2: Will a previous purchase from the same supplier make the decision maker feel more likely to buy, demonstrating the benefit of reminding buyers of previous purchases.

Q3: Will sharing a common interest or hobby with the salesperson will make the buyer more likely to purchase from the supplier.

Q4: Does sharing a political viewpoint with the salesperson will make the buyer more likely to purchase from that supplier. So learning about the political view of the decision maker in the buyer side and informing if there any common ones with the



salesperson will make the decision maker will increase the success chance in the corporate sale.

Q5: Does being informed about the corporation's competitors' purchases from the supplier will make the decision maker in the target corporation more likely to purchase. So finding out purchases that competitors of the corporation made from the supplier if exists and informing the decision maker about this will make the decision maker more likely to purchase.

Q6: Will being informed about that the price offered is the lowest among competitors will make the buyer more likely to purchase.

Q7: Does informing the buyer about the customised products and services and the benefits of customisation will make the buyer more likely to purchase.

Q8: Does focusing on the purchaser's familiarity with the brand of product or service and putting an emphasis on this familiarity during the sales meeting make him or her maker more likely to purchase.

Q9: Does informing the decision maker about the service or product support that will be provided after the purchase make him or her more likely to purchase.

Q10: Would sending ethical gifts to buyer will make the buyer make him or her more likely to purchase.

### **3.1 Relationship between Persuading Methods and Corporate Sales Success**

Knowledge of which methods for influencing people during the decision making process can be used in corporate sales in order to increase the success rate.

Therefore, the following research question is presented:

*Q1: Can persuasion methods be used in corporate sales to increase the success rate.*

## **Chapter 4**

### **METHODOLOGY**

The study was carried out during May, 2014. A total of 110 questionnaires were distributed via the Internet and print outs to the potential participants who act as decision makers in corporate sales or in related fields. The survey questions were prepared with shortened sample cases of the ideas kept short in order to maximise ease of understanding and the return rate. 95 questionnaires were returned, representing a 86.3% response rate.

#### **4.1 Sampling**

The sample comprised of 95 employees from different sectors, seniority levels and countries in order to obtain an international result which reflects the general population. Most of the employees sampled resided in Turkey, even if they worked for international companies.

#### **4.2 Materials and Measures**

An online survey with short-form questions was carried out in order to maximise the response rate. The survey consisted of 14 questions. The first four questions aimed toward understanding the characteristics of the respondents. Those four questions include the answers to the size, and sector of the organisation that the employee works for, and as well as the purchase authorising entity within the structure of the organisation.

The following 10 questions in the survey were asked in order to understand whether individual persuasion techniques would be successful in corporate sales. Every question measured a different method or aspect in order to show which ones might be successful in persuading the corporate purchase decision maker.

### **4.3 Procedure**

The questions in the survey were prepared with sample cases of the theories in order to maximise ease of understanding and the return rate. The survey took approximately two minutes to fill out. The respondents were asked about sample scenarios about each of the methods that are being tested.

### **4.4 Analysis**

Persuasion techniques were tested through 10 questions in order to analyse their respective chance of success. Questions use 5-point rating with sample cases. The ratings were as follows: 5 (Extremely important), 4 (Important), 3 (Neutral), 2 (Not so important), 1 (Not important) scores. The frequencies of all results were analysed to calculate average scores for the survey. Cross-analyses were conducted between respondent characteristics and persuading methods. From these results the companies were grouped according to their sector and the importance that they place on familiarity with the brand of product or service in the corporate purchase decision making process and compared. Also similarly, Companies were grouped according to their sector and the importance that they place on the quality of support for the product or service and then compared.

Companies grouped according to their sector and the importance they place on the customisation possibilities and benefits compared.

Subsequently the One-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) test was performed to compare the mean preferences of the companies grouped according to their sectors and income levels.

ANOVA was applied to ascertain the relationship between the characteristic variables and persuasion method variables. The two characteristics variables included: the annual revenue of the companies and the sectors of the companies. The independent variables consist of 10 methods of persuading, product quality information, familiarity with brand, reminders of previous purchases, finding a common interest, sharing a similar political view, providing information about competitors' purchases, providing information about pricing advantage, informing about customisation benefits, informing about after-sale support and sending ethical presents on special days. ANOVA was used to compare the means of persuasion methods of companies grouped according to their annual revenues and according to the sectors that they belong to. From the test results, annual revenues of the companies and purchase preferences showing significance are interpreted.

Similarly from the results for companies grouped according to the sectors that they belong to and the methods of persuasion are interpreted.

## **Chapter 5**

### **FINDINGS**

All of the analyses were performed by using IBM SPSS Statistics v.20 Software for Windows.

#### **5.1 Respondent Characteristics**

The sample consist of 95 employees who were were responsible for corporate purchase decisions from different companies worldwide. 23 Employees (24.2%) were working in companies with an annual revenue above 1B dollars, 18 (18.9%) from companies with an annual revenue in between 1M and 50M dollars, 14 (14.7%) were from companies with an annual revenue in between 500M and 1B, 15 (15.8%) were from companies with an revenue in between 50M and 500M dollars, 23 (24.2%) were from companies with an annual revenue less than 1M dollars. These results exhibit a U-shaped distribution among the annual company revenues and number of respondents.

Respondents were asked for the sector that they work for. 13 (13.7%) were employed in the Energy, 26 (27.4%) in Information Technologies, 13 (13.7%) in Other, 17 (17.9%) in Production, and 26 (27.4%) in Telecommunication sectors. The results show that more than 54% of the respondents were from the Information Technologies and Telecommunication sectors.

