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Effective leadership behaviors in the sales functions of consumer driven business in South Africa

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Effective leadership behaviors in the sales functions of consumer driven business in South Africa

Steven Hughes

A research report submitted to the faculty of Commerce, Law and Management, University of the Witwatersrand, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Business Administration

Johannesburg, 2013

ABSTRACT

Leadership as a topic provides an extensive challenge in that its scope is significant and no 'one size fits all' approach exists. Within leadership, there are various theories and styles. Potential leaders all have a natural style of leadership that they gravitate towards; nevertheless, it does not mean that leaders cannot grow. They have the ability to learn to lead more effectively by practising, observing and adjusting their behaviour where necessary.

This research report aims to identify business leaders' perceptions of the key behaviours that determine effective leadership within sales functions of consumer driven businesses in South Africa by using Nicholls' (1994) Head, Heart and Hands framework, which allows for differentiation between various types of behaviour.

A themed content analysis was conducted on the responses and information (interview transcripts) gathered from 16 critical incident interviews involving 16 respondents with current or recent sales director experience, thus meeting the research criteria. The common factors identified across all respondents led to a deeper understanding of the issues, resulting in a list of themes, categories within those themes and key behaviours of effective leaders relative to behaviours of effective leaders within sales functions of consumer driven businesses.

The most significant feature of the research was that provided a leader leads by example and treats people in the manner in which they would wish to be treated, it would be difficult to make fundamental leadership mistakes. By being authentic in their leadership style, and being themselves they will 'always' do the right thing and make the right decisions. Therefore, sales directors and aspiring leaders within the sales function of consumer driven industries can learn and apply the key behaviours of a leader, which is significantly easier to change and adapt than characteristics of a leader. Furthermore, the literature review revealed that leadership behaviour plays an extensive role in the performance and general productivity of the work force. The results of the research study have identified key behaviours of effective leaders within the sales functions of consumer driven businesses in South Africa.

DECLARATION

I, Steven Hughes, declare that this research report is my own work, except as indicated in the references and acknowledgements. It is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Business Administration at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in this or any other university.

Steven Hughes

Signed at …….....

On the …….. day of …… 2013

DEDICATION

This research report is dedicated to my wife Tarryn Hughes and my father Peter Hughes.

Tarryn, your unfaltering support this year has allowed me the opportunity to go and achieve a dream I have always had: to complete ‘my’ MBA. You have been there every step of the way and without you; this year may very well have not been a possibility. For that, I am forever grateful and indebted to you.

Dad, your support through the process has been overwhelming; you are my role model and my inspiration. Thank you for everything you have done to help me get through this year, for all the advice, guidance and mentorship that you have provided me throughout the journey.

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- The inspiring sales directors, who gave of their precious time to assist me with my research, thank you for talking so openly, sharing not only your views but also your own personal experiences and inspiring me to get excited about leadership. The lessons learnt and network built through this process has been of great value to me.

- My family, thank you for the support and encouragement through the year, it has given me the motivation to make you all proud.

- My coach, Robyn Cohen, for providing me with a sounding board, encouragement and the right advice to guide me through the process. You are exceptional and I am very grateful for the role you played through the year for me.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT ..... **II**

DECLARATION ..... **III**

DEDICATION ..... **IV**

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS ..... **V**

1 LIST OF TABLES ..... **IX**

LIST OF FIGURES ..... **IX**

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION **1**

1.1 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY 1
1.2 CONTEXT OF THE STUDY 1
1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT 3
1.3.1 MAIN PROBLEM 3
1.4 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY 3
1.5 DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY 4
1.6 DEFINITION OF TERMS 4
1.7 ASSUMPTIONS 4

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW **5**

2.1 INTRODUCTION 5
2.2 LEADERSHIP EFFICACY 5
2.2.1 DEFINITIONS OF LEADERSHIP 5
2.2.2 LEADERSHIP RESEARCH AND INTEREST 6
2.2.3 CRITICAL ISSUES FACING ORGANISATIONS 7
2.2.4 THE FIVE 'BIG IDEAS' OF LEADERSHIP LITERATURE 7
2.3 LEADERSHIP THEORIES 8
2.3.1 TRAIT THEORIES 8
2.3.2 BEHAVIOURAL THEORIES 8
2.3.3 SITUATIONAL/CONTINGENCY THEORIES 9
2.3.4 IMPLICIT THEORIES 11
2.3.5 TRANSACTIONAL AND TRANSFORMATIONAL THEORIES 11
2.3.6 EMERGING THEORY 12
2.4 LEADERSHIP STYLES 12
2.4.1 COERCIVE LEADERSHIP 13
2.4.2 AUTHORITATIVE LEADERSHIP 13
2.4.3 AFFILIATIVE LEADERSHIP 13

2.4.4 PACESETTING LEADERSHIP 13
2.4.5 TRANSACTIONAL LEADERSHIP 14
2.4.6 DEMOCRATIC LEADERSHIP 14
2.4.7 LAISSEZ-FAIRE LEADERSHIP 14
2.4.8 PRIMAL LEADERSHIP 14
2.4.9 SERVANT LEADERSHIP 14
2.4.10 COACHING LEADERSHIP 15
2.4.11 AUTHENTIC LEADERSHIP 15
2.4.12 SITUATIONAL LEADERSHIP 16
2.5 THE ROLE OF LEADERSHIP 16
2.5.1 ADAPTIVE LEADERSHIP 16
2.5.2 CREATE A 'CLIMATE' 17
2.5.3 EMOTIONAL LEADERSHIP 18
2.5.4 LEADERSHIP PIPELINE 19
2.5.5 ESTABLISHING TRUST AS A LEADER 20
2.6 FOLLOWERS 20
2.7 DIFFERENCE BETWEEN LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT 21
2.8 WHAT CONSTITUTES EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP? 22
2.9 LEADERSHIP SUMMARY 27
2.10 HEAD, HEART AND HANDS LEADERSHIP 29
2.10.1 HEAD – STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP 29
2.10.2 HEART – INSPIRATIONAL LEADERSHIP 29
2.10.3 HANDS – SUPERVISORY LEADERSHIP 33
2.10.4 WORKING DEFINITION OF HEAD, HEART AND HANDS 33
2.11 CONSUMER DRIVEN BUSINESS 34
2.12 CONCLUSION 35
2.13 RESEARCH QUESTION 36

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY 37

3.1 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY / PARADIGM 37
3.2 RESEARCH DESIGN 38
3.3 POPULATION AND SAMPLE 38
3.3.1 POPULATION 38
3.3.2 SAMPLE AND SAMPLING METHOD 39
3.4 THE RESEARCH INSTRUMENT 40
3.5 PROCEDURE FOR DATA COLLECTION 40
3.6 DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION 42
3.7 LIMITATIONS OF THE RESEARCH 42
3.8 VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY 43
3.8.1 EXTERNAL VALIDITY 44
3.8.2 INTERNAL VALIDITY 44
3.8.3 RELIABILITY 45

CHAPTER 4: PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF RESULTS 46

4.1 INTRODUCTION 46

4.2 BEHAVIOURS OF EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP WITHIN THE HEAD CATEGORY 46
4.2.1 HEAD: SCANNING THE ENVIRONMENT 47
4.2.2 HEAD: STRATEGY 48
4.2.3 HEAD: CAPABILITY 51
4.3 BEHAVIOURS OF EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP WITHIN THE HEART CATEGORY 52
4.3.1 HEART: BUILDING A POSITIVE SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT 53
4.3.2 HEART: CONSISTENCY 59
4.3.3 HEART: EMPOWERMENT 61
4.3.4 HEART: BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS AND CREATING PERSONAL CONNECTIONS 63
4.4 BEHAVIOURS OF EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP WITHIN THE HANDS CATEGORY 64
4.4.1 HANDS: MEASUREMENTS 64
4.4.2 HANDS: REVIEW CYCLE 65
4.4.3 HANDS: REWARDS 66
4.4.4 HANDS: COMPETITIONS AND SALES INCENTIVES 67
4.5 MOST IMPORTANT BEHAVIOURS BY RESPONDENT 67
4.5.1 HEAD 68
4.5.2 HEART 68
4.6 CONCLUSION TO THE RESULTS AND DISCUSSION 70
4.6.1 HEAD 71
4.6.2 HEART 72
4.6.3 HANDS 74

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS 76

5.1 INTRODUCTION 76
5.2 CONCLUSIONS OF THE RESEARCH 76
5.2.1 HEAD, HEART AND HANDS VISUAL OF KEY ACTIONS AND BEHAVIOURS 77
5.3 RECOMMENDATION'S 78
5.4 SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH 78
5.5 CONCLUDING REMARKS 80

REFERENCES 81

APPENDIX A - INTERVIEW OUTLINE FOR RESPONDENTS 86

APPENDIX B - REQUEST LETTER TO RESPONDENTS 90

APPENDIX C - CONSISTENCY MATRIX 91

1

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: List of potential respondents 39

Table 2: Sales manager attributes 56

Table 3:Consequences resulting in a more supportive environment 57

Table 4: Leadership behaviours for motivation 62

Table 5: List of categories and behaviours for leadership within the Head category 71

Table 6: List of categories and behaviours for leadership within the Heart category 72

Table 7: List of categories and behaviours for leadership within the Hands category 74

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Key actions and behaviours of effective leaders 77

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose of the study

The purpose of this research is to assess the views and perceptions of business leaders within sales functions of consumer driven businesses in South Africa, and to ascertain the key behaviours that determine effective leadership in these specific positions. This information will be organised within Nicholls' (1994) Head, Heart and Hands framework, which allows for differentiation between various types of behaviour, and in turn provides an understanding of which of these behaviours drive and ensure effective leadership.

1.2 Context of the study

> "The accelerating pace of change in globalisation, communication, disruptive technologies, capital flows and alliances have created fundamental shifts in business operations. Where many popular leadership models may provide formulae to help solve some business problems, they are insufficient to deal with the pace and polyvalent character of constant rapid change" (Ahn, Adamson, & Dornbusch, 2004, p. 13).

While business faces this rapidly changing environment, Higgs (2003) states that we still know very little about leadership, never mind what constitutes 'effective leadership'. Added to this, he suggests that in order to make sense of leadership currently, it is important to understand the critical issues that have implications for leadership style and practice within organisations. Higgs (2003) highlights these leadership challenges as "changes in societal values and investor focus; the implementation of change and the impact of stress on employees" (p.5.

A review of the extensive literature on the subject of leadership makes it quite clear that no 'one size fits all' approach exists when it comes to the behaviours and actions of leaders. There are many facets to leadership, and there are widely

varied views on the role of leadership within organisations. Allio (2009), defines the leaders role in an organisation as:

> "… a mandate to establish purpose and clarify the value of the organisation, develop a vision, articulate a strategy, adapt to change, create a community that is committed to the enterprise and its strategy, monitor strategy implementation and develop future leaders" (Allio, 2009, p. 8).

Heifetz and Laurie (1997) see the primary role of a leader as creating 'adaptive employees', helping their followers adapt to the challenges faced by the organisation.

Goleman (2000) refers to the leaders role as creating a 'climate' that allows people to operate at their most efficient. Ahearne, Mackenzie, Podsakoff, Mathieu and Lam (2009), hold that this 'climate' is critical, especially in sales orientated business and more specifically in sales teams.

Conger and Fulmer (2003) maintain that building a leadership pipeline is the key job of a leader. While Goleman, (2000) suggests that "the leaders singular job is to get results" (p. 1).

Conger and Kunango (1998) argue that in a sales environment, leadership plays a key role and that the leader must demonstrate four critical behaviours to foster an environment for sales people that allows them to operate at their best. Namely; encouraging autonomy; fostering participation in decision making; expressing confidence in the capability of their followers and enhancing the meaningfulness of their work.

An understanding of the external environment is also necessary in building the context for leadership within the organisation. Increasing food prices and decreasing disposable incomes has placed increased pressure and led to greater competition between companies in consumer driven markets (Ghosh, 2010). Ghosh (2010) goes on to say that as competitive pressure increases, so does the

need for companies to differentiate themselves, and one of the key drivers of creating differentiation is effective leadership.

Nicholls (1994) divides leadership into three major areas of activity, Strategic leadership (Head); inspirational leadership (Heart) and supervisory leadership (Hands).

Against this background of diverse opinion on the major determinants of successful leadership, this research project has identified and evaluated the behaviours that create effective leaders. The information derived should prove relevant to senior level sales leaders within organisations operating within this specified function and business sector.

1.3 Problem statement

1.3.1 Main problem

Determine business leaders' perceptions of the key behaviours that determine effective leadership within the sales functions of consumer-driven businesses in South Africa.

1.4 Significance of the study

The literature review revealed extensive research undertaken by many scholars over a number of years in an attempt to understand and define effective leadership. Limited research has however been undertaken in the specifically targeted sector of this research study, namely the sales functions of consumer driven businesses in South Africa.

The study intended to provide guidance to aspiring business leaders within the sales function, to assist in their understanding of what actions and behaviour on their part will lead to leadership that is more effective. The Head, Heart and Hands model of leadership (Nicholls, 1994) was used as a guideline in undertaking this study.

1.5 Delimitations of the study

The research was delimited in the following respects:

- Exploring the subject from the perspective of a business leader;
- Dealing with opinions and views of successful business leaders in this field;
- Limiting the study to the sales function;
- Restricted to consumer driven businesses;
- Only in South Africa.

1.6 Definition of terms

Consumer driven business: Consumer wants are the drivers of all strategic marketing decisions (Guiltinan, Paul, & Madden, 1997).

1.7 Assumptions

The following assumptions underpinned the research conducted:

- All persons interviewed were operating or have operated at sales director level in successful businesses, and were recognised as effective leaders in this field;
- Research respondents had an interest and a willingness to invest in the research process;
- Research respondents were honest in response to questions posed;
- The researcher was consistent throughout the interview process.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The literature review examines peer-reviewed articles in order to develop an understanding of what constitutes effective leadership in the selected sales function of consumer driven businesses. Articles and texts relating to leadership in general were reviewed to further understand the many theories developed, the styles and roles of leadership, emerging leadership theory and leadership trends.

The review also attempts to distinguish the differences between leadership and management as well as leaders and managers. It goes on to consider what constitutes 'effectiveness', and in so doing examines some real life examples. It considers literature specific to sales orientated business and sales team effectiveness.

