THE *GO-TO-MARKET* FRONTIER: GLOBAL ACCOUNT MANAGEMENT (GAM)

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ABSTRACT

Go-to-market systems, that complex web of multiple marketing channels that link suppliers with their customers, have radically evolved beyond simple advertising or salesperson marketing channels. Unfortunately, many academicians and industry practitioners are relatively unaware of the significance of these changes. The traditional salesperson has been replaced by specialized selling teams coordinated by technology and communications and targeting specialized market. Global Account Management (GAM) is one of several specialized sales channels at the go-to-market frontier and promises to lead, inform, and dominate organizational economic exchange linkages in the future. The purpose of this article is to stimulate readers to revisit and rethink their understanding of selling in the 21st century.

INTRODUCTION

Today, we are witnessing profound shifts in the way that supply and demand conduct economic exchanges. Some exchange strategies have tightened the intensity and continuity of the relationships between buyer and seller firms while others continue to traditionally operate with clear distinction between entities. On one hand, we see economic exchange strategies in transition; the old and evolving simultaneously operating side-by-side. On the other hand, we see the frontier of exchange in full practice. At this frontier are increasing strategic and global account alliances, mergers, and buyouts which wholly replace traditional exchange mechanisms and attempt to fuse and integrate the exchange distance between buyer and seller firms. This frontier is characterized by a sophisticated *go-to-market system* connecting supply and demand in economic exchange.

In this article, a *go-to-market system* is defined as the total structure of economic exchange channels (*multiple-channels*) connecting an organization with its down-stream end-customers as well as its up-stream suppliers (Porter, 1985). Briefly, a go-to-market system includes the following components: sales through the Internet, telemarketing, distributors, field salespeople (transactional and consultative selling strategies), and specialized salespeople/facilitators (alliance/partnership or SAM and GAM selling strategies). As advancing technology and communications provide new opportunities to better connect suppliers with customers, additional channels are spawned and added to the system. Subsequent evolution increases complexity in the go-to-market system.

Within this system a basic problem must be continuously addressed: How to comprehensively manage, coordinate, and direct the system's components. One solution to this ongoing problem is to organize the go-to-market system around specific customer targets. This article focuses on Global Account Management (GAM) which is highly targeted to a very select customer target: *Global customer accounts*. While a supplier addresses these large customer companies with a GAM strategy, they are simultaneously addressing different customer accounts with other marketing channels comprising their overall go-to-market system.

One thing remains clear. Whether we are viewing regional, national, or global environments, the go-to-market trend is the same: The exchange distance that once separated suppliers and customers and was traditionally distinct and relatively wide, is now narrowing and tightening. GAM strategies, while comprising only a single channel approach within a multiple-channel go-to-market system, is informing and helping both supplier and customer companies in learning how to solve the go-to-market system component coordination problem.

The narrowing of the economic exchange distance between buyer and seller is not entirely new; however, it has accelerated in recent years. Having occurred since the onset of the Industrial Revolution, it is expected to accelerate and form the basis of global competition in the twenty-first century. While the exact nature of future global competition is difficult, if not impossible to predict, some observers expect that it will be a world with a smaller number of mega-firms comprising each industry each tightly tied by strong ongoing relationships and highly sophisticated economic exchange linkages (Powers & Jones, 2001). A highly coordinated Global Account Management strategy is the single marketing channel at the go-to-market frontier that will lead, inform, and dominate organizational economic exchange linkages in the future.

Today's Selling Channel

As distinguished from non-personal marketing channels, the personal professional salesperson and selling team is a vital and primary channel. And, as we will later see, the personal salesperson channel executes his/her unique skills in various sales sub-channels (transactional, consultative, and alliance/partnership). This familiar go-to-market channel has radically evolved from its predecessors. Today's new salesperson/team is a *Micro-Marketer(s)* specifically selling or facilitating exchange within Business-to-Business (B2B) markets as opposed to the popular and misaligned peddler or traditional salesperson selling in Business-to-Business (B2C) markets. At the edge of the go-to-market frontier, GAM strategies, the traditional image of salespeople blurs with that of a organizational manager. Salespeople begin to appear more like a coordinating facilitator or manager of economic exchanges. And, these exchanges are no longer single and isolated events but related by formal and informal relationships and/or agreements. Additionally, one cannot speak of a single *salesperson,* but of a collaborative and globally dispersed *selling/facilitating exchange team* partnering with *buyer teams*.

Today, three distinct selling strategies have coalesced: (1) Transactional Selling Strategy, (2) Consultative Selling Strategy, and (3) Alliance/Partnership Selling Strategy. *Strategic Account Management* (SAM) and its global extension, *Global Account Management* (GAM) represent the third and most highly evolved of these selling strategies. GAM is the focal point of this paper.

Problem

Selling has traditionally been taught and practiced utilizing methodologies designed over 80 years ago. Does such a single selling methodology describe and inform today's go-to-market or selling realities? Does a methodology appropriate for one time and place have viability and instructive power in today's changed environment? What remains familiar and what has changed? What is this new go-to-market frontier that heralds the new realities of the 21st Century? What can the most highly evolved form of selling/exchange, Global Account Management (GAM), tell us about the shape of future go-to-market systems and the place of the salesperson/facilitator in this system?