Eight (8.4%) of the respondents stated that they do not have any other roles within the company other than making corporate purchase decisions in the company since 87 (91.6%) of them stated that they have other roles in the company.

Another characteristic for corporate purchase decision making is the size of the decision making team. 12 (12.6%) of the respondents stated that they make the corporate purchase decisions individually, while 31 (32.6%) of them said that they were made by a team of one to five people, 28 (29.5%) of them said that they were made by a team of 2 people, 19 (20%) of them said that they were made by a team of 5 - 10 people and 5 (5.3%) of them said that they were made by a team of more than 10 people. More than 59% of the respondents stated that corporate purchase decisions are made by team of two to five people.

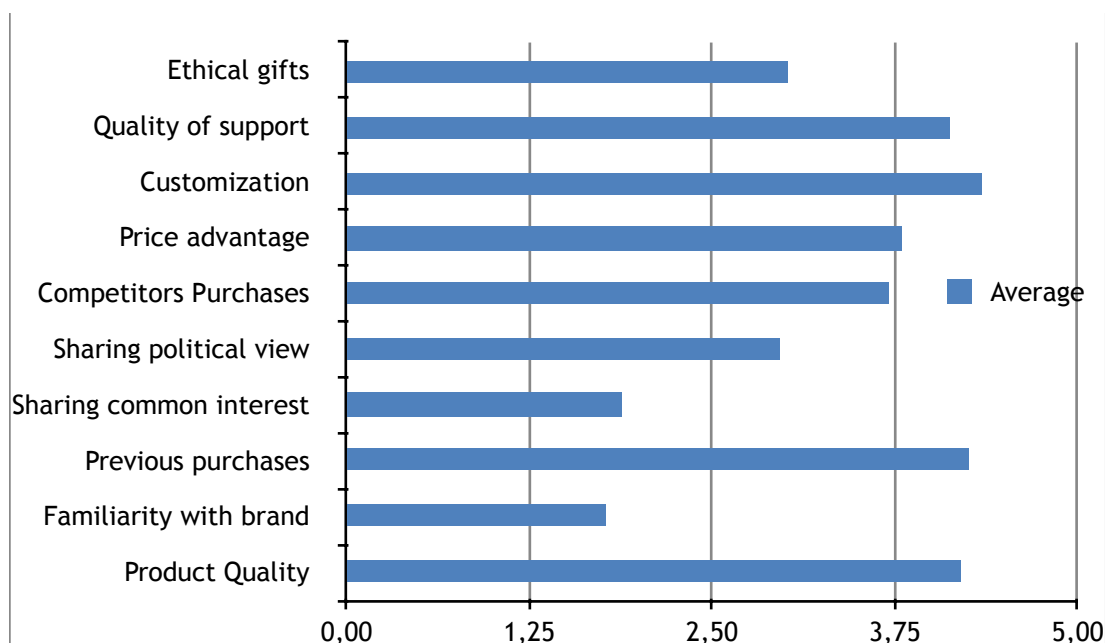
## **5.2 Frequencies of the Persuading Methods**

Effectiveness of different persuasion methods were measured by the ten questions in the survey. The first three questions measure the effectiveness of methods to be used by corporate salespeople with the following five-point rating system: “Extremely Important” scores 5, “So Important” scores 4, “Important” scores 3, “Not so Important” scores 2 and “Negligible” scores 1. In the following seven questions, the effectiveness of methods to be used by corporate salespeople were measured using a five-point rating scale: “Strongly agree” scores 5, “Agree” scores 4, “Neutral” scores 3, “Disagree” scores 2 and “Strongly Disagree” scores 1.

The results show that, on average for the whole sample, familiarity with the product brand and sharing a common interest with the corporate salesperson were the least

effective corporate sales persuasion techniques, whereas informing customers of customisation benefits and informing customers about the previous purchases made from the supplier were the most effective methods in corporate sales persuasion techniques. Product or service quality and quality of support were also found to be effective, with an average score greater than four.

Table 1: Average scores for the corporate sale persuading techniques



### 5.3 Cross Analysis

Correlations were discovered between respondent characteristics and persuasion methods. The results display an ordinary distribution between respondent characteristics and persuding methods, except for two crosstabulations. The crosstabulation for the company sector and familiarity with the product or service



brand yielded a meaningful distribution among the sectors, as did that for the after-sale support of the product or service and company sector.

### **5.3.1 Comparing Companies Grouped According to Their Sector and the Importance that they Place on Familiarity with the Product or Service Brand in Corporate Purchase Decision Making Process**

Crosstabulation between the company sector and familiarity with the product or service brand reveals that familiarity with the product or service brand was less important for the employees belonging to companies in the Information Technologies and Telecommunication sectors. The products or services of companies in the Information Technologies and Telecommunication sectors are mostly intangible. This result reflects that, with regard to these companies' products and services, the source products or services that they purchase will not be visible. This may explain why familiarity with the product or service brand is not as important to them as it is for the other companies. Companies in the Information Technologies and Telecommunication sectors are also capable of growing rapidly while providing high-quality products and services. Employees in these companies are aware of that unknown brands can quickly become known brands soon and some of these firms can provide high-quality goods and services even when they are unknown or developing brands. This might be another reason why familiarity with the product or service brand is not so important for the employees in these companies.