The appealing and graphic leadership structure developed by Nicholls (1994) – leadership of the Head (strategic), Heart (inspirational) and Hands (supervisory) – is favoured as a basis for exploration of leadership behaviours.

Yin (2009) makes the point, that review of previous research is helpful in developing focused questions for further research, rather than in finding answers to a topic. As such, an additional aim of the literature review is to develop appropriate questions to consider in undertaking this research.

2.2 Leadership efficacy

2.2.1 Definitions of leadership

There are many definitions, each of which has its supporters and detractors. Some of these leadership definitions are as follows:"That activity which stimulates purposeful activity in others by changing the way they look at the word around them and relate to one another" (Nicholls, 1994, p. 5).

> "Leadership is a process of social interaction where the leaders ability to influence the behaviour of their followers can strongly influence performance outcomes" (Humphrey, 2002, p. 12).

> "Producing movement through non-coercive means, towards the best future interest of the group and its members" (Kotter, 1988, p. 19).

> "Leadership is a rich word meaning widely different things to different people" (Nicholls, 1994, p. 1).

The above definitions demonstrate the limited consensus among business scholars. There are however some key themes (Allio, 2009) and patterns that emerge, which will be discussed.

2.2.2 Leadership research and interest

Students of leadership in business organisations have studied the subject for many years. George, George, & Sims, (2007) sum up the effort and lack of consensus among scholars succinctly with the following statement:

> "During the past 50 years, leadership scholars have conducted more than 1000 studies in an attempt to determine the definitive styles, characteristics or personality traits of great leaders. None of these studies has produced a clear profile of the ideal leader" (George et al., 2008 p. 8).

Higgs (2003) adds:

> "In spite of all of these studies and all these definitions, it seems we still know little about the defining characteristics of effective leadership" (Higgs, 2003, p. 8).

2.2.3 Critical issues facing organisations

In order to make sense of leadership today, it is helpful to consider some of the critical issues facing organisations. These include both external (environmental) and internal (organisational) factors.

Changes in societal values along with economic and organisational development has resulted in 'talent wars' (M. Williams, 2000) and a change in the way in which employees are engaged to secure effective commitment (Higgs & Rowland, 2000).

Recent research has indicated a change in investor focus, showing that investor decisions are now more than ever being influenced by 'intangibles' (Ulrich, 1997) including the quality and depth of leadership within organisations.

Increased challenges in implementing organisational change, as the rate and complexity of change increases and becomes an integral aspect of organisational effectiveness (Kotter, 1995). As such, there is a driving need to identify leadership behaviours, which will result in effective change implementation and build sustained change capability (Connor, 1998).

As business becomes more competitive and complex, there is increasing pressure on individuals to work harder and longer to deliver continuous improvement in performance (Alimo-Metcalfe, 1995). Stress levels on employees is greater than ever, and Alimo-Metcalfe, (1995) maintains that it is not work pressures that lead to stress, but rather the behaviour of leaders.

2.2.4 The five 'big ideas' of leadership literature

Allio (2009) claims that there are five 'big ideas' that arise in leadership literature:

1. *Good leaders have good character,* meaning that they 'do the right thing' as opposed to 'doing things right'. It also recognises that good leaders are both competent and ethical.

2. *There is no best way to lead*. How to lead effectively depends on the organisations culture and values, the behaviour of the followers, the personal traits of the leader, the strategy to be implemented, the resources available for the task, the urgency of the challenge and the externalities facing the organisation.
3. *Good leaders collaborate* with their employees, customers, suppliers and other stakeholders. At the same time they manage their conflicting interests, so that no one set of stakeholders is paid more than sufficient to secure their willing participation.
4. *Good leaders are adaptable.* Helping the organisation to adapt to change is perhaps the single most important leadership competency.
5. *Leaders are self-made*; they develop over time and through a process of self-development.

2.3 Leadership Theories

2.3.1 Trait theories

In terms of effective leadership, trait theory implies that effective leadership is a matter of selection, whereas behavioural and situational theories focus more on the development of leadership capabilities (Higgs, 2003).

2.3.2 Behavioural theories

Behavioural theories focus on examining the behaviour and styles of leaders. It attempts to find behavioural patterns that differentiate leaders from non-leaders (Alimo-Metcalfe, 1995). It follows that, if behaviours could be identified that led to effective leadership, then leaders could be trained into their positions (Alimo-Metcalfe, 1995).

2.3.3 Situational/Contingency theories

Contingency theories sought to address the short comings of the behavioural theory, by explaining the effect that the situational factors had on leadership behaviour (Robbins & Judge, 1998). Theorists attempted to isolate and identify which situational factors would affect leadership effectiveness. Robbins and Judge (1998) highlight six of these theories, which have subsequently gained wider recognition in leadership literature.

- *Autocratic-Democratic continuum model*
  Robbins and Judge (1998) described this model as leadership behaviour according to the management of decision making by the leader. At the autocratic extreme of the continuum, the leader makes the decisions and subordinates are expected to carry out instructions. At the democratic extreme, the leader shares the decision making with subordinates. Robbins and Judge (1998) concluded that a democratic model tends to result in higher levels of staff satisfaction, but does not present evidence suggesting effectiveness or productivity improvement.

- *Fiedler Model*
  The Fiedler model proposes that effective group performance depends on the proper match between the leader's interactional style and the degree to which the situation gives control and influence to the leader (Robbins & Judge, 1998).

- *Hersey-Blanchard's situational theory*
  Robbins and Judge (1998) cite this theory as one of the most widely practised leadership models. This leadership style is based on the followers' maturity level and the leader's effectiveness is dependent on the cooperation of the followers. Robbins and Judge (1998) identified four leadership styles:
  1. *Telling*, leader defines the task and gives directives as to how it is to be achieved;
  2. *Selling*, leader provides directive and supportive behaviour;

3. *Participating*, leader provides a communication and facilitative role and shares decision making;
4. *Delegating*, the leader provides little direction or support.

- *Leader member exchange theory*

  Developed by George Graen and Associates in 1973, this theory suggests that leaders establish special 'favoured' relationships with followers that are relatively stable. This group of favoured subordinates receive disproportionate attention and rewards from the leader, but perform better and have lower turnover compared with other staff groups (Robbins & Judge, 1998).

- *Path-Goal theory*

  This leadership model, developed by Robert House in 1971, suggests that it is the leader's job to provide direction and support to subordinates so that they might achieve goals consistent with those of the organisation. He identified four leadership behaviours that are available, depending on the situation or the subordinate (Robbins & Judge, 1998):

  1. The *directive leader* lets subordinates know what is expected of them;
  2. The *supportive leader* is friendly and concerned with the needs of their subordinates;
  3. The *participative leader* gathers suggestions from subordinates before making decisions;
  4. The *achievement-orientated* leader sets challenging goals and expects subordinates to perform at their highest levels.

- *Leader participation model*

  Victor Vroom and Phillip Yetton proposed this model in 1973. They suggested that the leaders' behaviour should be adjusted according to the given task and the environment. The model distinguishes five behaviours ranging from autocratic to group based decision making, dependent on the situation (Robbins & Judge, 1998).

2.3.4 Implicit Theories

- *Attribution theory* suggests that people make attributions to leaders based on their perception of traits such as intelligence, verbal skill and industriousness (Robbins & Judge, 1998).

- *Charismatic theories* are an extension of attribution theory and suggest that followers make attributions of heroic and extraordinary leadership abilities when they observe certain behaviours (Bromley & Kirschner-Bromley, 2007). Shamir (1992) returned to the qualities of leaders, and through studying successful leaders identified the thread of 'charisma'. Shamir (1992) describes it as the ability to inspire others to act in the way required to realise the leader's vision.

2.3.5 Transactional and Transformational theories

These theories identify different sets of behaviours and characteristics required in situations of organisational transformation and situations of stability (Higgs, 2003).

- *Transactional leadership is* characterised as leadership that continuously rewards and encourages specific performance and behaviours (Higgs, 2003). These leaders manage by exception, only intervening when a delegated task or function is failing to meet expectations (Higgs, 2003).

- *Transformational leadership* is characterised as leadership that is charismatic and inspirational, inspiring and aligning others, by providing a common purpose allied with optimism about the 'mission' and its attainability (Higgs, 2003). Higgs (2003) describes it further as intellectually stimulating, encouraging individuals to challenge the status quo, to consider problems from new and unique perspectives and to be innovative and creative. A genuine concern for people's feelings, aspirations, and development is part of this theory. These leaders pay special attention to the individual's needs for achievement and growth, and they coach and mentor followers, who are all treated differently but equitably.

2.3.6 Emerging theory

Almost all previous studies have focused on what leaders do, however the determinants of effective leaders include the impact leaders have on followers and their subsequent ability to perform (Higgs, 2003). A general consensus emerges that leadership is a combination of personal characteristics and areas of competence (Higgs, 2003).

Avolio, Walumbwa and Weber (2009) contend that there are three current trends emerging in the study of leadership:

1. Students of leadership are taking a more holistic view. They are now examining all aspects of leadership, the leader, the follower, the context, the levels and the dynamic interaction.
2. An examination of exactly how the process of leadership takes place, integrating the work of cognitive psychology with strategic leadership. There is a greater interest in how the leader and the follower process information.
3. Leadership is being examined with a greater use of mixed methods.

Additional dynamics noted by Avolio et al. (2009), that are particularly important in sales orientated business and sales teams, are that followers are becoming an integral part of the dynamic leadership system. There is growing interest in what genuinely develops leadership. E-Leadership is becoming a commonplace dynamic in organisations as they become more global. Increasingly leadership is being distributed and shared in organisations.

2.4 Leadership styles

Literature regarding leadership styles contains a multitude of competing and complementary theories. To compare one theory with another is well-nigh impossible, due to each containing a multitude of convincing paradigms. To synthesise the literature into a meaningful summary also proves a challenge as some authors focus on traits while other refer predominantly to behaviour, styles or paradigms.

2.4.1 Coercive leadership

Goleman (2000) describes coercive leadership style as one where the leader 'demands immediate compliance'. These leaders control tightly, through close monitoring, relying on negative and corrective feedback as well as attention-getting actions to ensure compliance while stating the negative consequence of non-compliance.

2.4.2 Authoritative leadership

Goleman's (2000) view of this style is that the leader is vibrant, enthusiastic and has a clear vision. This leader mobilises people towards a vision. The authoritative leader frames individual tasks within the overall vision, and frequently gives feedback on performance.

2.4.3 Affiliative leadership

Goleman (2000) describes the affiliative style as focused on creating harmony and building emotional bonds. It promotes friendly interactions and places less emphasis on directives, goals and standards. Affiliative leaders pay attention to and care for 'the whole person', and avoid performance related confrontation.

2.4.4 Pacesetting leadership

According to Goleman (2000), this is a style where high performance standards are set. It is particularly effective style when the leader is after quick results from an already highly motivated and competent team. Leaders adopting this style are apprehensive about delegation without a high level of trust that the subordinate will perform the work to a high standard. Consequently, these leaders have low tolerance and sympathy for poor performance.

2.4.5 Transactional leadership

Popper and Zakkai (1994) refer to this as leadership based on 'exchange relations'. The style is considered suitable for routine situations where anxiety levels are low and there is no threat of crisis or major challenge (Popper & Zakkai, 1994). The 'transaction' refers to the remuneration provided to the followers in return for their effort and compliance.

2.4.6 Democratic leadership

Goleman (2000) refers to this as a style where leaders involve other stakeholders in decision-making. The leader seeks and facilitates consensus, although retaining the right to make the final decision. Democratic leaders demonstrate a high level of trust in the capability of their employees, and rarely give negative feedback. This style can be highly effective in getting buy-in and input from employees.

2.4.7 Laissez-Faire leadership

Eagly Johannesen-Schmidt, and Van Engen (2003) identify laissez-faire leadership as exhibiting a lack of involvement and an absence during critical moments. This allows people to make their own decisions, although the leaders retain overall accountability for the outcome.

2.4.8 Primal leadership

Goleman, Boyatzis and McKee (2001) describe this as a style where the leader's mood and behaviour drives the mood and behaviour of their followers. A leader in a 'bad mood' can create a toxic environment filled with negativity, and in turn, an inspirational leader creates followers who can take on any challenge.

2.4.9 Servant leadership

Servant leadership according to Laub et al. (1999) can be defined as:

> "… an understanding and practise of leadership that places the good of others over the self-interest of the leader. Servant leadership promotes the value and development of people, the building of community, the practise of authenticity, the sharing of power and status for the common good of each individual the total organisation and those served by the organisation" (Laub et al., 1999, p. 12).

2.4.10 Coaching leadership

Goleman (2000) describes this as a style where leadership is about developing people for the future, to help improve performance and develop long-term strengths. These leaders reach agreement with employees regarding their respective roles, and provide ongoing instruction and feedback. Coaching leaders may trade off immediate standards of performance for long-term development.

2.4.11 Authentic leadership

Authentic leadership, is a root construct underlying all positive leadership theories. The basis of this theory is that through increased self-awareness, authentic leaders cultivate the authenticity in those that follow them (Avolio & Gardner, 2005).

> "A process that draws from both positive psychological capacities and highly developed organisational context, which results in both greater self-awareness and self-regulated positive behaviours on the part of leaders and associates, fostering positive self-development" (Avolio, Walumbwa, & Weber, 2009, p. 9).

Avolio et al. (2009) go on to explain that there are four factors that cover the components of authentic leadership: balanced processing, internalised moral perspective, relational transparency and self-awareness.

2.4.12 Situational Leadership

Situational leadership is a balance between leaders' direction to subordinates, effective support to the organisational milieu, and the motivational readiness of subordinates when performing specific tasks. To find a balance between these three factors, the leader must use the appropriate style for the situation. (Ang, 2011) Goleman (2000) suggests that the most effective leaders switch between the leadership styles as and when required.

From the above list of leadership styles, it becomes evident that there are an extensive number of ways in which leaders lead using their preferred leadership styles. No one particular leadership style is claimed to be better than any other, but simply that some leadership styles would be more effective in certain situations than in others. Leaders have the ability to learn to lead more effectively by practising, observing and adjusting their behaviour where necessary.