Purpose and Scope

The purpose of this conceptual paper to stimulate both hospitality and tourism academicians and industry practitioners to *rethink* their view of professional selling and, as a result, be better prepared to improve their go-to-market practices.

This article describes the evolutionary march to the new go-to-market frontier, provides emblematic characteristics of the most recently evolved form, *Global Account Management* (GAM), and provides a mini-case as an exemplar of the GAM concept. First, we present an overview of the evolution of a single marketing channel, personal selling, within the multiple channel go-to-market system. Second, we will explain the concept of Global Account Management (GAM) and the forces driving it. Third and finally, we will provide an exemplar case of GAM by briefly examining Marriott International's entry into GAM programs.

FROM TRADITIONAL SELLING TO STRATEGIC ACCOUNT MANAGEMENT

We have come a long way from the world of Willy Loman, Arthur Miller's tragic central character in *Death of a Salesman* (Miller, 1949). Loman, the lonely drummer on the road pitching his wares to one buyer after another, has given way to complex, cross-functional team sales to multinational customers with multiple product line, buying units and locations. The buying cycle is longer and less predictable; sales calls take more time and must be made to more people in more locations; buyers are becoming more sophisticated; and the procedures and policies for purchasing have become almost impenetrable (Bacon, 1999).

The days of the *Fuller Brush* man and *Electrolux* salesman selling products door-to-door is only a memory. The power of advertising replaced these traditional Business-to-Consumer (B2C) salespeople some time ago. Willy Loman, sample case in hand, remained as a (B2C) and ersatz Business-to-Business (B2B) salesperson until Arthur Miller noticed his decline (Miller, 1949). As we will see, the dominant domain of the salesperson in today's go-to-market systems is in B2B markets and increasingly limited to complex versus simple products and services. Additionally, salespeople are morphing into sophisticated strategic and global account managers who oversee the entire systems of exchange between organizations. In the evolution of go-to-market systems, the trend is fewer salespeople managing more complex exchange networks between supplier and customer organizations.

This evolutionary cycle was poignantly portrayed in the film, *Door-to-Door* (Schachter, 2003). Based on the true story of Bill Porter, this movie is about an approximate 50 year career of a door-to-door salesman with cerebral palsy. *Door to Door* follows Porter from early 1950s when he follows in his father's footsteps and gets his first job in sales. The film follows his career to his retirement in the late 1990s when door-to-door salesmen became outmoded by catalogs, telemarketing, and the Internet. The following brief history describes a more detailed account of these evolutionary changes.

The Early Days of Selling: An Overview

Early historical records indicate that salespeople or merchants who traded goods for profit were seen as odious and despicable characters. The *Odyssey* tells the story of Ulysses of being affronted for the purpose of finding out if he was a pirate or a merchant. Since he was a military man he was assumed to be a pirate and was given some honor which was far better treatment than if he were a merchant.

In the many millennia of the Agrarian Age, societies stored wealth and status in land holdings and livestock. Trade and commerce was a lowly way of making a living. To perform a service or give anything without a reward was thought to be generous and noble, but to barter or trade one thing for another was considered mean or low.

In the 1300s, peddlers selling books and other assorted goods throughout Europe began to appear. As these peddlers developed their networks accumulated stores of inventory, they began to set up shops to supply new generations of peddlers with goods. Successful peddlers evolved into merchants. The commercial trade of a merchant was, however, still depreciated and considered contemptible. Both merchants and peddlers were confined to the lowest ranks of society (Peeler, 1996).

The Industrial Revolution refers to the totality of changes in economic and social organization that began about 1760 in England and later in other countries. Goods were shipped from England and landed in the Boston, New York and other harbors of the American Colonies. The problem was how to get these desired goods to the pioneers moving westward in the new county.

Enter the *Yankee Peddler.* While today we might disparage those sellers who carried small comforts to the pioneers in a rucksack or meticulously stored in their bulging wagons, they were essential to the development of the new country. Their selling approach may be seen as primitive today, however it was appropriate to the situation of the time. Buyers were very happy simply to have availability of products and services.

Peddlers focused on selling products, but they also had to intimately understand their customers and adapt to the customers' needs. This was true since these peddlers often had a regular route. This regular route necessitates, contrary to popular wisdom, that honesty had to be maintained in order to create "welcome" for repeat business and often housing with these customers

Peddlers were independent contractors who earned a living from reselling products at a profit. Records indicate the beginnings of the first salary plus commission sales force approximately1816. Competition increased as routes covered by these salespeople expanded and manufacturers began to give incentives for "pushing products." With this competitive pushing of products, the image of the salesperson being *less than honest* begins to appear. With the practical commercialization of railroad travel in the mid-1800s, peddlers were able to access most geographic area of many countries (Peeler, 1996).