Table 2: Comparing companies grouped according to their sector and the importance that they place on familiarity with the product or service brand in corporate purchase decision making process

	Extremely important	Important	Negligible	No idea	Not so important	So important	Total
Energy	0	1	6	0	6	0	13
Information Technologies	2	1	14	0	8	1	26
Other	3	1	4	0	5	0	13
Production	0	1	7	0	9	0	17
Telecommunication	0	0	10	3	11	2	26
Total	5	4	41	3	39	3	95

### 5.3.2 Comparing Companies Grouped According to Their Sector and the Importance that they Place on the Quality of Support for the Product or Service

Crosstabulation between the company sector and being persuaded about the quality of support for the product or service shows that the effectiveness of method of persuading the decision maker about the quality of support varies among the sectors. Results suggest that this method works best for the employees in companies of the Information Technologies and Telecommunication sectors. This may be because of that the possible future problems with the product or service may be too hard to fix by others than the provider. Even if other firms can fix these problems, they may require much more time than the first one does to fix. In most cases, fixing a problem in these sectors may necessitate special expertise or a deep understanding of

the product. It may be possible for many machinery services to fix a broken-down truck in the construction sector, while a malfunctioning software used in the Information Technologies sector may be irreparable by anyone other than the developer of the software. Another reason for this result could be that, in the IT and Telecommunication sectors, one problem can prevent many other systems and mechanisms from working properly. This fact may create the requirement for repairs to be done urgently.

These facts make persuading the decision maker about the quality of product or service support an effective method in the Information Technologies and Telecommunication sectors.

Table 3: Comparing companies grouped according to their sector and the importance that they place on the quality of support for the product or service

	Agree	Disagree	Neutral	No idea	Strongly agree	Strongly Disagree	Total
Energy	7	0	3	0	2	1	13
	1	0	0	1	23	1	26
Information Technologies	4	2	4	0	3	0	13
	5	0	8	0	4	0	17
Other							
Production	4	0	0	1	19	2	26
Telecommunication							
Total	21	2	15	2	51	4	95

### 5.3.3 Comparing Companies Grouped According to their Sector and the Importance That they Place on the Customisation Possibilities and Benefits

Crosstabulation between the company sector and informing the decision maker about customisation possibilities and benefits illustrates that the effectiveness of informing the decision maker about customisation varies among the sectors. The most significant result from this cross-analysis is that 17 out of 26 respondents from the Information Technologies sector stated that they strongly agree concerning the importance of customisation. The reason for this might be that goods and services can easily be customised in the IT sector and this brings about the high customisation expectation in this sector.

Table 4: Comparing companies grouped according to their sector and the importance that they place on the customisation possibilities and benefits

	Agree	Disagree	Neutral	No idea	Strongly agree	Strongly disagree	Total
Energy	7	0	0	0	6	0	13
	8	1	0	0	17	0	26
Information Technologies	5	0	0	0	7	1	13
	10	0	0	0	7	0	17
Other							
Production	11	0	2	2	11	0	26
Telecommunication							
Total	41	1	2	2	48	1	95

Customisation opportunities are very important when persuading corporate purchase decision makers. Informing users about customisation possibilities and benefits can help the corporate sales representative to be successful.

## **5.4 ANOVA test for Companies Grouped According to Annual Income and Methods of Persuasion in Corporate Sales**

The ANOVA test was performed to compare the mean preferences of the companies grouped according to their sectors and income levels. ANOVA was applied to ascertain the relationship between the characteristic variables and persuasion method variables. The two characteristics variables include: the annual revenue of the companies and sector of the companies. The independent variables consist of 10 methods of persuasion product quality information, familiarity with brand, reminders of previous purchases, finding a common interest, sharing a similar political view, providing information about competitors' purchases, providing information about pricing advantage, providing information about customisation benefits, providing information about after-sale support and sending ethical presents on special days.

ANOVA was used to compare their means according to company sector and company annual revenue as a measure for company size on scale variables at the  $p > .05$  level for these two characteristics.

### **5.4.1 Annual Revenues of the Companies and Purchase Preferences ANOVA Test Findings**

The ANOVA test was performed in order to compare the mean preferences of the companies grouped according to their income. The results for the method of

informing the decision maker about product or service quality showed a significant positive correlation between the annual revenue of the companies ( $f=3.004$ ,  $Sig=0.15$ ), characterised by a U-shaped distribution.

Table 5: ANOVA test for the importance companies put on product or service quality according to the companies grouped by the annual revenues

	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
Not stated	2	2,00	2,828		
Above 1B\$	23	4,39	,891		
Between 500M\$ & 1B\$	14	3,71	1,773		
Between 50M\$ & 500M\$	15	4,13	,834		
Between 1M\$ & 50M\$	18	4,33	,767		
Less than 1M\$	23	4,43	,507		
Total	95	4,20	1,068	3,004	,015

This method seems to be work best for the companies with the highest level of annual revenue (above 1 billion dollars) and lowest level of annual revenue(below 1 million dollars). Results also show that, with 4.39, 3.71, 4.13 and 4.33 respectively, the mean scores for this method are efficient in the companies with annual incomes between 500 million dollars and 1 billion dollars, 50 million dollars and 500 million dollars, 1 million dollars and 50 million dollars.

Informing the corporate purchase decision maker about the previous purchases made showed a significant positive correlation between the companies grouped according to their annual revenues of them with ( $F=6.527$  and  $Sig=0.000$ ).