2.5 The role of leadership

> "A leaders mandate is to establish purpose and clarify the value of the organisation, develop a vision, articulate a strategy, adapt to change, create a community that is committed to the enterprise and its strategy, monitor strategy implementation and develop future leaders" (Allio, 2009, p. 18).

The role of leadership is a hotly contested debate; for the purpose of this research, four key areas that keep occurring in the literature have been chosen.

2.5.1 Adaptive leadership

Heifetz and Laurie (1997) believe the fundamental role in today's organisational environment, because of changes in society, markets, customers and competitors, is to get employees to face 'adaptive challenges'. They describe this as an approach where responsibility for problem solving must shift to the people.

They propose the following list of what 'to do' and what 'not to do':

- Leaders should not create expectations that they will provide answers but they should ask tough questions of their subordinates;
- Instead of protecting people from threats they should allow them to feel the pinch of reality to stimulate adaptation;
- Rather than orientate they should disorientate;
- Instead of resolving issues, they should draw them out;
- Instead of maintaining norms, they should challenge the way business is done.

They should identify values over struggles and power, in so doing recognise patterns of work avoidance, and watch for other functional and dysfunctional reactions to change (Heifetz & Laurie, 1997).

The process that leaders need to follow in order to ensure adaptive change involves identifying the challenge, regulating stress, maintaining disciplined action, giving the work back to people and protecting the voices of leadership from below (Heifetz & Laurie, 1997).

2.5.2 Create a 'climate'

The second key role of leadership that continues to emerge in the literature, supported by Goleman (2000), is the need to create a 'climate' to enable followers to operate at their best. Six key factors determine the climate:

1. Flexibility. How free employees feel to innovate unencumbered by red tape.
2. Employees sense of responsibility towards the organisation.
3. The level of standards that is set.
4. The sense of accuracy about performance feedback and the fairness of rewards.
5. The clarity employees have about mission and values
6. The level of commitment to a common purpose within the organisation.

The style of leadership present affects the climate and the climate in turn affects the results (Goleman, 2000). Goleman (2000) goes further to suggest that a leader should build a team with members who employ a style they themselves lack. In so doing, complementing the leader's natural style and creating a more balanced team. He also maintains that leaders should build on their repertory. To do so they must understand which emotional intelligence competencies underlie the leadership styles they are lacking.

In a sales team, the interpersonal climate or sense of how well the team works together, affects the team's sense of potency (Ahearne, MacKenzie, Podsakoff, Mathieu & Lam, 2009). This 'interpersonal climate' can be defined as:

> "… distinctive patterns of collective beliefs about interpersonal processes which include conflict management, affect management, motivation and confidence building" (Ahearne et al., 2009, p. 11).

Aheame et al. (2009) state that this organisational climate is shaped by the level of organisational support, openness of the organisation, supervisory style, and quality of relationship between members of the organisation.

The level of facilitative leadership is considered to be a key component of determining an organisations climate; these leaders are focused on developing people around them (Robbins & Judge, 1998). In terms of the sales team, there needs to be a focus on adaptive leadership, these leaders need to create to create a 'demand pull' in which people in the organisation want to learn, in this way abandoning the role of expert and acting rather as a coach (Ahearne et al., 2009).

2.5.3 Emotional leadership

In Goleman Boyatzis, and McKee's. (2001) article titled 'Primal leadership: the hidden driver of great performance', they describe emotional leadership as "the spark that ignites a company's performance, creating a bonfire of success or a landscape of ashes" (Goleman, et al., 2001, p. 51).

Emotional leadership is considered a key element in the role of leadership. The leader's mood and behaviour drives the mood and behaviour of everyone else in the organisation, which in turn plays a role in performance (Goleman et al., 2001). The leader's mood is contagious, spreading quickly and inexorably throughout the business (Goleman et al., 2001). Goleman (2000) goes so far as to say that if mood and accompanying behaviour of leaders are such critical drivers of business success, then emotional leadership is a leader's key task. Leaders need to ensure that they are regularly optimistic, authentic, have high energy levels and that through their actions followers feel and act in that way as well. Leaders whose emotional style creates a dysfunctional environment are often inevitably fired, the reason being poor results (Goleman et al., 2001).

Emotionally intelligent leaders monitor their own mood through self-awareness, and changes them for the better through self-management. They understand their pact through empathy, and act in ways that boosts others moods through relational management (Goleman et al., 2001). The most effective executives display moods and behaviours that match the situation at hand with a healthy dose of optimism mixed in (Goleman et al., 2001).

2.5.4 Leadership Pipeline

A further role of leadership supported by Conger and Fulmer (2003) is that of creating a leadership pipeline. A leader who is familiar with the skills, time applications and work values demanded by each passage, will assist in not only making their own leadership transition easier, but also have the ability to unclog their organisations leadership pipeline and facilitate growth of leadership from within (Charan, Drotter, & Noel, 2011). The six levels outlined are:

1. Managing self to managing others.
2. Managing others to managing managers.
3. Managing managers to functional managers.
4. Functional managers to business managers.
5. Business manager to group manager.
6. Group manager to enterprise manager.

It is the leaders responsibility in the senior position to develop and coach the next level of leadership to facilitate succession planning, development and selection processes in the organisation (Conger & Fulmer, 2003).

2.5.5 Establishing trust as a leader

Covey (2009) states that the ability to establish, grow, extend and when necessary, restore trust among stakeholders is a critical competency required of leadership. Being an effective leader is not possible without trust. The best leaders build trust through character and competence. Character includes integrity, motive and intent with people. Competence includes capability, skills, results and track record (Covey, 2009).

In sales teams it is the leader's role to facilitate trust among members (Ahearne et al., 2009), as well as to empower the sales team members. Ahearne et al. (2005) suggest that these leadership behaviours are the following:

1. Encouraging autonomy.
2. Fostering participation in decision making.
3. Expressing confidence in the performance of followers.
4. Enhancing the meaningfulness of work.

It is evident that sales leadership effectiveness is directly linked to that of the follower. Logic suggests that due to the very nature of sales leadership and the large numbers of followers each sales manager often has, a review of the follower's role is appropriate.

2.6 Followers

According to Kouzes and Posner (1990) leadership is not only about leaders, it is also about followers. Leadership is a reciprocal process as it occurs between people. They believe that successful leadership depends far more on follower's perceptions of the leader's abilities than upon the leaders own perceptions (Kouzes & Posner, 1990). Their statement of "leadership is won when people believe that the leader is capable of meeting their needs" (Kouzes & Posner,

1990, p. 8) supports this. They suggest that the majority of people admire and look for leaders who are:

1. *Honest, truthful, ethical and principled.* If a leader behaves in a way that is consistent with their stated values and beliefs, then followers believe they can entrust to that person their careers, their security and even their lives.
2. *Competent.* Followers need to believe that that person is capable and effective. Having a winning track record is the surest way to be considered competent. Leaders need to have the ability to challenge, inspire, enable and encourage if they are to be viewed as competent by followers.
3. *Forward looking.* Followers expect leaders to have a sense of direction and a concern for the future of the company.
4. *Inspiring.* Leaders are expected to be enthusiastic, energetic and positive about the future and they need to be capable of communicating a vision that encourages us to sign up for "follow-ship".

Kouzes and Posner (1990) go on to say that, these four characteristics combined offer insight into the foundation of leadership from the constituent's perspective.

Experts refer to this as 'credibility'. It is evident that more than anything else followers want to be led by leaders who are credible. They describe leadership as a unique and special bond between leader and constituents. They state that as a leader, one needs to know one's constituents, stand up for one's beliefs, speak with passion, lead by example, and have self-confidence (Kouzes & Posner, 1990).

2.7 Difference between leadership and management

Kotter (2001) describes the difference as follows:

> "Leadership complements management; it does not replace it. Both are necessary for success in an increasingly complex and volatile business environment" (Kotter, 2001, p. 103).

Nicholls (1994) defines management as “getting things done through others to meet the challenges of the complex and changing business environment.”

Management is about coping with complexity, and it is largely a response to one of the most significant developments of the twentieth century, the large organisation (Kotter, 2001). It brings a degree of order and consistency to key dimensions like quality and product profitability.

Leadership in contrast is about coping with change. In a world where business has become more competitive and volatile, and change is on the rise, the demand for leadership has increased (Kotter, 2001). These two elements - complexity and change, shape the activities of management and leadership. Kotter (2001) goes on to describe leadership and management as two distinctly and complementary systems of action. Each has its own functional and characteristic activities. Managers promote stability while leaders press for change, only organisations that embrace both sides of that contradiction can manage in turbulent times.

There is strong evidence in literature to suggest that there is a need for leadership skill within management. In support, Nicholls (1993) states strategic and supervisory leadership are both essential activities of effective management. He maintains that if organisations lack leadership, then its’ managers are neglecting their leadership responsibilities Strategic and supervisory leadership are the managerial aspects of leadership that are inherent in any manager’s position. Nicholls suggests that managers who neglect their strategic leadership role or fail to adapt their supervisory leadership style are no more than administrators.

2.8 What constitutes effective leadership?

It is clear from the literature review thus far, that there are varying views on what constitutes effective leadership. The wide spectrum of theories, styles and ultimately the role of leadership leave an opportunity for an element of interpretation that must be made in determining, within their own specific situation, what would constitute effective leadership. Following is an attempt to understand

what constitutes effective leadership within the sales functions of consumer driven businesses within South Africa.

Kotter (1988) concludes that effective leadership is the creation of an agenda for change, and the building of a strong implementation network. The agenda for change should include a strong vision of the long-term interest of the parties involved, and a comprehensive strategy for achieving this vision.

The implementation network should comprise a highly motivated group of people committed to making the vision reality. Kotter (1988) suggests that leaders should have sufficiently strong relationships to ensure compliance. They need to be credible and have behind them an impressive track record and reputation. Interpersonal skills and integrity assist a leader in developing broad relationships with stakeholders (Kotter, 1988).

Goleman (2000) states that the leader's singular job is to obtain results and in achieving those results is considered effective. Furthermore, he states that leaders who have mastered four or more styles, (especially authoritative, democratic, affiliative, and coaching) tend to be able to get the best results, and as such, he considers them the most effective. The application of 'situational leadership', where a leader switches between styles and creates the best working 'climate' for employees to perform at their best (Goleman, 2000).

Kouzes and Posner (1998) state that to be effective, a leader must be able to do the following:

- Challenge the process, and constantly question why things are being done in a certain way, combined with the openness to have their own actions challenged. These elements refer to the supervisory element of leadership, which we will explore later in the Hands portion of the Head, Heart and Hands model;
- Inspire a shared vision, in so doing engage others with a vision of how things can be and how progress may be made. This is the strategic leadership element, otherwise referred to as the Head portion of the Head, Heart and Hands model;

- Enable others to act and work in the belief of the potential of other people, while creating the conditions to enable people to realise their full potential. This is done by modelling the way; acting as a role model; demonstrating integrity in terms of congruence of words and actions and providing recognition tailored to an understanding of the needs and personalities of each person. This is the inspirational element of leadership otherwise known as the Heart portion of the Head, Heart and Hands model.

Higgs (2003) offers a potential model of effective leadership; he breaks it down into two areas:

1. *Skill and competence:*
    - Envision a clear future picture, which informs the way in which people direct their efforts and utilise their skills;
    - Engage, and find appropriate ways for each individual to understand the vision and know how they can contribute;
    - Enable and act in the belief of the talent and potential of individuals, and create an environment in which they can be released;
    - Inquire and remain open to real dialogue with those involved in the organisation and encourage free and frank debate on all issues; and
    - Develop people to build their capabilities and help them make an envisioned contribution.

2. *Personal characteristics:*
    - Authenticity, being genuine and not playing a role;
    - Integrity, being constant in what you say and do;
    - Willingness, to lead and persistence in working towards a goal;
    - Self-belief, a realistic evaluation of their capabilities and belief that you can achieve the organisational goals; and
    - Self-awareness, a realistic understanding of 'who you are'.

An area of interest that surfaces through the literature review is the reference to the fact that effective leaders are not necessarily people of merit or of good intentions (Kellerman, 2004) – consider Hitler. Kellerman (2004) goes further to

remind us that leadership is not a moral concept. He suggests that leaders are a mix of trustworthy and deceitful, cowardly and brave, greedy and generous individuals. The lack of acknowledgment that not all leaders are good people is to be willingly blind to the reality of human conditions and can severely limit our scope for becoming effective leaders (Kellerman, 2004, p. 8). “Capricious, murderous, high-handed, corrupt and evil leaders are effective and everywhere” (Kellerman, 2004, p. 8).

Kotter (1988) uses Lee Iacocca as an example of effective leadership. Iacocca took over leadership of Chrysler in the 1980’s and managed to transform the business through two effective leadership mechanisms:

- Creating a bold vision for the future saw the firm producing high quality products and becoming both competitive and profitable. His vision included all stakeholders in the business and focused on improving the interest of those groups;
- Successfully attracting and maintaining cooperation and teamwork from a network of people who were needed to help accomplish the vision. Kotter (1988) believes that Iacocca accomplished this through articulating his agenda in emotionally powerful ways; by appealing to the goals they all shared. He used his personal selling skills to maintain momentum on building the vision through his inspirational communication techniques.

Consensus on what defines effective leadership is far from being reached by scholars. However, what is common throughout different models is that a leader’s role is to get followers performing tasks assigned to them – ‘getting results’. Hence, effective leadership is about getting followers performing these tasks to the best of their abilities (Fiedler & Chemers, 1974). Fiedler and Chemers (1974) summarise the definition for effective leadership as being “how successful tasks assigned to a group, under the guidance of a leader are performed” (p. 18).

It can be noted that scholars are not debating what leaders have to achieve but rather ‘how’ they go about achieving it effectively. That is, the different models and different methods used in achieving the leadership task. Some researchers

advocate that different situations need different leadership styles and approaches. How to lead effectively depends on the organisations' culture and values, the behaviour of the followers, the personal traits of the leader, the strategy to be implemented and the resources available for the task, the urgency of the challenge and the externalities facing the organisation (Allio, 2009).