In the second decade of the 1900s, the practice of selling began to noticeably change. They became recognized as a legitimate occupation and attention was placed on increasing their effectiveness through training. As did their peddler ancestors, salespeople primarily sold to consumers in what is called today, *Business-to-Consumer* (B2C) markets. While these salespeople began to sell in the *Business-to-Business* (B2B) markets (calling on buyers in the distribution channels – retailers, wholesalers, etc), major sales such as large equipment and other complex sales were sold by senior management or company owners as opposed to a professional B2B sales force.

By the 1920's salespeople began to receive formal sales training. Here Edward Kellogg Strong, Jr. (1922) wrote the first *how to sell* book using the then revolutionary psychological techniques by Freud, Adler, Jung and other early psychologists. The philosophy underlying these new techniques was to push product by appealing to the customers' psychological needs. In essence, Strong taught that fear and greed were the main motivators found in all buyers. He also taught that through a series of logical steps, a salesperson could lead the buyer to the sale. Much of today's selling process training is based, if not an exactly replicated, from E.K. Strong's *The Psychology of Selling Life Insurance* (1922), his *The Psychology of Selling and Advertising* (1925), and his *The Psychological Aspects of Business* (1938). Serving first with the Carnegie School of Life Insurance Salesmanship and later as Professor of Psychology in the Business School of Stanford University, Professor Strong bequeathed a foundational legacy for better understanding of the sales process.

Unfortunately, Strong's 80 plus year old legacy no longer fits today's selling realities. Strong built his selling strategy to teach salespeople to sell to B2C markets. He based his methods on emotional and psychological motivations as opposed to rational problem-solving motivations characteristic of selling in B2B markets. Today, salespeople who sell in B2C markets are being replaced by advertising pulled sales and direct sales to the consumer

through the Internet. Even salespeople selling simple products in B2B markets are being replaced by the Internet and other alternative go-to-market channels. Today, Strong's selling strategy remains a dominant foundation in most sales training, yet it was built for a different time and is primarily aimed at selling to B2C markets.

Three Distinct Selling Strategies Coalesce

In the 1980s, Neil Rackham and his consulting firm studied more than 35,000 salesperson/client encounters in 27 countries. He concluded in his book, *Major Account Sales Strategy* that the traditional selling model taught in most educational programs and industry training did not represent actual practices of sales people selling large accounts in the business to business (B2B) markets. (Rackham,1989, p.2).

In 1996 and recognizing the growing importance of partnerships and customer/supplier alliances, Neil Rackham, Lawrence Friedman, and Richard Ruff thoroughly examined this topic in *Getting Partnering Right* (Rackham, Friedman, and Ruff, 1996). Here they described how market leaders were creating long-term competitive advantage through a new way of providing value to customers. Rackham incorporated these insights into his next contribution to the study of evolving go-to-market systems.

In the influential book, *Rethinking the Sales Force*, (Rackham & De Vincentis, 1999) the authors refined Rackham's earlier research and theorized the emergence of three distinct selling strategies:

Transactional Selling Strategy. This strategy is the oldest form of selling. It evolved in the early history of selling (think of traveling peddlers). Transactional selling has become more sophisticated over the years however; it retains many historic characteristics. Transactional salespeople continue to sell low to medium-priced and simple products/services. A transactional salesperson's investment in long-term relationships with customers is a costly luxury since achieving sales revenue volume in this strategy is dependent upon a large volume of sales transactions with individual and usually unrelated buyers.

The traditional transactional salesperson is being replaced by technology. He or she has become a cost that is no longer supportable in selling/marketing simple and *commoditized* products and services. From the advancements of the quality and reengineering eras of the 1980s and 1990s, many of today's products are of similar quality and can more or less perform the same function. They are perceived as commodities. Simultaneously, buyers have become more sophisticated and knowledgeable and have easy access to product/service specifications. The salesperson is no longer necessary to inform or educate buyers.

Since today's buyers know what they want, where to get it, and have access to many product suppliers (ease of the Internet), they are primarily interested in one thing—*price*. The traditional salesperson involved in a transactional selling strategy has become a cost that is relatively high to the selling price. So, a competitor who sells without salespeople (over the Internet, for example) can offer a lower price.

In other words, a transactional selling strategy is a *quantitative* game of selling transactions to large numbers of individual and generally unrelated buyers. This strategy is distinguished from a consultative selling strategy which is a *qualitative approach based on* repeat and referral business.

Consultative Selling Strategy. This form is the second oldest of the three basic forms. It theoretically evolved by the mid-1980s and only today is being put into full practice. These salespeople sell high-priced and complex products/services. Long-term relationships with customers are a distinguishing and mandatory characteristic. The goal of consultative selling is repeat and referral business. Thus, supplier firms target customer firms with a high and long-term spending potential and attempt to convert them to *preferred accounts*. As relationships in these preferred accounts intensify, some have the *potential* to evolve to a higher form of selling strategy – *Alliance/Partnership or Strategic and Global Account Management.*

Alliance/Partnership Selling Strategy. This form of selling is the newest and at the "cutting edge" of the three selling modes. In its most complete form, there is no visible distinction between the seller and the buyer. In fact, the selling company forms a selling team that exactly matches the buying team. Teams are represented by cross-functional areas: for example, both teams include a technology person and/or financial person as the situation dictates. These teams are as permanent as is the partnership. These strategic alliances are characterized by such arrangements as the buyer and seller sharing the same warehouse and/or computer purchasing system. The seller may even have a permanent office located at the buyer's facility. The "vendor/buyer" distinction found in both the transactional sale and the consultative sale is blurred in alliance/partnership selling. This strategy is represented by Strategic Account Management (SAM) and its sub-category, Global Account Management (GAM) discussed below.