Table 6: ANOVA test for the importance companies put on previous purchases that according to the companies grouped by the annual revenues

	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
Not stated	2	1,50	2,121		
Above 1B\$	23	4,35	,775		
Between 500M\$ & 1B\$	14	4,14	1,099		
Between 50M\$ & 500M\$	15	3,73	1,223		
Between 1M\$ & 50M\$	18	4,50	,514		
Less than 1M\$	23	4,61	,499		
Total	95	4,25	,967	6,527	,000

Results for this method display a good U-shaped distribution. This method works best for the smallest companies as defined by an annual income less than 1 million dollars, with mean score 4.61 and standard deviation of 0.499. It also works very well for the companies with an annual income above 1 billion dollars. These top edges of the distribution curve can be related to different factors. The companies in the upper edge of the distribution have longer internal procedures when purchasing from new providers. Since corporate purchases require a relatively greater number of payments, the procedures for those transactions will be more complex. The employees responsible for corporate purchase decisions are more apt to work with providers that they have previously worked with since this decreases the amount of work needed to be done in order to complete the purchase. On the other edge of the curve, employees of the smaller companies are willing to work with providers that they have worked with previously because employees in smaller companies have relatively more critical responsibilities than the employees in other companies. The

results of mistakes can be less forgiving for smaller companies than in larger ones.. A few mistakes in corporate purchase decisions can even cause a small company to go bankrupt. This might explain why the willingness of employees in small companies to work with former providers is relatively higher than in other companies since this would lower the risk of making a mistake.

The results indicate that the method of informing the decision maker about a common interest or hobby with the purchase sales salesperson does not work well, with means less than or equal to a score of three for all company groups (F=4.151, Sig=0.002) and are results that are worth investigating.

Table 7: ANOVA test for the importance companies put on having a common interest or hobby with the salesperson to the companies grouped by the annual revenues

	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
Not stated	2	4,00	,000		
Above 1B\$	23	1,87	1,058		
Between 500M\$ & 1B\$	14	2,50	1,454		
Between 50M\$ & 500M\$	15	2,00	1,254		
Between 1M\$ & 50M\$	18	1,50	,514		
Less than 1M\$	23	1,52	,593		
Total	95	1,87	1,064	4,151	,002

This might be related to an ability of corporate purchasing agents to naturally separate their personal and professional lives.



The method of focusing on the pricing advantage and providing the lowest possible price and yielded a significant positive correlation between the annual revenues of the companies (F=3.842, Sig=0.003).

Table 8: ANOVA test for the importance companies put on if the supplier is providing the lowest price among the competitors and companies grouped by the annual revenues

	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
Not stated	2	1,00	1,414		
Above 1B\$	23	4,17	,937		
Between 500M\$ & 1B\$	14	3,57	,938		
Between 50M\$ & 500M\$	15	3,40	1,682		
Between 1M\$ & 50M\$	18	3,94	1,056		
Less than 1M\$	23	3,91	,793		
Total	95	3,79	1,166	3,842	,003

The results show that the importance that companies put on attaining the lowest price among competitors varies among the companies as much as grouped by the annual revenues. Price advantage is important for all companies but not as it is for the companies with annual revenues above 1 billion dollars. The reason for this is that as the bigger companies make bigger corporate purchases and as their order sizes increase, the importance of paying a low price rises. The expectation is that when some product or service is bought in mass, than it is to be offered at a lower price. This tendency can be considered to be another reason for this result.

The ANOVA test was completed for the results of all of the questions on the survey representing the methods of persuasion in corporate sales and annual revenue levels. The questions representing the answers for all other questions resulted in significance levels higher than 0.05; thus, they were not worth investigating.

Table 9: ANOVA test for the methods of persuasion and companies grouped by the annual revenues resulting with significance level higher than 0.05

		N	Mean	Std.	F	Sig
<b>Familiarity with the brand</b>	Not stated	2	3,00	1,414		
	Above 1B\$	23	1,78	1,204		
	500M\$ - 1B\$	14	1,93	1,492		
	50M\$ - 500M\$	15	1,87	1,302		
	1M\$ - 50M\$	18	1,94	,725		
	Less than 1M\$	23	1,35	,487		
	Total	95	1,77	1,076	1,443	,217
<b>Sharing similar political view</b>	Not stated	2	4,50	,707		
	Above 1B\$	23	3,04	1,107		
	500M\$ - 1B\$	14	2,79	1,188		
	50M\$ - 500M\$	15	2,87	1,060		
	1M\$ - 50M\$	18	2,83	,985		
	Less than 1M\$	23	3,00	,798		
	Total	95	2,96	1,020	1,119	,356
<b>Being informed about competitors purchases</b>	Not stated	2	4,50	,707		
	Above 1B\$	23	3,78	1,043		
	500M\$ - 1B\$	14	3,71	1,326		
	50M\$ - 500M\$	15	3,07	1,335		
	1M\$ - 50M\$	18	3,72	1,320		
	Less than 1M\$	23	3,96	,928		
	Total	95	3,71	1,175	1,323	,262
<b>Customisation</b>	Not stated	2	4,00	1,414		
	Above 1B\$	23	4,22	1,043		
	500M\$ - 1B\$	14	4,36	1,336		
	50M\$ - 500M\$	15	4,07	1,223		
	1M\$ - 50M\$	18	4,50	,514		
	Less than 1M\$	23	4,57	,507		
	Total	95	4,35	,943	,738	,597
<b>Quality of support</b>	Not stated	2	2,50	3,536		
	Above 1B\$	23	4,17	1,029		
	500M\$ - 1B\$	14	3,86	1,512		
	50M\$ - 500M\$	15	3,60	1,595		
	1M\$ - 50M\$	18	4,50	,786		
	Less than 1M\$	23	4,43	,788		
	Total	95	4,13	1,223	2,162	,065
<b>Small gifts</b>	Not stated	2	3,00	,000		
	Above 1B\$	23	2,91	,900		
	500M\$ - 1B\$	14	2,93	1,072		
	50M\$ - 500M\$	15	3,47	,990		
	1M\$ - 50M\$	18	3,11	,832		
	Less than 1M\$	23	2,78	,850		
	Total	95	3,01	,917	1,154	,338