Deeter-Schmelz, Groebel and Kennedy (2008) give a clear breakdown through their own research of what attributes are desirable for a sales manager leading a sales team, suggesting that the following attributes will create a climate in which sales people can operate more efficiently thereby making the leader more effective:

1. *Communication and listening skills*, the manager has the ability to listen and communicate effectively.
2. *Human relation skills*, works with people effectively and develops personal rapport with sales force members.
3. *Organisation and time management skills*, ability to organise and manage their own time and work activities.
4. *Knowledge possession*, about the industry, the product and the business in general.
5. *Coaching skills*, helping members to improve their selling skills.
6. *Motivational skills*, recognising motivating factors and rewarding good performance.
7. *Honest and ethical tendencies*, perceived as truthful, straight forward and ethical.
8. *Selling skills*, the manager has sales experience.
9. *Leadership skills,* in terms of encouraging and inspiring.
10. *Willingness to empower*, allows members to take responsibility and action.
11. *Adaptability*, to a variety of situations.

These skills result in a set of consequences which result in a more supportive environment in which sales representatives are more likely to succeed (Deeter-Schmelz, Goebel, & Kennedy, 2008):

1. *Positive morale*, the workplace is a positive environment and exhibits positive morale.
2. *Open communication*, with the manager who is supportive.
3. *Role model*, the manager is seen as a role model for the sales representatives.
4. *Confidence and trust*, the manager instils confidence in and develops trust with sales force members.
5. *Clear expectations*, the sales representatives have a clear understanding of their roles and what is expected of them.
6. *Manager reputation*, how the manager is perceived by others.
7. *Sales person development*, the selling skills and abilities of the sales representatives developed.
8. *Greater effort*, individual team members have the willingness to work harder.
9. *Effective feedback*, from manager to sales representative, and from sales representative to manager.
10. *Recognition of individuality*, the manager recognises and deals effectively with the varying traits of individual sales team members.

To be effective, the sales manager role is far more a coach and communicator than a commander and score keeper (Piercy, Cravens, & Morgan, 1997).

2.9 Leadership Summary

In summary, it seems that effective leadership involves the ability to initiate change, and to motivate others to embrace and work towards that change. To achieve this, the leader must provide an inspiring and clear vision of the potential future state of the organisation. To be an effective motivator, the vision should take in to account the legitimate long term interests of the followers, and should include a comprehensive strategy on achieving the vision (Kotter, 1988).

Communicating the vision and organisational alignment are necessary for the realisation of a vision. The style of communication has a significant effect on the impact of the vision (Kantabutra & Avery, 2011). For optimum results

communication should be clear and consistent and should inspire people through creating a shared vision which is both future orientated and challenging (Baum, Locke, & Kirkpatrick, 1998).

Kotter (1988) states that it is not enough for leaders to create an inspiring vision, they need to have the ability to influence others and create organisational alignment. Influence involves affecting the behaviours, thoughts and feelings of others (Gardner & Laskin, 2011), this points to the underlying emotional connection that occurs between leaders and followers in the process of influence. This can be achieved if the leader has, among other things, built a strong implementation network (Gardner & Laskin, 2011). Besides having good communication and interpersonal skills, followers must see their leader as possessing integrity and leading by example (Kotter, 1988).

Leadership theories differ in their explanations of the factors that contribute towards leadership efficacy. Trait theory offers some evidence that traits such as intelligence and self-confidence contribute to effective leadership (Robbins & Judge, 1998). Behavioural theory suggests that a participative leadership style results in high satisfaction levels among staff (Robbins & Judge, 1998). If followers trust and respect their leader, the leaders style tends towards a participative role, in which the leader provides a communicative and facilitative role, sharing in the decision making (Robbins & Judge, 1998).

Attribution theory provides an explanation for leadership efficacy through their assertion that followers make attributions about leaders based on their perception of traits such as intelligence, verbal skills and industriousness (Robbins & Judge, 1998). The charismatic leader can by means of his personal or social abilities, inspire followers to transcend their own self interests in pursuit of the goals of the organisation (Robbins & Judge, 1998). Charismatic leadership traits defined as social sensitivity and persuasive personality traits were found to influence subordinate commitment (Hwang, Khatri, & Srinivas, 2005).

It is evident that there are many leadership theories and styles. However, it is important to note is that behaviours are constructive and not simply theory, as

such the Head, Heart and Hands framework helps leaders to understand what they 'do', identifying actions and behaviours that can be focused on in order to become an effective leader within the sales functions of consumer driven businesses.

2.10 Head, Heart and Hands Leadership

Nicholls (1994) holds that there are three different aspects of leadership behaviour, supervisory, strategic and inspirational. He maintains that the common thread in leadership is the effect the leader has on people. The only difference between the Head (strategic), Heart (inspirational) and Hands (supervisory) portions of the model is the attention and the focus of each.

2.10.1 Head – Strategic leadership

Nicholls (1994) suggests that strategic leadership is the job of the Head of the organisation, and as such, its focus is on the organisation. The principle components of strategic leadership are path finding and culture building. Through path finding, the leader relates the organisation to the business environment and through culture building; people are drawn into membership of the organisation. The leadership role is to determine where the organisation is headed and what sort of organisation it wants to be.

He goes on to say that, managers have a strategic role to play in their specific areas. In performing a strategic leadership role they use their heads to ensure effectiveness of their respective units by doing the right things (Nicholls, 1994).

2.10.2 Heart – Inspirational leadership

The distinguishing feature of inspirational leadership according to Nichols (1994), is that it never resorts to the use of coercive power or authority. It focuses on people's personal beliefs and feelings, and energises enthusiastic followers. In doing so, it affects people's personal beliefs by clarifying understanding and

encouraging alignment. He suggests that leaders do this by generating a compelling vision that changes the way people look at the world around them.

The vision also changes the way people relate to each other and as such draws people together to become a purposeful group. Anyone with strong clear ideas and sufficient determination can become an inspirational leader. They require no formal position or access to coercive power or authority (Nicholls, 1994). Kotter (2001) views inspirational leadership relative to its ability to inspire change. He says that since change is the function of leadership, being able to generate highly energised behaviour is important for coping with the inevitable barriers to change.

Inspirational leadership, according to Kotter (2001), is characterised by the leaders ability to motivate and inspire. People are energised and not simply pushed in the correct direction by use of control mechanisms. Their basic human need for achievement is satisfied. Inspirational leadership generates a sense of belonging, recognition, self-esteem, a feeling of control over one's life, and the ability to live up to one's ideals. Such feelings touch people deeply, and elicit a powerful response (Kotter, 2001).

Kotter (2001) suggests that good leaders motivate people in a variety of ways. Firstly, they articulate the organisations vision in a manner that stresses the values of the audience they are addressing. Secondly, they support employees to realise the vision by providing coaching, feedback and role modelling, and in doing so helping people grow professionally and improving their self-esteem. Lastly, they recognise and reward success, giving people a sense of accomplishment and making them feel as though they belong to an organisation that cares about them (Kotter, 2001).

Emotional intelligence plays an integral part in the leader's ability to motivate and inspire. It is defined by Goleman (2010) as:

> "… the capacity to recognise our own feelings and those of others, for motivating ourselves, and for managing emotions well in ourselves and in our relationships" (Goleman, 2010, p. 3).

Emotional intelligence according to Goleman (2010) involves the capacity to reason about emotions and of emotions to enhance thinking skills.

Mayer, Salovey and Caruso (2008) describe an emotional intelligent leader as one who can accurately perceive, access and generate emotions so as to assist thought, understand emotions and emotional knowledge, and reflectively regulate emotions so as to promote emotional and intellectual growth (Mayer, Salovey & Caruso, 2008).

Leaders can energise employees in a multitude of ways. Goleman et al. (2001) suggests that good leaders can assess, within the first few minutes of conversation, that a talented but underperforming employee may have been demoralised by an unsympathetic, do-it-the-way-I-tell-you manager, and that the employee needs to be inspired through a reminder of why their work matters. A leader may choose to re-energise the employee by asking about their dreams and aspirations and finding ways to make their job more challenging (Goleman, 2000).

Goleman's (2000, 2010) view is that there are four key competencies that leaders need in order to be considered emotionally intelligent leaders:

- *Self-awareness*, ability to read your own emotions;
- *Self-management*, the ability to control your emotions and act with honesty and integrity in reliable and adaptable ways;
- *Social awareness*, key capabilities of empathy and organisational intuition;
- *Relationship management*, the ability to communicate clearly and convincingly, disarm conflicts and build strong personal bonds.

While Higgs (2003) agrees with Goleman, they have added some additional competencies:

- *Emotional resilience*, the ability to perform well and consistently in a range of situations and when under pressure;
- *Motivation*, the drive and energy to achieve results, and pursue goals in the face of challenge and rejection;

- *Influence*, the ability to persuade others to change their viewpoint on a problem, issue or decision;
- *Intuitiveness*, the ability to use insight;
- *Conscientiousness and integrity*, the ability to display commitment to a course of action in the face of challenge, to act in line with understood ethical requirements.

It can be deduced that emotional intelligence plays a role in creating leader effectiveness. This is supported by Goleman (2004) where he states that the effective leader is distinguished by a high degree of emotional intelligence. He goes on to clarify that it is not that IQ and technical skills are irrelevant, but should be seen predominantly as 'threshold capabilities' (Goleman, 2004). This was supported by his competency model study of 188 companies. In this study his findings indicated that the higher the rank of a star performer, the more emotional intelligence capabilities they showed (Goleman, 2004). Goleman (2004) believes that emotional intelligence can be linked to strong performance and there is a direct link between emotional intelligence of a company's leaders and its financial success. Selection of high level executives on their academic intelligence and business expertise, while ignoring their emotional intelligence, often leads to poor choices that can be disastrous for an organisation (Goleman, 2010). In general the higher a position is in the organisation the more important emotional intelligence becomes (Goleman, 2010).

It seems that to inspire and motivate, the emotional intelligence of the leader plays a pivotal role.

Authenticity of the leader also seems to be important. Followers however considered the most important characteristic of the leaders they follow to be credibility (Kouzes & Posner, 1990).

The need for an authentic leadership style is critical for follower confidence. This authenticity allows for followers to be motivated and energised into action (George et al., 2007). George et al. (2007) believe that superior results over a sustained period of time are the ultimate mark of an authentic leader in action.

2.10.3 Hands – Supervisory leadership

Supervisory leadership could be described as the action a leader takes to ensure the execution of the strategy. Management still exercises a hands-on supervisory leadership approach in order to ensure execution of the strategy (Nicholls, 1994). To do this effectively, managers adjust their leadership style to match or be congruent with the capability of their subordinates (Nicholls, 1994). Capability has two components, namely, competence or ability and commitment or willingness. (Nicholls, 1994).

It seems as though alignment of people in the organisation is a consequence of creating the vision and communicating it effectively throughout the organisation. Alignment empowers people in two ways; firstly, when a clear sense of direction has been communicated throughout the organisation, lower level employees can initiate actions without the same degree of vulnerability. Secondly, if everyone is aiming at the same target, the problem is less than one person's initiative when it comes into conflict with another (Kotter, 2001). Therefore, it can be deduced that alignment in an organisation goes a long way to ensuring compliance in executing strategy, with the manager playing a supervisory role.

In summary, it seems the common thread running through all three of these aspects of leadership is that they modify the relationship between people and the environment. The difference being simply the focus of each (Nicholls, 1994). Inspirational leadership focuses on people's personal beliefs to create enthusiastic followers. Strategic leadership focuses on an organisational unit to create an effective entity. Supervisory leadership focuses on a specific situation to provide efficient performance (Nicholls, 1994).

2.10.4 Working definition of Head, Heart and Hands

That activity which stimulates purposeful activity in people, individually or collectively, by changing the way they look at the world around them and how they relate to one another (Nicholls, 1994).

2.11 Consumer driven business

Guiltinan et al. (1997) describe the consumer-driven approach as:

> "… one where the consumer wants are the drivers of all strategic marketing decisions. No strategy is pursued until it passes the test of consumer research. Every aspect of a market offering, including the nature of the product itself, is driven by the needs of potential consumers. The starting point is always the consumer. The rationale for this approach is that there is no reason to spend research and development funds developing products that people will not buy. History attests to many products that were commercial failures in spite of being technological breakthroughs" (Guiltinan et al., 1997, p. 67).

It is common knowledge that over the past few years the living costs of South Africans have drastically increased. Food prices have significantly increased on almost every basic food commodity, and at the same time the cost of electricity and water has more than doubled in some municipalities. While the global recession is over, the impact is still being felt and countries are slow to recover. As with many consumers globally, South Africans are still experiencing the effects of the recession and are curbing their spending, concentrating on staples and neglecting non-essential consumer goods (ThinkSales, 2012).

The prices of commodities have climbed steadily, and consumers have been seeking long lasting solutions to the soaring cost of living. With unemployment in South Africa at 26 per cent, the growth of the economy is expected to continue to challenge South African's lives. There are grave concerns that if employment opportunities do not increase significantly, economic growth in South Africa will be constrained (ThinkSales, 2012).

Thus, it is clear that leadership in sales functions in consumer led industries in South Africa is vitally important to the sustainability of business. Key players in this industry are companies such as KFC, Famous Brands, Unilever, SAB, Tiger Brands, Danone, Coca Cola, Brand House, Pick and Pay, Spar Group, Shoprite,

Distell, Rainbow, McCain, Kimberley Clark, Johnson and Johnson, Kraft, Nestle, Cadbury, Proctor and Gamble, McDonald's and Simba (ThinkSales, 2012).

Sales leadership is one of the most complex and demanding of all executive positions. The sales leader is not only responsible for top-line growth but also for disciplined sales processes, organisational architecture, scenario planning, motivating and managing the sales team, while simultaneously being the ultimate customer champion. Unlike business administrators, marketing managers and financial directors, there is no tertiary education path that a sales practitioner can follow to qualify for the job. Sales leaders often land their positions by being the best sales executive. Their expertise is learned on-the-job while working their way up the ranks, receiving sporadic training and labouring under other sales managers, who have followed the same career path. Further compounding this difference is the fact that there is no universal consensus on a set of standards or duties to characterise the sales leader's job description (ThinkSales, 2012).

2.12 Conclusion

In understanding the nature of the environment in which businesses operate, it becomes evident that there are critical issues facing business today that have an impact on leadership within those organisations. The need to ensure effective leadership in the sales functions of those organisations is critical to their survival in an ever increasingly complex, highly competitive business environment (Alimo-Metcalfe, 1995;Connor, 1998; Kotter, 2001).