Multiple Go-To-Market Channels

With advanced communications, especially the common usage of the Internet, multiple *Go-To-Market Systems* provided a way for organizational management to reduce the rising costs of personal salespeople and to seek new ways of achieving competitive advantage. Prior to these advances, sales people were personally responsible for all steps of the selling process which connected customers and suppliers: Prospecting through the selling presentation and sales close, and after-sales service. Advanced communication technology offered selling organizations and customers ways to more effectively and efficiently connect and coordinate economic exchange activities. Lawrence Friedman and Timothy Furey described these new possibilities in their landmark work, *The Channel Advantage* (1999).

Many organizations are considering and rapidly moving to *multiple-channel strategies*. In the order of lowest potential cost, these channels include: (a) the Internet, (b) telemarketers (inbound and outbound), (c) partners (independent agents and wholesalers), and (d) direct salespeople. These multiple-channels are being used simultaneously and being mixed and matched according to their value as perceived and received by the customer. Multiple linkages to the customer are replacing and/or supporting the traditional single channel – the salesperson.

In 2001, Andriss A. Zoltners, a professor of marketing at Northwestern University's prestigious Kellogg School of Management, and his co-authors synthesized the central themes of earlier sales force researchers in the text, *The Complete Guide to Accelerating Sales Force Performance* (Zoltners, Sinha, & Zoltners, 2001).

Zoltners et al present a tale of sales force reengineering involving efforts to maintain a balance of efficiencies and effectiveness. The more results created per unit of exposure, the more *effective* the selling/marketing instrument. *Efficiency* measures the number of contacts with customer that can be made through any of the available go-to-market channels. *Effectiveness* is a measure of the sales that arise from each customer contact using the available go-to-market channels. *Effectiveness* is concerned with using the *right* selling channel for the *right* customer. Mixing a balance of efficiencies and effectiveness creates hybrid and multiple channels of distribution that comprise a company's total go-to-market system. (Zoltners, Sinha, & Zoltners, 2001).

Regarding encouraging a go-to-market system balancing efficiency and effectiveness, Zoltners et al described driving forces: Increasing market and product heterogeneity and complexity. Go-to-market systems must be structured to maximize efficiencies while being balanced with effectiveness.

Market heterogeneity and complexity is exemplified by a company's market usually having many participants. Some are large while others are small. Some are price-sensitive while others more highly value relationships. Some require more information than others. Customer needs are many and varied, thus go-to-market systems must be structured for efficiency while addressing heterogeneity and complexity. And, heterogeneity and complexity is increasing especially as markets become more global.

Zoltners et al. discussed the impact on go-to-market organizational structures as they respond to complexity. They identified four fundamental go-to-market structures (Zoltners, Sinha, & Zoltners, 2001, p.117):

1. The Generalist Structure. This structure is appropriate when the firm sells a manageable product line and the selling process is relatively homogeneous for all customers and prospects.

2. The Market-Based Structure. This is appropriate when the market is characterized by heterogeneity and complexity. It focuses on customer characteristics and needs. ,

3. The Product-Based Structure. This form of go-to-market structure is appropriate when the firm has a large, complex, or diverse product line.

4. The Activity-Based Structure. This is highly dependent on the firm's products and markets and, thus appropriate when both the firm's products and markets are heterogeneous. This structure disaggregates the selling process and uses specialized multiple channels in the sales process. For example: (a) A team to sell new accounts and a team to maintain and expand business at existing accounts, (b) Separate selling teams for account management, problem solving, and buy/lease decision making, and (c) An end-user team to generate product pull-through and a reseller team to manage distributors, manufacturer's representatives, and value-added-resellers (VARs).

5. The Mixed Structure. This is a go-to-market structure that is a hybrid of two or more of the above four fundamental structures. Mixed structures incorporate multiple forms of specialization. They may include product and market specialization – for example, product-based selling teams, each with a national account and generalist team. Or, they may be structured around markets and activities – for example, industry teams, each with its own *hunters* (new sales, prospecting, or selling) or *farmers* (account maintenance and servicing). The numbers of combinations that can be made from the four fundamental structures is large.

Mixed structures are a response to customer heterogeneity and product complexity, multiple and diverse buying influences, systems buying, or customer supplier partnerships. "These selling structures are adaptive, are tailored to customer organizations, and gain effectiveness through product expertise and customer knowledge (Zoltners, Sinha, & Zoltners, 2001, p.125)." *And, they are the model for strategic and global account management.*

"It's no secret that customers have been downsizing their supplier bases at a dizzying pace since the mid-1990s. There's a widely quoted figure that customers in the late 1990s were working with a third fewer suppliers than they did in the late 1980s (Rackham, Friedman, & Ruff, 1996, p.3)." And, the numbers of suppliers have drastically dwindled today. Customers have been downsizing their supplier base, and replacing their myriad vendors with a very small number of long-term relationships. Applying the 20/80 Pareto principle, companies are focusing their go-to-market resources on the most profitable 20% of customer accounts that generate 80% of their revenue stream. Thus, these companies seek competitive advantage through *Strategic Account Management* (SAM) go-to-market structures.