#### 5.4.2 ANOVA Test for Companies Grouped According to the Sectors that they Belong to and the Methods of Persuasion in Corporate Sales

An ANOVA test was performed in order to compare the mean preferences of the companies grouped according to the sectors that they belong to.

The test findings indicate that method of informing the decision maker about the product or service quality represented a significant positive correlation between the sectors of the companies (F=3.004, Sig=0.15).

Table 10: ANOVA test for the importance companies put on the product or service quality and companies grouped by the sectors that they belong to

	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
Not stated	26	4,15	1,084		
Above 1B\$	26	4,08	1,262		
Between 500M\$ & 1B\$	17	4,47	,514		
Between 50M\$ & 500M\$	13	4,08	1,320		
Between 1M\$ & 50M\$	13	4,31	,947		
Less than 1M\$	95	4,20	1,068		
Total	26	4,15	1,084	3,004	,015

The results show that the product or service quality is important for all of the sectors, with mean scores greater than 4 in each. Production had the highest mean score (4.47). The reason for this result is that, in the production sector the biggest corporate purchase items are raw materials, which directly effect the quality of the products that they produce. The importance of product or service quality is high for

other sectors but Production is the sector that gives the highest importance to product or service quality.

The method of reminding the decision maker about the satisfaction from the previous purchases from the supplier revealed a significant positive correlation between the sectors that companies belonged to ( $F=6.527$ ,  $Sig=0.00$ ).

Table 11: ANOVA test for the importance companies put on the satisfaction from the previous purchases from the supplier and companies grouped by the sectors that they belong to

	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>Sig</b>
Information Technologies	26	4,38	,697		
Telecommunication	26	4,08	1,294		
Production	17	4,53	,514		
Energy	13	4,00	1,080		
Other	13	4,23	1,013		
Total	95	4,25	,967	6,527	,000

These results convey that previous purchases made from the same supplier are important for the decision maker employees from all sectors. The highest importance was seen in the production sector, with a mean score of 4.53 out of 5. Companies in the production sector make regular corporate purchases and their needs change very rarely when compared to companies from other sectors. The requirements for raw material for a manufacturing company do not vary much over time. This could be the reason behind the importance of previous purchases to have the highest mean score in among the companies grouped according to their sectors.

Reminding the decision maker about a common interest or hobby with the salesperson showed significant positive correlation between the sectors of the companies that decision makers belonged to ( $F=4.151$ ,  $Sig=0.002$ ). Results show that having a common interest or hobby with the salesperson is not very important to the buyers in all sectors, with mean scores less than 2.3 out of 5 for all.

Table 12: ANOVA test for the importance companies put on having a common interest or hobby with the salesperson and companies grouped by the sectors that they belong to

	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>Sig</b>
Information Technologies	26	1,77	1,070		
Telecommunication	26	1,88	1,107		
Production	17	1,59	,618		
Energy	13	2,08	1,188		
Other	13	2,23	1,301		
Total	95	1,87	1,064	4,151	,002

The importance that companies put on the fact that the supplier or provider offers the lowest price among its competitors demonstrates a significant positive correlation between the sectors of the companies that decision makers belonged to ( $F=3.842$ ,  $Sig=0.003$ )

Table 13: ANOVA test for the importance companies put on the fact that the supplier or provider offers the lowest price among competitors and companies grouped by the sectors that they belong to

	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>Sig</b>
Information Technologies	26	3,96	1,113		
Telecommunication	26	3,31	1,350		
Production	17	4,12	,697		
Energy	13	4,00	1,080		
Other	13	3,77	1,301		
Total	95	3,79	1,166	3,842	,003

The strongest connection was found in the production sector. Raw materials represent a large portion of all of the Manufacturing sector's corporate purchasing. There, raw material purchases generally account for a higher amount of purchasing with respect to the companies in other sectors. Since the purchased product or service is valued relatively higher, the difference in the total amount to be paid to the provider changes significantly, even with small differences in the unit price of the products or services. This is the reason for the higher importance that is placed of providing the lowest price among competitors by companies in production sector when compared to than companies in other sectors.