Effective leadership entails initiating change and setting a bold vision for the organisation. Leaders need to reshape their followers perception of reality (Kotter, 2001). Influence can be achieved through a number of factors. The key element is considered to be 'leader credibility' (Kouzes & Posner, 1990).

To reiterate, the role of leadership remains a topic of debate, and various authors have differing views on the key role of leadership, although some common ground is observed.

This research project will attempt to identify those key behaviours, within the context of the Head, Heart and Hands framework, which lead to effective leadership in sales functions of consumer led industries in South Africa.

2.13 Research question

What are the key behaviours that determine effective leadership in the sales function in terms of the Head, Heart and Hands model (Nicolls, 1994) of leadership?

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research objective was to identify what business leaders consider the key behaviours that determine effective leadership in the sales function of consumer driven business in South Africa.

Since the research was exploratory in nature and aimed to develop a view of multiple leaders within the same industry, rendering this information valuable for chief executive officers, boards of directors, senior executives, senior management and other company stakeholders, a qualitative approach was deemed suitable, as it was particularly concerned with understanding multiple perspectives of different individuals (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005; Williams, 2011).

3.1 Research methodology / paradigm

Qualitative research is particularly suited to research that is exploratory in nature (Creswell, 2009). This approach is supported by the findings of Leedy and Ormrod (2005) in that qualitative research studies typically suit the following purposes, which mirror the purpose of this research:

- To reveal the characteristics or qualities of people, processes, relationships, systems, and even situations;
- To allow the researcher to:
  - gain new insights in respect of the phenomenon being studied;
  - develop new concepts about a phenomenon; and/or
  - ascertain the problems that exist within a phenomenon;
- To allow the researcher to test the validity of certain claims, theories or generalisations;
- To enable a researcher to evaluate the effectiveness of certain policies, practices or innovations.

3.2 Research Design

The methodological approach proposed was that of a critical incident method in interview format to solicit views of behaviours from interviewees. The intention was to develop an understanding of respondents' views of the key behaviours that determines effective leadership in the sales function.

It was envisaged that 16 interviews with sales directors of South African companies would take place, with each interview being recorded and the results transcribed.

An interview guide was devised. The critical incident interview technique provides an opportunity for participants to openly share and specify their understanding of the key behaviours that determine effective leadership in the sales function of consumer driven business in South Africa. The conversations were led by the respondents in an attempt to mitigate potential concerns with regard to corrupted data as a result of researchers pursuing their own agendas.

Nonetheless, interviews suffer from a number of limitations, including inequalities in perceptions and the ability of respondents to articulate themselves, researcher presence biasing responses, location, and the provision of 'indirect' information by respondents (Collis et al., 2003; Creswell, 2009).

3.3 Population and sample

3.3.1 Population

The population for this research included sales directors of both listed and unlisted companies operating in the consumer goods industry in South Africa that have more than one hundred sales employees. There were no limitations as to age, race, gender, education background and previous work experience. However, it was necessary that members of the interviewee group were either currently employed as sales directors (or equivalent) or had in the past five years filled such a position for a period of greater than six months.

3.3.2 Sample and sampling method

A sample of 16 sales directors from the population was drawn. Significant effort was made to include sales directors from all population groups and both genders. A list of potential respondents is provided in Table 1.

The sales directors included in the sample are all based in companies with country headquarters in Gauteng, Cape Town or Kwazulu Natal.

Convenience sampling, as opposed to random sampling, was employed as ease of access to potential respondents was important (Creswell, 2003).

Table 1: List of potential respondents

Number	Respondent	Company
1	Brendon Kneightly	BrandInTrade
2	Michael Cathie	EAG
3	Jimmy Botes	Clover
4	Marc Eyres	Smollens
5	Lillian Henderson	Mars Confectionary
6	Daniel Lombard	Simba
7	Mauricio Maza	Coca Cola
8	Dennis Mhangame	HoofPace Trading
9	Mahen Naidoo	Tiger Brands
10	Simone Perry	Pick and Pay
11	Jason Livesey	Rainbow
12	John Seymour	Lodestone Brands
13	Andre Burger	Unilever
14	Louis Opperman	Red Bull

Number	Respondent	Company
15	Eric Brown	Ingenuity Unlimited
16	Gert Scheepers	ICC Group
17	Justin Howard	NBA
18	Cliff Samson	Foodcorp
19	Paul Carolin	Sanofi
20	Christo Fousche	GSK
21	Ken Allan	Brandhouse
22	Geoff Whyte	Richmark Holdings

3.4 The research instrument

The interview commenced with a formal introduction of the researcher as well as a brief background to the research and its objectives. The respondent was then allowed to freely discuss the topic and provide a response to a few over-arching critical incident based questions as to what they believe are the key behaviours that determine effective leadership in the framework provided. Where deemed appropriate the researcher employed a few specific probing questions to garner a deeper understanding of a certain perspective of the respondent; or in instances when the respondent did not provide sufficient information on a specific viewpoint.

A sample of the research instrument is included at Appendix A.

3.5 Procedure for data collection

Initially, potential respondents were contacted by telephone, informed of the research and invited to participate in an interview. At this time, the potential respondent was informed of the purpose of the study, subjects to be covered and the research process, including the expected duration of the interview.

An outline of the research and its objectives was sent to the potential respondent for attention and acceptance in the form of a letter. A sample of which can be found at Appendix B.

Upon acceptance or refusal from the respondent, either verbally or electronically, electronic correspondence was sent thanking the respondent for their reply. In instances where respondents accepted the invitation to participate in the interview, the correspondence included appreciation for their willingness to participate in the study and confirmed the place, date and time of the interview.

Each respondent was offered a copy of the research report, thus providing an incentive for participating in the research. Importantly, respondents confirmed their agreement to their responses remaining anonymous and confidential.

The interviews took place at the respondent's offices. This was the most convenient for the respondent and the familiarity of the location ensured that the respondent felt more at ease in talking to the researcher. Upon consent of the individual respondent, each interview was recorded, notwithstanding the potential risk of respondents' becoming alarmed or self-conscious at the prospect of being recorded (Bryman & Teevan, 2004). In addition, handwritten notes were taken during the interview.

Upon returning from the interview, the recording was transcribed and the written notes expanded on. The interview transcriptions and written notes will not be included in the research report, but will be safely stored with the interview recordings as a reference, should there be the need to refer to them for whatsoever reason.

The mere presence of the researcher could affect, the respondent's responses in some way rendering them different from the exact response the respondent wished to provide (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005). During the interview therefore, every effort was made not to lead the respondent in their response, and to facilitate an open discussion around the research questions.

3.6 Data analysis and interpretation

The data analysis technique is a themed content analysis. A thematic analysis closely resembles content analysis in which common and recurring themes are sought and identified in the data (Burns, 2000). Leedy and Ormrod (2005) define content analysis as:

> "... a detailed and systematic examination of the contents of a particular body of material for the purposes of identifying patterns, themes or biases" (p. 142).

In this instance, the content analysis was based on the information gathered during the interviews.

All information was analysed and the audiotapes of the interviews were reviewed in their entirety, and used to expand on the handwritten notes. The interview recording was transcribed and these transcriptions formed the basis of the information from which the analysis was conducted. The key factors and/or themes from the interviews were then identified and tabulated.

The data from all the interviews was then integrated into one document and the frequency of each factor and/or theme was tabulated. Unusual responses, which may signify differing views, were also specifically noted. This process highlighted common themes and factors identified across all respondents, and enabled an interpretation of the results leading to the development of a deep understanding of the issues. No other quantitative analysis or statistical technique was conducted on the results.

Throughout the data analysis and interpretation process, the results were criticaly reviewed with due reference to the literature.

3.7 Limitations of the research

The research conducted faced a number of potential limitations. These included:

- The research was exploratory in nature and only a limited number of respondents were interviewed;
- The respondents, who agreed to be interviewed, were different from those who were not available or not prepared to be interviewed;
- *Single researcher bias*. The methodology was limited by and to the researcher's abilities, integrity and sensitivity, and results may therefore be open to misinterpretation, whether intended or accidental (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005). Strict procedures and a standard protocol was adopted in order to minimise and overcome this limitation.

3.8 Validity and reliability

Every study must address threats to validity and reliability (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005).

Validity refers to the ability of the measurement instrument, which in this instance is the structured interview schedule, to measure what it is intended to measure (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005): whereas reliability refers to the extent to which a measurement procedure provides the same answer whenever and however it is conducted (Kirk & Miller, 1986).

Validity and reliability of research are critical elements as they provide an understanding of the quality of the research and the extent to which the findings from the research can be relied upon.

Leedy and Ormrod (2005) provide a list of nine general criteria, based on significant prior research by a number of academics, for evaluating qualitative research. These include:

- Purposefulness;
- Explicitness of assumptions and biases;
- Rigor;
- Open-mindedness;
- Completeness;

- Coherence;
- Persuasiveness;
- Consensus; and
- Usefulness.

3.8.1 External validity

External validity relates to the extent to which the results of research conducted are applicable to situations beyond the immediate research and can be generalised to other contexts (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005; Yin, 2009).

Since the research that was conducted encompassed responses from a limited number of respondents who were not randomly selected, it is not possible to generalise findings, but it may be that the findings from the research will be of value and applicable to other sales directors in South Africa.

3.8.2 Internal validity

Internal validity relates to the extent to which the research design and data results enable the researcher to draw accurate conclusions about cause and effect and other relationships within the data (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005).

In order to enhance internal validity and ensure that the findings of the research are congruent with reality, the concept of triangulation was considered. Since, for the purposes and scope of this research, multiple sources of data cannot be obtained, the concept cannot be implemented. Nonetheless, it must be noted that the source of the data involves 16 individuals that are all independent of each other.

In the case of the research conducted, the data is only valid provided the interview was conducted in a manner where the respondent was not influenced or led in any direction by the researcher, and was free to provide and make comments as he or she wished. It is for this reason that the interview was conducted at the premises of the respondent. It is also the duty of the researcher to be objective in

the analysis of the data, and in the interview technique. The objective was for the researcher to conduct the interview in a neutral manner and not lead the respondent to answer in a specific manner.

3.8.3 Reliability

Leedy and Ormrod (2005) define reliability as: “the consistency with which a measuring instrument yields a certain result when the entity being measured has not changed” (p. 99). It is therefore the ability of a measurement instrument to provide the same answer whenever and however research is conducted (Kirk & Miller 1986). A research instrument is reliable to the extent that it measures whatever it is measuring consistently.

In order to increase the reliability of the research, all interviews were conducted in person by the researcher. An attempt to maintain consistency in approach was made by utilising the same interview structure and interview questions. To ensure reliability the data collection was approached in a systematic manner.

CHAPTER 4: PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF RESULTS

4.1 Introduction

The presentation of results chapter and the discussion of results chapter have been combined in order to avoid repetition.

This chapter presents and identifies the themes and categories within themes shared by the respondents within the Head, Heart and Hands framework as presented in the literature review. The Head, Heart and Hands framework was chosen as it provides a suitable categorisation to present the findings and it focuses specifically on behaviour and as such what leaders 'do' to be effective. Note that interviewed candidates' names have been withheld at their requests as anonymity was agreed to.

A research question was derived from the literature review, against which the research was conducted, in order to identify the behaviour of effective leaders within the sales functions of consumer driven businesses within South Africa. A total of 16 interviews were conducted on a face-to-face basis, the critical incident method used to prompt behaviour related responses of these leaders.

The findings have been presented within the Head, Heart and Hands framework (Nicolls, 1994) by theme, category and where applicable specific incidents.

In order to determine the factors perceived to be the most important, respondents were asked to select their most important behaviour of an effective leader. These specific chosen behaviours will be shared outside of the general findings in a separate section.

4.2 Behaviours of effective leadership within the Head category

Strategic leadership (Head category) is primarily concerned with the 'thinking' that a leader has to do to provide strategic direction in the sales functions of consumer

driven businesses (Nicolls, 1994). The main themes that emerged from the interviews were scanning the environment, strategy and capability.

4.2.1 Head: Scanning the environment

In order to inform the strategy, leaders need to assess the sales function in its entirety and in order to do so they require certain information, which is collected through various channels. This information and data collection takes two forms and is available from both internal and external sources.

> "It's just going through the basics really, I engage with internal and external people, talk to them in formal and informal settings, walk through the trade, talk to customers and consumers. See what competitors are offering on line, in store, how they service customers and it informs my thinking about what we as a sales function could be doing strategically to take advantage of the market and counter our competitors." (Respondent 12)

Effective leaders do this through a process of 'immersion' into the sales function These are actions such as trade visits with sales people, one-on-one discussions in the office, informal discussions in and around the office over tea, or even lunch.(Respondent 6.9.13)

As described by Respondent 5, he suggested that "you need to get your hands very dirty, very quickly". By getting your hands dirty quickly, you get the information you need to inform the strategy and guide the sales function in the direction it needs to be going.

Respondent 3 said,

> "This is not a monologue; this has to be a dialogue. I talk to all stakeholders in the sales function through formal discussions, informal discussion, nothing like a bit of 'corridor chat' with a sales guy to get some valuable information".

The purpose it seems of collecting this information is to provide the leader with the information they would need to do the thinking about making an informed decision around the direction in which to take the sales function. By consulting with internal and external stakeholders they start to foster participation in the decision making process, which as we will see starts to assist in generating buy-in to the defined vision, mission and ultimately strategy of the sales function. (Respondent 5,8,16)

The first set of information is existing data or information that is currently available. This can take the form of market related information, company offering versus what the market wants and what the competitor is offering. The leader gathers this information by 'walking the trade' spending time with sales people in the trade, talking to customers, consumers and employees. (Respondent 4,5,8,10,12,14,15) Other forms of existing data could be previous benchmarking in terms of the company's offering and internal service processes which when compared with the best in class within the same industries should be considered. The leader's action is to consider this information in their thinking when forming the strategy. The leaders must also consider information pertaining to the sales function drivers, sales function barriers, customer strategy, growth drivers and current trends. This is supported by Kotter (1988), who states that effective leaders relate the organisation to the business environment and identify key strategic challenges which affect the sales function.