Strategic Account Management (SAM)

In response to changing customer needs and value perceptions, supplier company go-to-market systems have continued to evolve. Because of the current emerging market trends, companies are being forced to rethink their approach to resource deployment and this includes the rising resource costs associated with sales and marketing. LaVon, Koerner, CEO, Koerner & Associates, LLC concluded his presentation, "Strategic Account Selection & Prioritization," at the 36th Strategic Account Management Association (SAMA) annual conference with these words:

> *In the past, training budgets, recruiting efforts, etc. were* [resources] *allocated to increase the effectiveness of the "opportunity management" aspect of the business development [producing sales for a company] process. Now, the focus must be expanded to include the "account management"* [management of the customer] *aspect. The most serious business development issue in the past millennium was, "In what sales deals are we over invested, and in what sales deals are we under invested?" In this millennium, that*

question must become, "In what accounts are we over invested, and in what accounts are we under invested (Koerner, 2000, p. 32)?"

At an earlier time, companies sought competitive advantage by providing value to the customer by being the lowest cost producer or differentiating their products through benefits embedded in its products. Today, many companies are nearing the point of diminishing returns on their quality initiatives. Quality in products/services is not a competitive advantage; they are the *price of admission.* The process mapping, benchmarking, and best-practice initiatives of most competing companies have run their course. All companies and their product offerings have benefited, however future gains are likely to be incremental, not transformational. In the future, organizational performance and competitive advantage is more likely to come from the *interface* between organizations (Bacon, 1999). Suppliers and customers will work more closely on joint initiatives to reduce costs and improve efficiency and this close relationship described as alliances or partnerships will be actively managed in *Strategic or Global Account Management* programs.

What is Strategic Account Management (SAM)? SAM, "is the systematic development and nurturing of customers that are strategically important to an organization's survival and prosperity (Bacon, 1999, p. 3). The term, *strategic account management (SAM),* however has gone by many other names, including *large account management*, *key account selling*, *major account selling*, *national account management*, *global account selling*, and *national account marketing*. Whatever it's called, SAM represents how companies focus their selling effort on the few customers who constitute the largest proportion or their sales. To reflect go-to-market evolutionary changes, in 1998 the *National Account Management Association* (NAMA) was renamed, *The Strategic Account Management Association* (SAMA).

SAM is growing steadily. In a 1997 survey of 152 companies (assumed by the author to be NAMA member companies), NAMA, as reported by Bacon (1999) found that 51 percent had formal national/strategic account programs. In a 2002 SAMA survey of its members (N 261), 25.1% reported that between 25% and 49% of their company's 2001 revenue came from strategic account management programs. Further, 33.2% of the surveyed members reported between 50% and 100% of their companies' 2001 revenue came from their strategic account management programs (SAMA, 2002). While the survey results do not represent all US, and certainly not all companies worldwide, if one assumes that the members of SAMA represent very large multinational corporations, and that these large corporations are increasingly generating the largest amounts of global revenue, SAMA's reported numbers take on increased significance.

SAM, along with its globally dispersed variation, *Global Account Management* (GAM) is an exemplar of the new sales and marketing frontier. Bacon (1999) sees this new frontier of go-to-market system evolution as the new focus exchange interfaces connecting suppliers and their customers. Koerner (2000) speaks of suppliers achieving new competitive advantage in this frontier by a focus on and close alignment with any clearly defined strategic customer account no matter what geographic domain the account may encompass: national, regional, or global.

GLOBAL ACCOUNT MANAGEMENT (GAM)

Globalization

In 1983, Harvard professor Theodore Levitt (1983) proclaimed the globalization of markets. Since that time, companies headquartered in multiple countries have seemed to follow that proclamation. Expansion internationally remains in a long-term upward, albeit periodically choppy, trend. In the current short-term, we are witnessing global economic weakness as U.S. and other country firms delay globalization, however, many observers remain confident that the upward trend will resume with the resolution or, at minimum, control of current global uncertainty. For example, foreign investment by U.S. manufacturers fell 37% in 2002 having peaked at $58 billion

in 2000, the simultaneous peak of U.S. equity markets (IBD, 2003, May 13). *Nine/Eleven* exacerbated the threat of worldwide terrorism creating heightened uncertainty and precipitating the 2003 Iraq war. World health scares with the SARS epidemic has further dampened global companies expansion. However, the long-term upward trend of increased globalization is likely. Thus, from Levitt's 1983 proclamation to today, the globalization of enterprises has been remarkable and should continue.