An ANOVA test was completed for the results of all of the questions in the survey representing the methods of persuasion in corporate sales and sectors of the companies. The questions representing the answers for the importance of familiarity with the product of service brand, importance of sharing a similar political view with the salesperson, importance of previous purchases that the competitors made from

that supplier, importance of the providers' ability to provide well-customised products or goods, importance of support for the service or product and importance of the salesperson sending ethical gifts to the decision makers on special days resulted with significance levels higher than 0.05; thus, they were not worth investigating



Table 14: ANOVA test for the methods of persuasion and companies grouped by the sectors of companies resulting with significance level higher than 0.05

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	F	Sig
<b>Familiarity with brand</b>	IT	26	1,81	1,201		
	Telecommunication	26	1,54	,989		
	Production	17	1,65	,606		
	Energy	13	1,62	,650		
	Other	13	2,46	1,561		
	Total	95	1,77	1,076	1,443	217
<b>Sharing similar political view</b>	IT	26	2,92	,977		
	Telecommunication	26	3,04	1,076		
	Production	17	3,35	,786		
	Energy	13	2,77	1,166		
	Other	13	2,54	1,050		
	Total	95	2,96	1,020	1,119	0,35
<b>Being informed about competitors purchases</b>	IT	26	4,00	,938		
	Telecommunication	26	3,69	1,289		
	Production	17	3,82	,883		
	Energy	13	3,77	1,166		
	Other	13	2,92	1,498		
	Total	95	3,71	1,175	1,323	262
<b>Customisation</b>	IT	26	4,58	,703		
	Telecommunication	26	4,04	1,341		
	Production	17	4,41	,507		
	Energy	13	4,46	,519		
	Other	13	4,31	1,109		
	Total	95	4,35	,943	,738	597
<b>Quality of support</b>	IT	26	4,62	1,235		
	Telecommunication	26	4,35	1,413		
	Production	17	3,76	,831		
	Energy	13	3,69	1,032		
	Other	13	3,62	1,044		
	Total	95	4,13	1,223	2,162	065
<b>Small gifts</b>	IT	26	2,92	1,055		
	Telecommunication	26	3,08	,744		
	Production	17	3,12	,857		
	Energy	13	2,92	1,038		
	Other	13	3,00	1,000		
	Total	95	3,01	,917	1,154	338

## 5.5 Correlations

A Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient was computed to assess the relationship between cognitive methods of persuasion in corporate sales. The results show that product or service quality is correlated positively with satisfaction from the previous purchases with the supplier, with significance of .000. Previous purchases completed with satisfaction lowers the risk of being unsatisfied with the purchase. The employees that put importance on product quality prefer to work with suppliers that they have worked with previously, with a Pearson correlation weight of .393. Similarly, previous purchases with supplier are positively correlated the importance of providing the lowest price among competitors, with a Pearson correlation weight of .387, well-customised products or services, with a Pearson correlation weight of .486 and good support after the sale, with a Pearson correlation weight of .288.

Results also show that the method of informing the decision maker about the purchases that their competitors made from the supplier is positively correlated with product or service quality level, with a Pearson correlation weight of .226.

Similarly, the method of informing the decision maker about the purchases that their competitors made from the supplier is positively correlated with the importance on providing the lowest price among competitors with Pearson correlation weight of .288, well customised products or services with a Pearson correlation weight of .266 and good support after the sale with Pearson correlation weight of .367.

The product or service quality provided is positively correlated with the method of informing the decision maker about previous purchases made from supplier with a Pearson correlation weight of .393. Product or service quality is also negatively correlated with the importance that decision makers put on having a common interest with the salesperson with a Pearson correlation weight of -.343. This correlation is a result of fact that the employees who put importance on sharing a common interest or hobby with the salesperson does not strictly focus on the benefits for the company that they work for. This explanation elucidates the negative correlation that should the decision maker places importance on the product quality he or she does not put importance on having a common interest or hobby with the salesperson and vice versa.

The importance that the corporate purchase decision makers put on the product or service quality is positively correlated with the importance that they put on the purchases that their competitors made from the supplier with Pearson correlation weight of .226.

Similarly, the importance that decision makers put on providing the lowest price among competitors and providing good after-sale support for the products and services are positively correlated with the importance that they put on product or service quality with a Pearson correlation weights of .436 , .247 and .461 respectively.

The importance that decision makers put on product or service quality is negatively correlated with the importance that they put on whether the salesperson sends small ethical gifts on special days with a Pearson correlation weight of  $-.209$ . This can be explained by virtue that the decision makers that can be influenced with gifts may not always be making decisions according to the benefit of the company.

Table 15: Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient table of persuasion