Non-existent information needs to be collected by the leader consulting with both internal and external stakeholders affected by the sales function. (Respondent 1,5,7,8,12,13,14)This element of consultation was mentioned by 15 of the 16 respondents and seemed to be the preferred method of data gathering.

4.2.2 Head: Strategy

In the process of defining the strategy for the sales function, an effective leader considers the information they now have available through the internal and external data gathering and consultation process.

> “Ok, so now we have the information we need to do the thinking work required, now what? Now we apply our minds, our experience and we start to piece the puzzle together, now we start to build our strategy for winning in the market place.” (Respondent 7)

Respondents state that leaders discuss and debate the sales function objectives with the sales function leadership. They display where necessary their ability to persuade others to change their viewpoints on a problem, issue or decision. They inspire and align others by providing a common purpose, in doing so getting team agreement on a mutual set of objectives and breaking those objectives down into clearly defined individual objectives throughout the sales function.

> “For people to go in the direction you are headed, they need to understand what's wrong with where they are, because there is no reason to change unless you understand the need for change. You as the leader must convince them of the need for change, one-on-one, in a group setting, at every opportunity you get.” (Respondent 9)

> “Convince me, don’t tell me.” (Respondent 1)

The process of generating buy-in is critical, engaging all stakeholders with the proposed direction and strategy. Kotter (1988) concludes that effective leadership is the creation of an agenda for change, and the building of a strong implementation network. The agenda for change should include a strong vision of the long-term interest of the parties involved, and a comprehensive strategy for achieving this vision. The interview findings also stressed the necessity to articulate the need for change.

> “This change can come from anywhere but ultimately it is about understanding and thinking how as a team we are going to fix what needs to be fixed so that sales teams can win in the market place.”(Respondent 3)

By doing so, the leader creates an agenda for change and provides the beginnings of a platform to start building a strong implementation network to execute on that change. (Respondent 2,3,6,8,10,16)

> "Transparency in communication is critical, when you as the leader are seeing the end goal; you need to be considerate of the fact that you may be the only one seeing it for now. I take my team on a journey, paint the picture and then talk about the path of how we are all going to get there together as a team. I meet with them often; remind them of the vision, talk about the milestones passed and the next one to go after." (Respondent 4)

Effective leaders frame the message correctly, depending on who they are addressing. The vision must be communicated clearly and simply with a well-defined 'map' of how they as a team are going to get there with measurable milestones along the way. (Respondent 5,6,8,9,12,14,16) The leader does this by sharing this message at formal and informal events as often as necessary.

> "I make every effort to always speak honestly, I don't coat the message, I don't overemphasise issues that are not that important. I choose the few key messages and I speak with conviction because I truly believe they are what we should be focusing on, I consciously try and remain authentic in how I get the message across." (Respondent 16)

Kotter (1998) believed that successfully attracting and maintaining cooperation and teamwork from a network of people who were needed to help realise the vision can be accomplished by articulating the agenda in emotionally powerful ways and by appealing to the goals they all share thus increasing the impact for change. In framing the message clearly, the research also found that transparency was important.

> "My job once I have the information I need is to bring it all together, get the buy in I need, convince who I need to and start to get people excited about the journey" (Respondent 14)

According to Allio (2009), a leaders mandate is to establish purpose and clarify the value of the organisation, develop a vision, articulate a strategy, adapt to change, create a community that is committed to the enterprise and its strategy, monitor strategy implementation and develop future leaders. (Allio, 2009, p. 18). The behaviour within the strategy process then centres on a leader generating alignment and buy in to the strategy, ensuring it is top of mind.

4.2.3 Head: Capability

The research indicated that the area of capability is predominantly around thinking about what capability is required and assessing the current capability of both the current team members, as well as the team itself.

> "I get close to the people on the lowest level; I immerse myself in the trenches with the sales force. I understand the challenges they face, feel what they feel, make an effort to see things from their perspective. I tune into their frequency and see life through their eyes. In doing so I get to understand what is REALLY going on. Once I understand what is really going on, I can spend some time thinking about what capabilities I need to win in the market place. But equally as important is that I start to build credibility with my team." (Respondent 15)

By identifying these pockets of weakness and excellence, effective leaders have an opportunity to think about how they leverage their strengths and whether to import or develop capability for the weaknesses that exist within that team.

> "I am only as good as the people around me. It is important to select people that are not all group think, I see it too often, an Afrikaans company employs a bunch of Afrikaans sales guys, an English company does the same thing, Jewish guys and African guys sometime do the same thing. By selecting a group that is diverse it brings a different dynamic to my team, you can't just all sit around talking about the rugby every day. Your customer group is going to be

> diverse and you need diversity in your sales team to manage this." (Respondent 1)
>
> "I always look at competitors, they make a good place to find capability that the team or function may need that I don't currently have." (Respondent 7)

The research indicated that effective leaders consider the team as a whole and any capability that may be required to ensure that it is effective as a working group:

> "Diversity is an element that needs to be considered carefully in sales functions especially in the South African context." (Respondent 7)

Respondents suggest that they also need to assess and think about what additional capability is required at both an individual and a team level, for example commercial competence, which is a key capability that should exist in a sales function. There may be internal capability that exists that would complement the team. Once this process of assessment in terms of research and capability has been done and the leader has the information they need in order to inform the strategy, they are then in a position to define the strategy. This includes the process of generating alignment and buy-in through the process.

The research findings suggest that when assessing current team member capability an effective leader engages internally with people at all levels of the sales function to assess competence regularly. They engage externally with customers to get a sense of which employees meet customer requirements. They identify pockets of weakness and excellence within the function and they do this predominantly through a process of immersion, trade walkabouts and time spent talking to internal and external stakeholders.

4.3 Behaviours of effective leadership within the Heart category

Inspirational leadership (heart category) is primarily concerned with the behaviours required by the leader to build relationships between leader and

follower in order to be able to provide inspirational leadership (Goleman, 2010). The main themes that emerged while questioning the interview candidates were the following:

- Building a positive social environment;
- Consistency;
- Empowerment and building relationships; and
- Creating personal connections.

4.3.1 Heart: Building a positive social environment

This section featured strongly with both the research findings and the literature review. It is concerned with the leader creating an environment where his followers operate with trust, are free of retribution, build confidence in the vision, are available and accessible, have the right behaviour rewarded, are encouraged to work in teams, have clearly defined roles and boundaries and are treated like adults (Nicolls, 1994).

> "I think most people wake up in the morning wanting to do a good job, be successful and feel good about their futures. That is my base assumption. As such they have my full trust until they break it." (Respondent 4)

An effective leader needs to work from a high trust state. The research findings suggest than in order to do this everyone should be given a clean slate when joining their sales team. The leaders immediately begin to build trust and relationships with people in the team. (Respondent 1,2,5,7)

> "I find if I go in too aggressively, I create an environment of doubt, fear, and uncertainty. By doing so it makes it extremely difficult for me to identify the good people from the bad ones. I have learned that good people react as badly as bad people do to threats, this way it's difficult to distinguish between the two." (Respondent 13)

Respondent 13 suggested that an added benefit of operating from this state at the outset is that leaders allow themselves the opportunity to identify their star players and their trouble makers.

Higgs (2003) refers to transformational leadership as a leader having the ability to inspire and align others, provide a common purpose allied with optimism about the 'mission' and its attainability. He further describes it as intellectually stimulating, encouraging individuals to challenge the status quo, to consider problems from new and unique perspective and to be innovative and creative. A concern for people's feelings, aspirations, and development is part of this theory. These leaders pay special attention to the individual's needs for achievement and growth, and they coach and mentor followers, who are all treated differently but equitably (Higgs, 2003).

> "I always allow for robust discussions, in fact I encourage them, the higher the emotion the better as far as I am concerned, because it means they care." (Respondent 11)

The research showed that an effective leader creates an environment free of retribution. The ability for the leader to encourage the employees to challenge the status quo, to consider problems from new and unique perspectives, to be innovative and creative was identified, which mirrored Higgs's (2003) statements in this regard, Higgs (2003) goes further to suggest that effective leaders are willing to have the direction they have chosen for the sales function challenged by people in their team. Kouzes and Posner (1998) state that to be effective, a leader must be able to challenge the process, and constantly question why things are being done in a certain way, combined with the openness to have their own actions challenged. However this should be done through friendly interactions and the leader must protect where necessary the voices of leadership from below.

> "If I don't have confidence in the direction I have set the sales function, how can I expect my employees to do so? I must reflect this in my behaviour, and demonstrate this from day one." (Respondent 12)

Respondent 12 suggests that effective leaders generate confidence in the vision by speaking convincingly; with clarity and self-belief on all occasions and opportunities that present themselves.

> "I make every effort to provide an intellectually stimulating environment, I create opportunities for people to speak their minds." (Respondent 2)

The research showed that intellectually stimulating employees, and creating meaning in peoples work helps to build a positive social work environment. By creating an environment free of retribution this naturally challenges employees to become more involved and think and talk through issues and considerations more rigorously. It also identified the need for the leader to create flexibility for employees to feel free and unencumbered by 'red tape'.

> "If I listen a lot, people are inevitably going to tell me what's wrong with the organisation and provide insight that normally I would not get, especially the people who have been there for a long time." (Respondent 9)

Within the sales environment, it is especially important to be available and accessible; a way of ensuring this is by having an open door policy for employees. Of the 16 respondents, 12 mentioned having an open door policy, thus increasing the one on one interaction with their followers and especially direct reports. This assists leaders with the behaviour of listening and if those conversations are handled in a friendly manner with genuine concern for the employee, this helps to regulate employee stress. Effective leaders listen more than they speak.

Deeter-Schmelz et al. (2008) give a clear breakdown through their own research of what attributes are desirable for a sales manager leading a sales team, suggesting that the attributes in Table 2 will create a climate in which sales people can operate more efficiently thereby making the leader more effective.

Table 2: Sales manager attributes

Attributes	Respondent mentions (No's)
Communication and listening skills, the manager has the ability to listen and communicate effectively.	1,2,4,5,8,9,10,12,14,15,
Human relation skills, works with people effectively and develops personal rapport with sales force members.	1,2,3,6,7,8,9,10,11,12,13,14
Organisation and time management skills, ability to organise and manage their own time and work activities.	2,3,4,5,7,8,9,12,14,16
Knowledge possession, about the industry, the product and the business in general.	3,4,6,7,9,10,11,12,13,15
Coaching skills, helping members to improve their selling skills.	1,2,3,4,5,6,7,9,10,13,14,16
Motivational skills, recognising motivating factors and rewarding good performance.	5,7,9,10,12,13,14
Honest and ethical tendencies, perceived as truthful, straight forward and ethical.	1,3,4,5,6,8,9,11,12,13,14,16
Selling skills, the manager has sales experience.	2,7,9,10,12,14
Leadership skills, in terms of encouraging and inspiring.	1,2,3,4,5,6,7,9,10,12,13,15,16

Attributes	Respondent mentions (No's)
Willingness to empower, allows members to take responsibility and action.	1,3,4,5,8,9,12,13,16
Adaptability, to a variety of situations.	3,5,8,9

The research findings regarding the desirable attributes indicates human relation skills, honesty and ethical tendencies, coaching skills and leadership skills were mentioned by the most respondents suggesting they are the most important in the list.

These skills result in a set of consequences (Table 3) which result in a more supportive environment in which sales representatives are more likely to succeed (Deeter-Schmelz et al., 2008).

Table 3: Consequences resulting in a more supportive environment

Consequences	Respondent mentions (No's)
Positive morale, the workplace is a positive environment and exhibits positive morale.	1,2,3,4,6,7,9,10,12,13,14,15,16
Open communication, with the manager who is supportive.	1,2,4,5,7,8,10,12,14,15
Role model, the manager is seen as a role model for the sales representatives.	2,4,6,8,10,12,13,14
Confidence and trust, the manager instils confidence in and develops trust with sales force members.	2,3,4,5,6,7,8,10,12,14,16

Consequences	Respondent mentions (No's)
Clear expectations, the sales representatives have a clear understanding of their roles and what is expected of them.	2,4,5,7,8,9,10,11,12,13,14,15,16
Manager reputation, how the manager is perceived by others.	3,4,5,8,9,10,12,13
Sales person development, the selling skills and abilities of the sales representatives developed.	1,2,3,5,7,8,10,11
Greater effort, the willingness to work harder.	3,5,7,9,10,11,12,13,14
Effective feedback, from manager to sales representative, and from sales representative to manager.	1,3,5,6,8,9,12,14
Recognition of individuality, the manager recognises and deals effectively with the varying traits of individual sales team members.	1,2,5,9,11,14

> "Every year I get my employees to write out their own job spec, this way I get great insights into whether they understand what I need from them. If they hit the nail on the head, then great, if not we sit together and thrash it out until they are crystal clear in terms of what's expected from them." (Respondent 16)

The research findings suggest that effective leaders acknowledge positive and negative behaviour through recognition and reward and celebrate success. (Respondent 4, 8, 9) In doing so they start to drive the behaviour that creates effective teams, they start to create 'heroes'. The behaviour that came through

most consistently in both the research and the literature review was that of encouraging teamwork. In a sales team, the interpersonal climate or sense of how well the team works together, affects the team's sense of potency (Ahearne et al., 2009).

> "I am quick to identify and break down 'cliques', within the sales function, they do nothing to help the group work as a team." (Respondent 16)

An effective leader's behaviour to encourage this, outside of only reward and recognition, is by taking quick action to break down alliances, entitlement, hierarchy and arrogance within the function. This helps to disarm conflict and further build personal relationships.

> "There is nothing more demeaning for a sales person than being lectured by a sales manager, you have to treat people the way in which you want to be treated, you have to treat them like adults."(Respondent 1)

Effective leaders should treat employees in the manner in which they would want to be treated. A key behaviour is to acknowledge employees as the experts in their areas of accountability at every opportunity, have open and honest discussions with them about their growth prospects in the organisation during one-on-one's in both formal and informal settings. A common theme throughout the results and literature review was that of the leader providing open and honest feedback to the employee when required. Kotter (2001) and Goleman (2000) agree that feedback is a powerful tool for corrective action; creating compliance and helping employees grow and develop. This in turn helps to build employee self-awareness and improve overall job performance.

4.3.2 Heart: Consistency

Being consistent as a leader is an element that came up regularly in the results and literature review. An element of consistency, as a leader, was specifically mentioned by 15 of the 16 respondents.