Globalization is the progressive integration of financial, product, and labor markets across national boundaries (Jones, 2002). As companies, headquartered in varying countries expand their participation in other foreign countries, they face another need: The need to integrate their worldwide strategy. A worldwide or *global strategy* is very different from an older approach, *multinational* or *multi-local strategy*. A multi-local strategy is one in which companies set up decentralized foreign country subsidiaries that design, produce, and market products or services tailored to local needs. A truly global strategy is centralized and produces and sells worldwide while seeking global economies of scale.

> *An industry is global to the extent that there are intercountry connections. A strategy is global to the extent that it is integrated across countries. Global strategy should not be equated with any one element - standardized products or worldwide market coverage or a global manufacturing network. Global strategy should, instead, be a flexible combination of many elements* (Yip, 1992, p. 2).

George S. Yip (Yip, 1992) believes that the state of economic development in the world make it more likely that in many industries, a global strategy has the potential of being more successful than the older multi-local strategy. He also believes that successfully implementing a global strategy is easier today than before. First, worldwide economic development changes have driven the trend to using a global strategy versus a multi-local strategy. These changes include: (a) a growing similarity of countries and the products desired by their citizens, (b) reduction of tariffs and harmonization of trading areas such as the European Union and NAFTA, (c) growing expense of technology investments that are too expensive to be amortized in one country market only, (d) increased competition moving from a country-by-country basis to a global basis, and (e) most importantly the accelerating globalization of customers. Second, it is easier today to manage a global strategy from a more central center. The communications and information revolution dominated by the Internet has made it easier to communicate and control far flung operations. Improvements in air travel have also contributed to the ease of linking globally dispersed operations.

Most every industry has aspects that are global or partially global, but some industries have more and more intense global aspects. Practically, globalization and its effects are only found in the developed world where the 20/80 rule generally applies: 20% of the countries control 80% of world revenue. (Note: the *Triad* of North America, Europe, and Japanese centered Asia with China quickly coming on line). Thus, the geographic domain of globalization is relatively defined and the companies that play the global strategy game are also defined.

Global Account Management (GAM) is an economic exchange strategy through which a supplier firm attempts to carefully identify select globalized customers to which they can profitably match their capabilities. Thus, implicit in a GAM strategy is the proper selection of customers and the ability of supplier firms capabilities to match or fully address the worldwide needs of these global customers. Competitive advantage (Porter, 1985) is theorized to go to the supplier firm that integrates or closely matches and fulfills the customer's global strategy needs better than other competitors. GAM is a geographic extension of Strategic Account Management (SAM) discussed above as well as an advanced form of the third of Rackham's et al three distinct selling strategies discussed above: *Alliance/Partnership Selling Strategy* Rackham, Friedman, and Ruff, 1996 and Rackham and De Vincentis, 1999).

Global Account Management: Drivers & Performance –Benefits/Risks/Costs

Drivers. There are primarily three drivers of globalization and the use of Global Account Management (GAM) strategies:

1. *Globalization of markets* is the most salient driver of companies entering and expanding into global markets.

2. The *Zeitgeist* of *customer focus* is a key element of most successful business strategies. Thus, GAM strategies are an attempt to gain competitive advantage by fully serving global customer accounts.

3. *Competitive preemption and response* tends to reinforce and accelerate supplier companies chasing customers into global markets and implementing GAM strategies. If competitors are going global, so will other firms. (Yip, Montgomery, & Villalonga, 1998).

Performance Benefits. The overall benefits Global Account Management (GAM) are related to the extent and depth that a supplier firm appropriately responds to the drivers of globalization discussed above. Thus, to achieve benefits, a supplier firm must: (a) effectively and efficiently addresses global customer accounts with a specialized marketing channel, a GAM strategy; (b) Ensure that the specialized global customer account needs are fully satisfied by matching the supplier firm's resources to fulfill customer needs; and (c) Ensure that the supplier firm accomplishes "a" and "b" before or better than their competitors. Specific benefits of GAM include (Yip & Madsen, 1996):

1. The global supplier (using GAM) speaking to a global customer with one voice, thus avoiding having the supplier's subsidiaries compete with one another for a customer's business. A one voice approach avoids confusion for both the supplier firm and customer firm. This approach also instills confidence within the global customer account that the supplier can comprehensively satisfy its full range of needs.

2. Increased ability of the supplier firm to gain additional revenues from the customer's continued international expansion. Using GAM, the supplier and customer are in a very close relationship – almost a full partnership. Therefore, the supplier is normally privy to strategic customer moves. This proximity is 180 degrees from the distance and distrust characteristic of traditional transactional selling strategies.

3. Global economies of scope and scale through efficiency gains and reduced costs.

4. Raising customer switching costs through increased interdependence of the supplier firm and the customer firm. Increased interdependence potentially helps to create an enhanced long-term relationship which is a barrier to competition.

5. Good service at the GAM level can lead to reputation benefits that help the supplier to win business in new industries.

Performance Risks. There are several pitfalls that can potentially occur in a GAM Strategy:

1. Global customers may use the centralized contact (the GAM Manager) to demand that the lowest national or country price become the global price for the entire global customer account. Generally, an effective GAM manager will be able to provide justification for price differences between countries. At a minimum, a GAM strategy should anticipate this risk and appropriately negotiate with the global customer account.