	Product or Service Quality	Brand recognition	Experience with supplier	common interest	Political view	Competitors decisions to work with a supplier	low price	Understanding our needs	Service support after purchase	Small gifts
Product or Service Quality	1									
Brand recognition	-.061 Sig. (2-tailed) Pearson Correlation	1								
Experience with supplier	,557 Sig. (2-tailed) Pearson Correlation	,026 Pearson Correlation	1							
common interest	,393** Sig. (2-tailed) Pearson Correlation	,801 Sig. (2-tailed) Pearson Correlation	-.454** Pearson Correlation	1						
Political view	-.343** Sig. (2-tailed) Pearson Correlation	,001 Sig. (2-tailed) Pearson Correlation	,000 Pearson Correlation	-.113 Pearson Correlation	1					
Competitors decisions to work with a supplier	,115 Sig. (2-tailed) Pearson Correlation	,266 Sig. (2-tailed) Pearson Correlation	,603 Pearson Correlation	,277 Pearson Correlation	,309** Pearson Correlation	1				
low price	,226* Sig. (2-tailed) Pearson Correlation	,239 Sig. (2-tailed) Pearson Correlation	,068 Pearson Correlation	,344 Pearson Correlation	,002 Pearson Correlation	,288** Pearson Correlation	1			
Understanding our needs	,436** Sig. (2-tailed) Pearson Correlation	-.039 Sig. (2-tailed) Pearson Correlation	,387** Pearson Correlation	-.185 Pearson Correlation	,162 Pearson Correlation	,005 Pearson Correlation	,367** Sig. (2-tailed) Pearson Correlation	1		
Service support after purchase	,000 Sig. (2-tailed) Pearson Correlation	,706 Sig. (2-tailed) Pearson Correlation	,000 Pearson Correlation	,073 Pearson Correlation	,116 Pearson Correlation	,266** Sig. (2-tailed) Pearson Correlation	,009 Pearson Correlation	,467** Sig. (2-tailed) Pearson Correlation	1	
Small gifts	,247* Sig. (2-tailed) Pearson Correlation	,216* Sig. (2-tailed) Pearson Correlation	,486** Pearson Correlation	-.168 Pearson Correlation	,126 Pearson Correlation	-.367** Sig. (2-tailed) Pearson Correlation	,000 Pearson Correlation	,214* Sig. (2-tailed) Pearson Correlation	-.096 Pearson Correlation	1
	,016 Sig. (2-tailed) Pearson Correlation	,035 Sig. (2-tailed) Pearson Correlation	,288** Pearson Correlation	,104 Pearson Correlation	,175 Pearson Correlation	-.086 Pearson Correlation	,407 Pearson Correlation	,155 Pearson Correlation	,354 Pearson Correlation	
	,461** Sig. (2-tailed) Pearson Correlation	-.050 Sig. (2-tailed) Pearson Correlation	,005 Pearson Correlation	-.306** Sig. (2-tailed) Pearson Correlation	,090 Pearson Correlation	-.086 Pearson Correlation	-.147 Sig. (2-tailed) Pearson Correlation	-.096 Pearson Correlation	,354 Pearson Correlation	
	,000 Sig. (2-tailed) Pearson Correlation	,628 Sig. (2-tailed) Pearson Correlation	,005 Pearson Correlation	,003 Pearson Correlation	,090 Pearson Correlation	-.086 Pearson Correlation	-.147 Sig. (2-tailed) Pearson Correlation	-.096 Pearson Correlation	,354 Pearson Correlation	
	-.209* Sig. (2-tailed) Pearson Correlation	,024 Sig. (2-tailed) Pearson Correlation	-.207* Pearson Correlation	,219* Pearson Correlation	-.022 Pearson Correlation	-.086 Pearson Correlation	-.147 Sig. (2-tailed) Pearson Correlation	-.096 Pearson Correlation	,354 Pearson Correlation	
	,042 Sig. (2-tailed) Pearson Correlation	,817 Sig. (2-tailed) Pearson Correlation	,044 Pearson Correlation	,033 Pearson Correlation	,830 Pearson Correlation	-.086 Pearson Correlation	-.147 Sig. (2-tailed) Pearson Correlation	-.096 Pearson Correlation	,354 Pearson Correlation	

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). \* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

## **Chapter 6**

### **DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION**

The purpose of this study was to determine the effectiveness of methods to be used in corporate the sales field..

#### **6.1 Findings**

The answers to survey provided by the participants projected that, on average, most of the persuasion techniques for corporate sales seem to be effective. The two methods with an average score of less than 2.5 out of 5 were using familiarity with product or service brand and using an interest or hobby in common with the decision maker. The rest of the survey questions regarding the persuasion of the decision maker in corporate sales were proven to be effective. These methods were as follows: reflecting product or service quality, informing the decision maker about his or her satisfaction from purchasing from them in past, reflecting a similar political view with the decision maker, informing the decision maker the purchases that their competitors made from the provider, informing decision maker about that the price offered for the product or service is the lowest among its competitors, informing decision maker about that the products that they will provide will be well customised and beneficial for them, informing about the good support that will be provided after purchase and sending gifts to the decision makers on special days. The highest

average score was received for the method of reflecting that the goods or services will be well-customised and beneficial.

The received results were grouped according to the size and sectors of the companies. The most noticeable results were obtained from the results grouped according to sectors. Results from the Information Technologies and Telecommunications sectors showed a similarity and difference between the results for the other sectors. The importance placed on familiarity with product brand on these sectors was noticeably less than in other sectors. Similarly, results from these two sectors suggest that the importance that they put on after sale support quality is higher than that from other sectors. Both of these results occurred because these are high-technology oriented companies.

These results were analysed in more detail with ANOVA testing in order to compare the mean preferences of the companies grouped according their annual revenues that they have.

Findings demonstrate that, method of informing the decision maker about the product or service quality is a more efficient way to persuade decision makers for the companies with highest and lowest annual revenues than it is for the companies with middle-range annual revenues. Similarly, method of reminding the decision maker about his or her satisfaction from the previous purchases they made with the provider found out to be a more efficient way to persuade decision makers for the companies with highest annual revenues and lowest annual revenues than it is for the companies

in middle range annual revenues. Informing the decision maker that the price for the product or service is the lowest among its competitors was discovered to work the best for the companies with the highest level of annual revenue.

These results were analysed in more detail with further ANOVA testing in order to compare the mean preferences of the companies grouped according their sectors.

The ANOVA test for the importance that companies put on the product or service quality and companies grouped by the sectors that they belong to show that product or service quality is important for all sectors. Production had the highest mean score. The reason for this result is that, in the production sector the biggest corporate item purchases are raw materials, which directly affects the quality of the products that they produce.