An effective leader behaves in a predictable way; thus, they are consistent. Behaviours that arose in the literature review are discussed below.

Effective leaders consistently stand up for their beliefs. Kouzes and Posner (1990) suggest that the majority of people admire and look for leaders who are, honest, truthful, ethical and principled. If a leader behaves in a way that is consistent with their stated values and beliefs, then we believe we can entrust our careers to that person, our security and even our lives. They state that as a leader, one needs to know one's constituents, stand up for one's beliefs, speak with passion, lead by example, and have self-confidence (Kouzes & Posner, 1990).

> "I always try to remain consistent, not hot one day and cold another. If your style is highly energetic, always be highly energetic while of course remaining your authentic self." (Respondent 6)

Effective leaders manage their mood and display moods and behaviours that are appropriate for the situation at hand. Goleman (2001) suggests that emotionally intelligent leaders monitor their own mood through self-awareness, and change them for the better through self-management. They understand their pact through empathy, and act in ways that boosts others moods through relational management (Goleman et al., 2001). The most effective executives display moods and behaviours that match the situation at hand with a healthy dose of optimism mixed in (Goleman et al., 2001).

> "I never waiver from my vision, I try to always be totally consistent and dedicated to it." (Respondent 15)

Effective leaders are consistently able to adapt their leadership style to the specific situation in which they find themselves.

The results and literature review both had examples of leading by example as a behaviour that drove consistency through as a leader.

> "Your followers almost need to be able to predict how you will react in a particular situation; if they can do that then you know that you are a consistent leader." (Respondent 4)

The research suggests that leaders can demonstrate this by performing well and consistently in a range of situations when under pressure and while pursuing goals in the face of challenge and rejection. By being conscientious and acting with integrity, displaying self-awareness and leading with optimism about the 'mission' and its attainability. By simply doing the right thing, acting honestly, truthfully, ethically, and principally, all the while building trust with team members.

4.3.3 Heart: Empowerment

Empowerment has many different definitions; however, Respondent 13 summed it up in the research when she said:

> "Empowerment of sales people is the sharing of information, rewards, and power with employees so that they can take initiative and make decisions to solve problems and improve service and performance. Empowerment is based on the idea that giving sales employees skills, resources, authority, opportunity, motivation, as well holding them responsible and accountable for outcomes of their actions, will contribute to their competence and ultimately their own satisfaction." (Respondent 13)

The research showed that effective leaders empower their team members to do their jobs. They do this by building capability within their teams, through a process of formal and informal mentorship and coaching.

> "Capability building is not about arriving at 08:00 and leaving at 17:00, it's a journey of self-discovery and facing one's own demons and being brave enough to accept that there may be gaps that need to be filled. I, as a leader, have to be brave to help my employees fill those gaps and they have to be brave enough to let me" (Respondent 1)

Conger and Kunango (1998) describe empowerment as the leaders behaviour required to foster a sense of self-determination on the part of the followers and to

create conditions to heighten the motivation for task accomplishment. Ahearne et al. (2005) suggests that these leadership behaviours are the following:

Table 4: Leadership behaviours for motivation

Leaders behaviours	Respondent mentions No's
Encouraging autonomy.	1,3,4,5,6,8,9,10,12,14,16
Fostering participation in decision making.	1,2,3,4,5,6,8,9,10,11,12,13,14,16
Expressing confidence in the performance of followers.	3,5,7,8,9,10,12,14,16
Enhancing the meaningfulness of work.	3,6,8,9,12,16

By making the employee's job more meaningful and challenging while supporting the employees through a process of mentorship and coaching, motivates and encourages people to develop for the future. The spin-off is that capability in employees is built for the long-term.

Coaching and mentorship provides the platform to allow this to happen within the team and function.

> "There is nothing worse than having someone staring over your shoulder 24/7." (Respondent 8)

The research suggests that an effective leader empowers the sales teams by abdicating responsibility to people within their area of accountability. They should allow people the 'space' to be accountable even if that means making a few mistakes along the way. Ahearne et al. (2009), who suggest that a level of autonomy is critical in order to empower sales people, support this. It is about a leader 'giving the work back' to its rightful owners; the employee responsible for it, empowering them to do it and making them accountable through the process. The research results discourage micromanagement, unless completely necessary as a last resort.

4.3.4 Heart: Building relationships and creating personal connections

The research indicates that a leader's ability to influence their sales team members is dependent on the relationship that they have with their followers. The stronger the personal connection is with team members, the greater the level of influence.

> "I ask my employee's questions all the time, direct questions about things that are going to help me understand what makes them "tick" beyond just a work level." (Respondent 16)

The research showed that to be an effective leader, one should always be making a concerted effort to create personal connections with team members. One way of doing this is to ask questions of employees, in order to understand what drives them as individuals and start to appreciate their individual dreams and aspirations and then re-energise the employee by finding ways to make their job more challenging (Goleman, 2000).

Goleman (2000) refers to the need to focus on creating harmony and building emotional bonds. By promoting friendly interactions and, when appropriate, placing less emphasis on directives, goals and standards. The leader has the ability to care for 'the whole person'.

> "I make an effort every day to have a certain level of personal interaction with people in my sales team, sales people are desperate for this, and they want to know that you care about how they are doing." (Respondent 7)

The research suggests that effective leaders do this is by walking around the office from time to time, and in so doing, giving themselves the opportunity to talk to people one-on-one and ask them specific questions not only about themselves but how their work is going. This behaviour shows individual consideration for the employees. It helps to build emotional bonds by creating opportunities for the

leader to show genuine concern for people's feelings, aspirations and development.

> "An effective leader is concerned for the 'whole person' and takes the time and effort to treat each person independently and equitably." (Respondent 8)

4.4 Behaviours of effective leadership within the Hands category

Supervisory leadership (hands category) is concerned with the behaviours required by the leader to ensure that the execution of the strategy takes place on a day-to-day basis. Simply put, this is about making sure things get done. (Respondent 12) The main themes that emerged while questioning the interview candidates were measurements, review cycles, rewards and competitions.

4.4.1 Hands: Measurements

> "If you can't measure it you can't manage it." (Anonymous)

The research found that an effective leader defines specific key performance indicators (KPI's) to measure and assess how the function is delivering against strategy and goals.

> "There should not be too many KPI's, enough to create stretch but also allow the person the opportunity to focus on less more effectively. They must define key milestones that should be achieved along the way." (Respondent 11)

KPI's are about deadlines and putting processes into place to ensure those deadlines are met as and when required. In order to do that effective leaders define key deliverables by person, which are reached by an upfront negotiation with the team or individual concerned. (Respondent 9,12)

> "As you climb the mountain, you need to be able to look back and see how far you have come. You need to know which base camps you have passed and which are still to come. I hold regular meetings to allow myself the opportunity to do exactly that." (Respondent 3)

Once the KPI's and milestones have been defined, the frequency of these measures should then be defined. The path-goal theory leadership model developed by Robert House in 1971 suggests that it is the leader's job to provide direction and support to subordinates so that they might achieve goals consistent with those of the organisation. House identified four leadership behaviours that could be used, depending on the situation or the subordinate, and stressed that in a sales environment the *achievement-orientated* leader who sets challenging goals and expects subordinates to perform at their highest levels would be most appropriate (Robbins & Judge, 1998).

4.4.2 Hands: Review cycle

The research found that the review cycles should contain an element of formal and informal as well as individual and group review.

> "Once a month I like to get my team together to give them an update on where we are." (Respondent 14)

> "The leader should arrange regular updates with a focus on updating the team on how the company is doing."(Respondent 4)

An effective manager has individual review cycles, which take place as agreed with the sales team members. The leader encourages these discussions to be driven by the employee and contain an element of focus around discussing current impediments, resource requirements, and KPI achievement. The leader encourages an element of talking about people within the respective sales teams where necessary. The process leaders need to follow to get a better overview of what takes place in order to ensure adaptive change, which involves identifying the challenge, regulating stress and maintaining disciplined action (Heifetz & Laurie, 1997). Group reviews are also conducted.

Effective leaders go into trade with their employees, in doing so create an informal opportunity to assess how that particular employee is performing in their role (Respondent 6, 9, 10). They also do random office walkabouts, creating opportunities to chat to individuals one-on-one and get a sense of the progress within their sales roles and areas of responsibility.

The literature reviews adds to this by suggesting that this behaviour will maintain disciplined action by employees and that effective leaders must not only manage the review process but participate and provide appropriate support where necessary (Heifetz & Laurie, 1997).

4.4.3 Hands: Rewards

Once the KPI's are in place and the review cycles defined, there becomes a need to periodically reward and recognise employees appropriately. Reward and recognition can also take place in both a formal and informal setting. Effective leaders acknowledge sales team members on an individual basis for positive performance or behaviour; this tends to encourage repeat behaviour. (Respondent 2,7,8,13)

Leaders formally recognise and reward team members; this assists a leader in ensuring compliance and execution of the strategy. The most common elements that emerged through the research were specific knowledge, behaviour, achievements, and good intentions.

Higgs (2003) suggests that effective leaders pay special attention to the individual's needs for achievement and growth, and they coach and mentor followers, who are all treated differently but equitably. Further to this, they provide recognition tailored to an understanding of the needs and personalities of each individual team member.

4.4.4 Hands: Competitions and sales incentives

> "Motivation is an incredible tool; sometimes the guys just need a little extra motivation. I often do some form of incentive, or competition. They don't have to be a long drawn out process, they can be short and sharp and spontaneous, in fact in my experience often those are the best and most effective ones." (Respondent 15)

A final element that emerged through the research was the actions taken by a leader to further motivate and drive sales team members to achieve goals and targets with competitions and incentives. Effective leaders initiate competitions and incentives around key targets and goals of the sales teams. They do this by identifying those goals and considering appropriate programs to motivate and influence sales people to make a greater effort to achieve them by providing additional earnings or incentive opportunities for them. These may take the form of rewards or even recognition.

The following quote sums up the role of Hands leadership:

> "Supervisory leadership is quite a lot like project management, the direction is set, the people are in place, we know what to do, now it's just a case of getting it done and making sure the bus is headed in the right direction." (Respondent 6)

4.5 Most important behaviours by respondent

At the end of each interview, the respondents were asked to choose one specific behaviour that they considered the most important in order to be an effective leader within the sales function of a consumer driven business in South Africa.

To ensure consistency in the analysis these behaviours have been categorised within the current Head, Heart and Hands framework (Nicolls, 1994) as with the previous analysis. Each number represents one respondents view and is a direct quote on what they considered the most important behaviour.

4.5.1 Head

1. “I preach a consistent vision, and never falter from that vision. I keep my eye on the ball and make sure that my people are aligned to the same vision.” (Respondent 6)
2. “I ensure my thinking is concise and that reflects in the strategy, in a simplistic way. By it being simple and preaching a concise, simple strategy people tend to execute on it more effectively.” (Respondent 11)
3. “I make sure my vision is simple and clear, in doing so I allow people accountability at all levels.” (Respondent 7)
4. “My vision is simple, clear and consistent, I preach a path, I do things that help them understand where we are going, why, and how we are going to get there?” (Respondent 12)
5. “I make an effort to ask people questions on an individual level to try and understand what my vision means to each person in my team, this way I can consider whether it is achievable, realistic and if it has a chance of achieving sustainable growth and performance.” (Respondent 8)
6. “I go full circle, I go through the process from start to finish and make sure that I cover all my bases within all the elements that play a role in being an effective leader. I believe you have to see the whole picture in order to do so.” (Respondent 15)

4.5.2 Heart

1. “I consciously behave in a transparent manner with consumers, customer and employees. This helps me to build credibility throughout the internal and external stakeholder group.” (Respondent 16)
2. “I always try to take the ‘I’ to the ‘we’, in doing so opening myself up and allowing myself as a leader to be vulnerable. This ensures

that I get the best out of my people and leverage their respective strengths." (Respondent 3)

3. "I behave consistently, consistently. I am firm but fair and always treat people the way I would like to be treated. This gives people a level of confidence in you one could not achieve if you were inconsistent." (Respondent 5)
4. "I behave in a manner that shows the sales function that I hold myself accountable to first and foremost the business needs and my own moral code. By doing this, I will always make the right decisions and do the right things." (Respondent 4)
5. "I act out of integrity, I am consistent, I do what I say I am going to do and am always pro-active. Integrity builds credibility. Credibility attracts followers. Followers can be influenced to achieve the functions goals." (Respondent 10)
6. "I make sure I attend meetings, I walk the floor and am visible. This inspires people and provides the human touch that is often needed to take good to great." (Respondent 9)
7. "I ensure I am on site as much as I can be, in the trade from time to time and that I am available and accessible, this provides support and allows people to get more involved." (Respondent 2)
8. "I remain humble and resilient, in doing so I will maintain my confidence as well as others confidence in me and I will continue to move the function forward." (Respondent 13)
9. "I provide good mentorship at an operational, strategic and leadership level throughout the function. If I can't provide it I find the capability elsewhere and ensure it is available. This allows you my sales team to learn different things from different people." (Respondent 14)
10. "I lead by example, if I tell them they need to see ten customers per week, I see ten customers per week. This demonstrates to my people that it can be done." (Respondent 1)

The above quotations indicate a preference towards the heart category within the framework as 10 of the 16 respondents chose behaviours within that section. No respondents chose behaviours that fell within the hands category. Does this imply that, as leaders, they are not closing the loop? Perhaps as leaders, they consider their role to be more a case of building an environment and enabling their sales teams. However, supervision is still important in closing the loop and possibly, they put it down to the management side of the function, which at their level is not necessarily within their day-to-day scope.

4.6 Conclusion to the results and discussion

The research question for the research study was:

What are the key behaviours that determine effective leadership in the sales function in terms of the Head, Heart and Hands model of leadership?

Following is a summary of the themes, categories and behaviours that emerged through the research process.