2. Generally, a GAM strategy results in an overall average lower price to the global customer account. The problem comes when this lower price is imposed on the supplier but the customer demands higher service levels. The risk here is in negotiating uniform levels of service to be delivered to the customer in multiple countries by the supplier's subsidiaries servicing these customers.

3. Conflict with the suppliers' national or country level account managers serving country level subsidiaries of a customer account that is now viewed as a global account. When the supplier's GAM manager is given responsibility for all activities around the world for a designated Global Account, conflict is probable unless properly managed. The risk here is the GAM manager's loss of internal (supplier company) support.

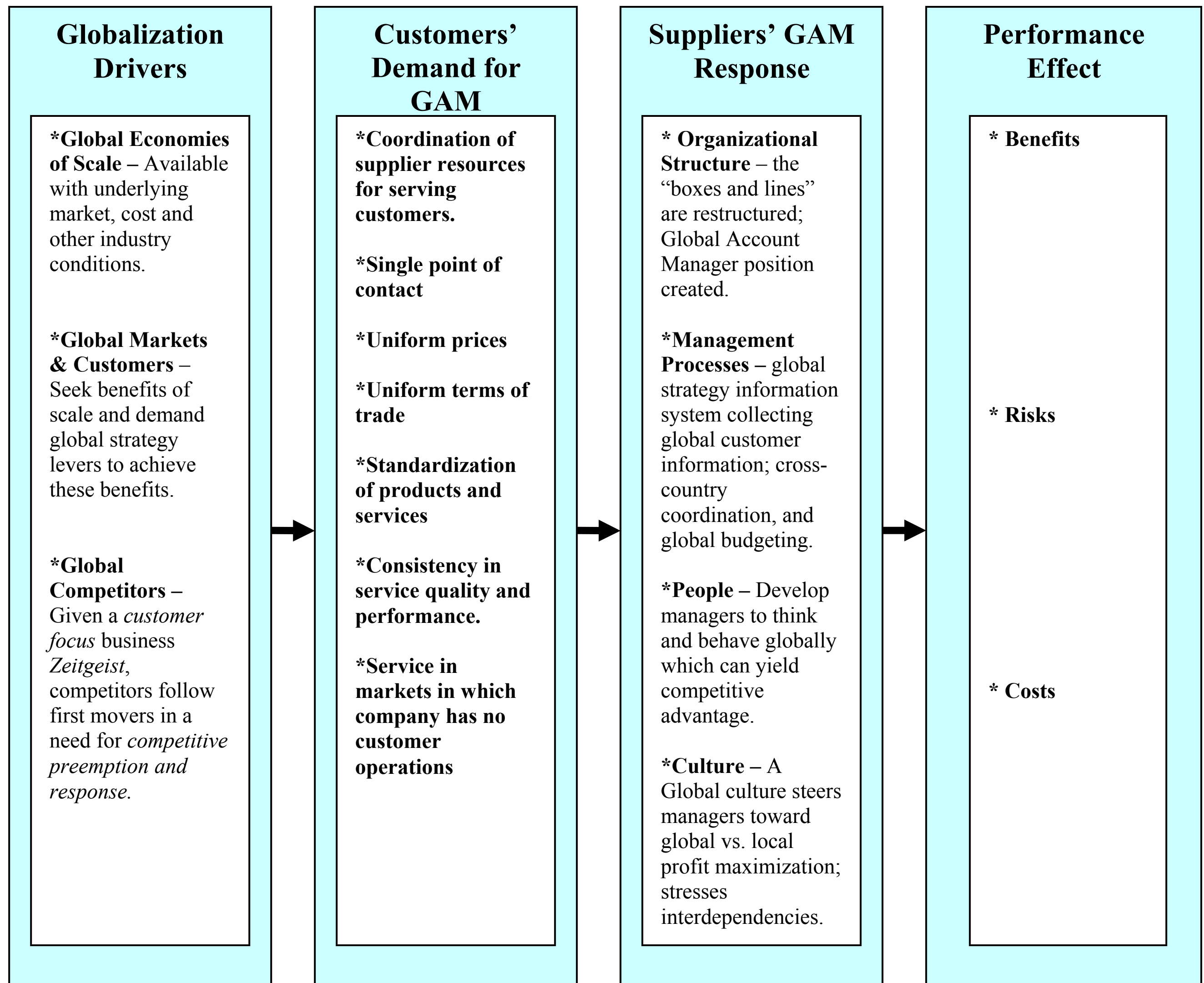
Performance Costs. Yip and Madsen (1996) briefly outline the costs of establishing a GAM strategy. They include:

1. Restructuring the supplier firm to accommodate the needs of a global customer account.
2. Hiring appropriate managers and other human resources with the ability to work internationally.
3. Obtaining the supplier firm's top management support and commitment to manage relationships of the global customer account.
4. Implementing feedback and co-ordination controls.
5. Establishing effective communications channels between all levels of management and across geographic boundaries.