The findings from the ANOVA test for the method of reminding the decision maker about satisfaction from previous purchases made from the supplier and the sectors that companies belong to show that previous purchases made from the same supplier are important to buyers in all sectors. The highest importance was seen in the production sector. Companies in production sector make regular corporate purchases and their needs change very rarely when compared to companies from other sectors. The requirements for raw materials from a production company do not vary much over time.



The ANOVA test for the importance that companies put on having a common interest or hobby with the salesperson and companies grouped by the sectors that they belong to reflected that having a common interest or hobby with the salesperson is not very important to the purchasers from any sector.

The ANOVA test for the importance that companies put on the fact that the supplier or provider offers the lowest price among competitors and companies grouped by the sectors that they belong to reflected that the highest importance given to the fact that the supplier or provider offers the lowest price among the competitors was in the production sector again as a result of raw material purchases. Raw material purchases generally mean a high amount of purchasing with respect to the companies in other sectors. Since the purchased product or service is valued relatively higher, the difference in the total amount to be paid to the provider changes significantly, even with small differences in the unit price of the products or services.

## **6.2 Implications**

The aim of this study was to determine whether the following methods for persuasion in the corporate sales area are efficient to use: reflecting product or service quality, informing the decision maker about his or her satisfaction with previous purchases, reflecting a similar political view with the decision maker, informing the decision maker about the purchases that their competitors made from provider, informing the decision maker that the price offered for the product or service is the lowest among the competitors, informing decision maker about that the products that they will provide will be well customised and beneficial for them,

informing his or her about the good after-sale support that will be provided after purchase and sending small, ethical gifts to the decision makers on special days.

It is ineffective for a corporate sales representative to focus on familiarity with the brand name or trying to find a common interest or hobby with the decision maker.

If the salesperson wants to influence a decision maker who works in Information Technologies or Telecommunications sector it is usually a good idea to inform the decision maker about the hyphenate support provided after the purchase. It is also not a good idea to focus on the brand name of the product or service when attempting to persuade decision makers in these sectors.

### **6.3 Limitations**

Some critical restraints need to be thought about. First, the project used a sample that consisted of decision makers in the corporate purchasing field whose native language was either English or Turkish. This represents a small sample in which the primary language was imbalanced. With such a small sample size, caution against drawing hasty conclusions or generalisations must be enforced.

A weakness in this study that could have affected the measurements of persuasion methods in the corporate sales field was the complication of choosing a measurement technique for the persuasion methods. Measurements were shortened and to keep the survey short in order to increase the response rate.

Similarly, the decision maker's demographics were analysed with only four questions in order to increase the response rate.

#### **6.4 Further studies**

The possibilities of undertaking a number of future studies using a similar hyphenate are apparent. The Results of this study showed that the results for the Information Technologies and Telecommunications sectors were different from the results for the other sectors. A further study could be embarked upon to examine the Information Technologies and Telecommunications sectors in greater detail. Further research in this direction would be a great resource for employees working as salespersons in the corporate sales field in the Information Technologies and Telecommunications sectors.

It would also be great to carry out a further study with a longer survey which may result in a lower response rate but a more in depth analysis of methods of persuasion in corporate sales. The findings from this further study may be analysed and compared with the ones obtained from this study, containing qualitative based, on in-depth interviews in order to obtain a more clearer understanding of effective methods of persuasion in corporate sales.

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## **APPENDIX**





## **APPENDIX A : SURVEY**

This survey is prepared to measure the effectiveness of corporate sale persuasion methods on decision makers who are responsible on corporate purchase. The survey is short and takes approximately two minutes to fill out. This survey is not prepared to measure your abilities or expertise. There is no correct answer for the questions. Please choose the answer which reflects your mind best quickly with the first reaction. Also please make sure you answer all the questions in the survey.

Thank you for your time

1) What is the annual revenue of your company?

- Above 1B\$
- Between 500M\$ & 1B\$
- Between 50M\$ & 500M\$
- Between 1M\$ & 50M\$
- Less than 1M\$
- No idea

2) In what sector your company is in?

- Information Technologies
- Telecommunication
- Production
- Energy
- Other

3) In your company corporate sale decisions are given by:

- Only you
- You and 1 more person
- You and 1 - 5 others
- You and 5 - 10 others
- You and more than 10 others

4) Do you have any other roles within the company other than decision maker for corporate sales in the company

- Yes
- No

5) The importance of the product or service quality for you is

- Extremely important
- So important
- Important
- Not so important
- Negligible
- No idea

6) Familiarity with the product or service brand for you is / Sizin için ürün veya hizmetin marka bilinirliđi

- Extremely important
- So important
- Important
- Not so important
- Negligible
- No idea

7) If exists, the satisfaction from the previous purchases from the same supplier / provider during the decision process for you is

- Extremely important
- So important
- Important
- Not so important
- Negligible
- No idea

8) Having a common interest or hobby with the salesperson makes me more likely to purchase from that supplier

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- No idea

9) Sharing a similar political view with the salesperson makes me more likely to purchase from that supplier

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- No idea

10) Being informed about the purchases that our competitors made from the supplier influences my decision making process in positive manner

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- No idea

11) The fact that the supplier / provider offers the lowest price among the competitors will make me more likely to purchase

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- No idea

12) The fact that the supplier understands our company well and providing customized services / goods for our needs will make me more likely to purchase

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- No idea

13) Being persuaded about the quality of support for the product / service after purchase will make me more likely to purchase

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- No idea



14) If the sales representative sent ethical gifts in special days before the meeting this will make me more likely to purchase

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- No idea