4.6.1 Head

Table 5: List of categories and behaviours for leadership within the Head category

Theme	Category	Behaviour
Scanning the environment	*Data gathering*	Collect existing data
	Consultation	Collect non-existent data through a process of consultation with people
Strategy	*Data gathering and consultation*	Consider data, consultation, historical information
	Alignment	Discuss and debate the business issues with all stakeholders
		Ensure team agreement and alignment on a mutual set of objectives
		Create individual objectives based on the mutual set of objectives
	Buy in	Articulate the need for change within the sales team
		Frame the message correctly
Capability	*Current team*	Engage internally and externally to assess capability
	Additionally required capability	Consider and identify gaps
	Team effectiveness	Identify required sales team capabilities

4.6.2 Heart

Table 6: List of categories and behaviours for leadership within the Heart category

Theme	Category	Behaviour
Building a positive social environment	*Trust*	Operate from a high trust state
	Environment free of retribution	Encourage employees to challenge the status quo
	Challenging environment	Intellectually stimulate employees
	Confidence in the vision	Speak with clarity and self-belief
	Availability and accessibility	Listen attentively
	Recognise and reward	Acknowledge positive and negative behaviour
		Celebrate success
	Boundaries and roles	Ensuring alignment and role clarity of employees in achieving the strategy
	Team work	Break down alliances, entitlement and hierarchy
	Treat employees like adults	Acknowledge them as experts in their fields
		Have open, honest discussions
		Provide ongoing feedback
Consistency		Lead by example
Empowerment	*Build capability*	Ongoing formal and informal mentorship and coaching

Theme	Category	Behaviour
		Abdicate responsibility where appropriate
		Behave in a predictable way
Create personal connections		Ask questions of employees about aspirations and desires
		Have one on one time with employees

4.6.3 Hands

Table 7: List of categories and behaviours for leadership within the Hands category

	Category	Behaviour
Measurements	*Specific KPI's*	Define key deliverables by person
		Define key milestones to be achieved
		Define the frequency of these measures taking place
Review cycle	*Individual (1 on 1)*	Define the individual review cycle
		Provide sufficient space and time to achieve the goals
		Discuss specific impediments and resource requirements
		Discuss specific KPI achievement
	Group	Define the group review cycle
		Review group/company performance
	Informal	Engage in trade visits
		Informal corridor discussions
Rewards	*Short-term*	Reward specific knowledge
		Reward specific behaviours
		Reward specific achievements

	Category	Behaviour
		Rewards good intentions
Competitions and sales incentives		Initiate competitions and incentives around key targets and goals of the sales teams

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

The research aimed to identify, by means of business leaders perceptions, key behaviours of effective leaders within the sales functions of consumer driven businesses in South Africa.

A total of 16 respondents, as sales directors of their respective companies, were interviewed and asked to provide, according to their own perspectives, insights into the behaviours of effective leaders, which were grouped within the Head, Heart and Hands framework (Nicolls, 1994). They were then asked to identify the one key behaviour they considered the most important. Content from the interviews provided the basis from which a final view of the key behaviours of effective leaders within the sales functions of consumer driven businesses in South Africa could be deduced.

According to business leader's perceptions, key behaviours of effective leaders within the sales functions of consumer driven businesses in South Africa are presented in Tables 5, 6 and 7.

5.2 Conclusions of the research

Sixteen critical incident interviews were conducted with respondents as current sales directors of their respective companies, in order to understand their perceptions as to the key behaviours of effective leaders within the sales functions of consumer driven businesses in South Africa. The interviews were recorded and transcribed and a themed content analysis conducted on respondent's comments and responses from the interviews. This formed the empirical data, from which themes were created to develop a level of insight within the Head, Heart and Hands framework (Nicolls, 1994) of the key behaviours of effective leaders within the sales functions of consumer driven businesses in South Africa.

5.2.1 Head, Heart and Hands visual of key actions and behaviours

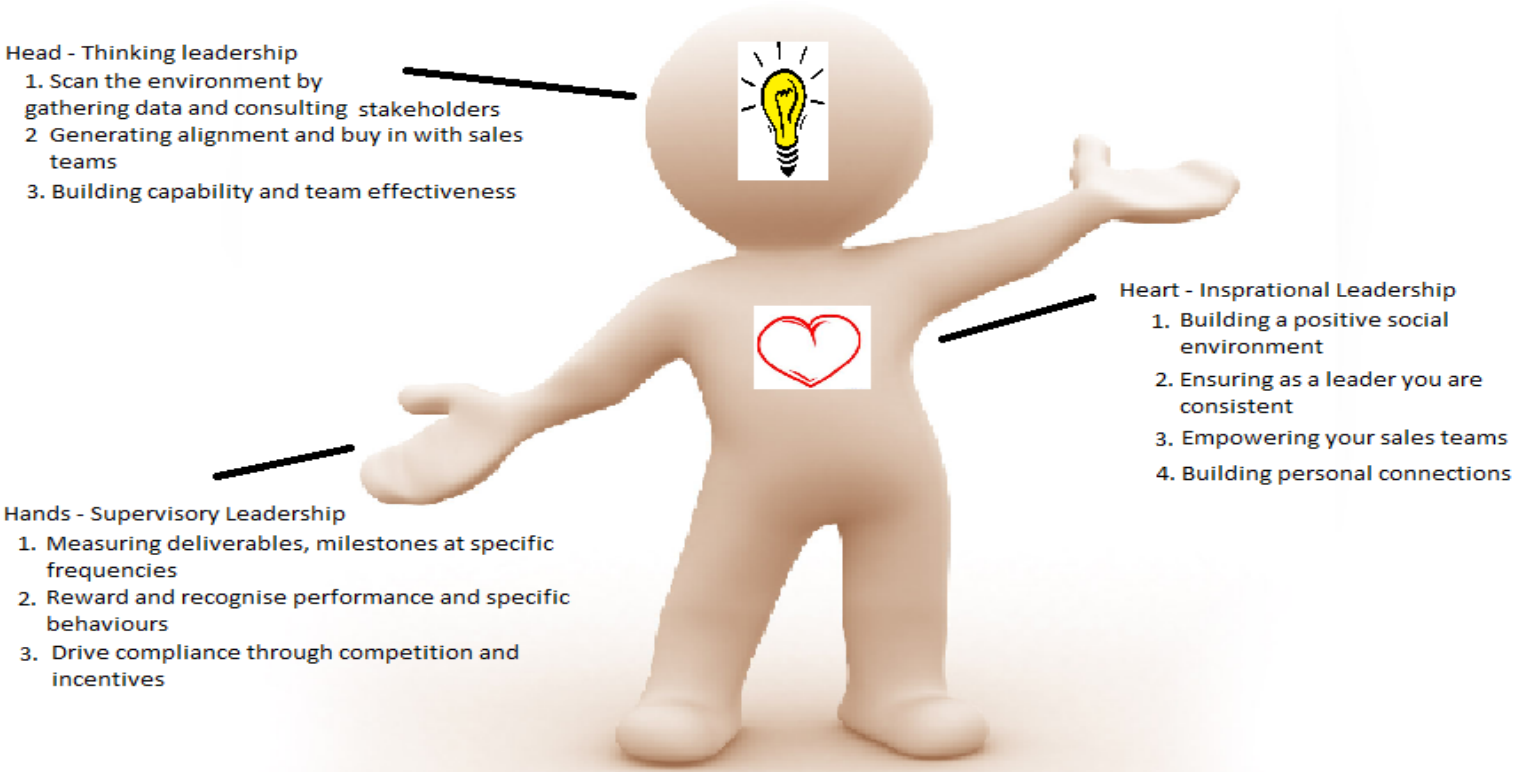


Figure 1: Key actions and behaviours of effective leaders

5.3 Recommendation's

The research study has identified the key behaviours of effective leaders within the sales functions of consumer driven businesses in South Africa.

The findings from the research study are considered important as the concept of learning and applying the key behaviours of a leader is easier to change and adapt than characteristics of a leader. Furthermore, findings from the literature review show that leadership behaviour plays an extensive role in the performance and general productivity of the sales force and the results from the research study identify key behaviours of effective leaders within the sales functions of consumer driven businesses in South Africa.

Therefore, an opportunity exists to specifically develop key behaviours of effective leaders within the sales functions as an item separate from standard performance measures so as to enhance overall sales function performance and employee buy-in to the vision, mission and values of an organisation.

The researcher therefore recommends those current and future chief executive officers, boards of directors, senior executives, senior management and other company stakeholders, who now have an understanding of the importance of behaviours of effective leaders, focus on developing those behaviours in order to be more effective.

5.4 Suggestions for further research

Knowledge surrounding the concept of identifying key behaviours of effective leaders within the sales functions of consumer driven businesses in South Africa is still nascent. The research study was conducted in order to develop an understanding of those key behaviours. The following areas are suggested for future research:

- *Extending the population to include other company stakeholders:*
  The current research study only included the views of company sales directors. An opportunity exists to extend the research study to include other company stakeholders, both internal (employees) and external (customers and suppliers). The objective would be to identify and correlate the findings from these stakeholder groups with the current findings and arrive at a comprehensive stakeholder view of the key behaviours of effective leaders. Recommendations could then be made to these various stakeholder groups as to important factors to focus on in order to drive behaviours of effective leaders and in turn sales function performance and employee buy in to the vision, mission and values.

- *Updated framework:*
  The current research study used the Head, Heart and Hands framework (Nicolls, 1994) as it provided an appropriate structure for leaders' behaviour and actions. An opportunity could exist to use a more recent framework should one exist that would allow focus on behaviour.

- *Specific focus on one category:*
  The research indicated a focus on the heart category. An opportunity exists to explore this in more detail, specifically from an employee viewpoint, to see if there is a correlation between the business leader's perceptions of what inspires, motivates and mobilises the work force, and the employee view of whether those behaviours have the effect the business leaders claim they do.

- *Managing directors and chief executive officers:*
  This piece of research could be conducted with managing directors and chief executive officers at a business level that considers cross-functional teams as well as extended internal and external factors.

5.5 Concluding remarks

Leadership as a topic provides an extensive challenge in that its scope is significant and no ‘one size fits all’ exists. Within leadership, there are varying theories and styles. As potential leaders, we all have a natural style that we will gravitate to; one that sits within our comfort zone.

Our characteristics are what they are, but we have the ability to learn to lead more effectively by practising, observing and adjusting our behaviour where necessary.

The overwhelming element that arose from this research is that provided leaders lead by example and treat people in the manner in which they would wish to be treated, it is difficult to go wrong. By being authentic in their leadership style, and being themselves they will ‘always’ do the right thing and make the right decisions.

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APPENDIX A - INTERVIEW OUTLINE FOR RESPONDENTS

Business leaders' perceptions of effective leadership behaviours in the sales function of consumer driven businesses in South Africa

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Details of the respondent:

Date:

Time:

Respondent name:

Title:

Organisation:

Opening remarks:

Thank the respondent for taking the time to meet and contribute to the research report.

The purpose of this research is to assess what leaders consider to be the key behaviours of leaders in order to be effective, as such we I am trying to understand what it is that leaders "do" to ensure effective leadership. By effective we mean achieve results.

The interview is conducted as a critical incident interview; this method is specifically designed to understand behaviour and as such is appropriate for this particular research. The interview is being conducted solely for the purpose of the research report.

May I have your permission to record the interview?

I will make handwritten notes and these notes can be made available to you upon special request, and that they will be deleted six months after the research report has been submitted.

I can guarantee anonymity for both you as an individual and as the company you represent, would this be your wish?

Background information:

I am going to ask you for come factual data about yourselves and your company….

- For how long have you or had you held the position of Sales Director in this organisation?

  Notes -

- For how long have you held the position of a sales director in any/all organisations you have worked for?

  Notes -

- What is/was the company's main interest?

  Notes -

- Approximately how old is/was the company, in its current guise?

  Notes -

- Approximately how many employees does/did your company employ?

  Notes -

<u>Question one</u>: (Thinking and leading through thinking)

I am looking for 5 different examples….

Tell me about a time when you applied your mind to a task as a leader?

<u>I.E</u>

- **Problem solving?**
- **Set the direction for the organisation?**
- **An idea, sense of the action, or probe specifically?**

<u>Question two:</u>

I am looking for 5 different examples….

Tell me about a time when you built or strengthened relationships with people?

<u>Question three</u>:

I am looking for 5 different examples….

Tell me about a time when you put mechanisms in place to ensure delivery on time?

I.E - deadlines and follow up, review meetings, planning with milestones – structure in place to ensure things happen

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<u>Question four:</u>

Of all the areas touched on what one thing do you consider to be the most important?

Question five:

Why?

Closing remarks:

Thank the respondent for taking the time to meet with you and offer him/her a copy of the report once it is completed.

APPENDIX B - REQUEST LETTER TO RESPONDENTS

Dear

I am an MBA student at Wits Business School and am currently completing my research report in order to fulfil all requirements for the Master's degree.

My research topic is entitled: "Business leader's perceptions of the key behaviours that determine effective leadership in the sales function of consumer driven business in South Africa", and I kindly ask for your assistance in affording me an opportunity to meet with you.

I anticipate requiring less than forty-five minutes of your time for this interview. The meeting will take the form of a critical incident interview in which I will ask you to share some of your thoughts on the key behaviours that determine effective leadership in the sales function of consumer driven business in South Africa.

I will gladly provide you with a copy of my findings upon completion of my research and ensure that your name and organisation details will be kept confidential in the research report.

I thank you in advance and look forward to meeting with you.

Yours faithfully,

Steven Hughes
Tel: 074 912 7777
E-mail: swazihughes@gmail.com

APPENDIX C - CONSISTENCY MATRIX

Research problem: Determine business leaders' perceptions of the key and behaviours that determine effective leadership within Sales functions of Consumer Driven businesses in South Africa.

Main problem	Literature review	Research question	Source of data	Type of data	Analysis
Determine business leaders' perceptions of the key behaviours that determine effective leadership within Sales functions of consumer driven businesses in South Africa.	Ahearne 2009; Alimo-Metcalf 1995; Allio 2009; Avolio 2009, Conger and Fulmer 2003; Connor 1998; Cobey 2009; Deeter-Schmelz 2008; Feidler 1964, George 2007, Goleman 2000,2001, 2004, 2010; Heifetz 1997; Higgs 2003; Kellerman 2004; Kotter 1995, 1998, 2001; Kouzes and Posner 1990; Laub 1994, Nicholls 1994, Robbins 1998. (Appendix A)	According to business leaders perceptions, what are the key determinants of effective leadership in the sales function	Interview data – Refer draft interview outline for respondents (Appendix A).	Qualitative opinions and commentary.	Themed Content Analysis (Burns 2000).