The Demand For and Use of Global Account Management

In a 1998 study, George Yip, David Montgomery and Belen Villalonga (Yip, Montgomery, & Villalonga, 1998) developed a GAM model (Figure 1 – *Model of Global Account Management*) and studied the perceptions of 191 senior executives. They wanted to: (a) better understand the extent to which multinational companies (MNC) use global account management, (b) understand the determinants of GAM, and determine GAM's performance effects.

Figure 1: Model of Global Account Management (GAM)



Source: Adapted from Yip, Montgomery, and Villalonga, (1998)

The GAM model (Figure 1) illustrates two concepts discussed earlier: GAM Drivers and Performance Effects from GAM. Added to the model are: *Global Customers' Demand* (Need) *for GAM* and *Supplier's Response with a GAM strategy.* The logic is: Globalization drivers yield global customer accounts which demand or need special attention from suppliers. Suppliers respond with a GAM strategy to meet this demand. The results of implementing a GAM strategy yields performance effects: Benefits, risks and costs.

Generally, the study found that GAM use and performance effects are positively related to the customer's demand for it. And, that the customer's demand for it is determined by the degree that they are using a global strategy (as opposed to multi-local strategy). Specifically, the study indicated:

1. The more globalized customers are, the greater the extent to which they demand GAM.
2. Demand for GAM is greater now than in the past.

3. Uniform prices are not the most demanded aspect of GAM.
4. The greater the extent to which customers demand GAM, the greater the extent to which it is implemented within the supplier.
5. Most suppliers will adopt GAM with a lagged response to globalized customer's demands (with some indication that U.S. suppliers are responding more with GAM programs than are non-U.S. primarily European suppliers).
6. Most suppliers will make greater use of GAM in the future than they do today.
7. The use of *Global Account Managers* (usually former major account salespeople – author's note) and *Global Account Support* Staff is greater than other aspects of [the distinguishing marks of a fully established GAM program] the GAM program.
8. The greater the extent to which a supplier's GAM program responds to customers' demands for it, the more favorable the effect on supplier performance.

Examples of Pioneering GAM Companies

The Advertising Agencies. In the 1980s, globalization drivers, primarily the globalization of markets and customers, spurred them to adopt a GAM strategy. First, major customers such as Procter & Gamble and Unilever adopted a *Global Strategy* and began to act like global customers. They began to increasingly use global standardized advertising which necessitated that suppliers (advertisers) treat them as a global account by matching supply with customer needs. Second, one large agency (Saatchi & Saatchi) preemptively repositioned itself as a global agency. Thus, other agencies were compelled to meet this competition. Advertising agencies in the 1980s began to adopt GAM strategies to: (a) meet the needs of their customers and (b) to respond to competition (Yip & Madsen, 1996).

The Computer/Telecommunications Industries. In the late 1980s and early 1990s other firms in other industries followed the lead set by the advertising agencies.

1. IBM – Their worldwide customers demanded more consistent and service. IBM responded by establishing its Selected International Accounts (SIA) and addressing their needs with a GAM strategy. Organizationally, each SIA is supported by a SIA Manager (a Global Account Manager) who is responsible for the entire account. SIAs managers are stationed near the customer's (SIA's) headquarters. Regarding pricing, SIA's are provided discounts on global purchases and are guaranteed consistent terms and conditions.

2. Xerox – In 1990, Xerox implemented its GAM strategy. To be selected as a global account, Xerox requires that the account operate in at least two or more countries and be committed to operating under a GAM strategy. Each global account is assigned a senior level manager (Global Account Manager) who: (a) ensures delivery of Xerox product and services, (b) advises the customer of additional Xerox services, and (c) advises and participates in strategic sales calls.

3. AT & T - Global customers are identified as those who require worldwide services. AT & T provides its global customers with a single point of contact for domestic and international operations and consistent worldwide service for the global account.

4. Hewlett-Packard (HP) - In 1991, HP implemented a GAM strategy. Like other GAM programs, HP assigns a Global Account Manager to each global account. Responsibilities of HP GAM managers include: (a) worldwide customer sales, support, and satisfaction for global accounts, (b) assuring that HP is perceived as one company at all of the global account customer's locations, and (c) working with HP's senior management to ensure coordination of HP's ability to match its capabilities to customer's needs.

To further strengthen the GAM strategy, HP: (a) Measures performance on a global account basis and

(b) assigns GAM managers overall sales objective quotas on a synthesis basis of both a global account and non-global account basis – this solves an accountability problem inherent in HP's matrix management organizational structure.

The GAM strategy improved financial performance. In 1993 and 1994, the GAM strategy was HP's fastest growing go-to-market channel (Yip & Madsen, 1996).

The Hospitality Industry. In the late 1990s, Marriott International began a pioneering effort to adopt a GAM strategy. Learning from the successful examples in other industries, Marriott has the distinction of being the first hospitality firm to successfully initiate a GAM strategy. The following is a brief overview of their GAM efforts.

Marriott International and Global Account Management (GAM)

In 1927, J. Willard and Alice S. Marriott opened a nine-stool A & W Root Beer stand. Today, headquartered in Washington, D.C., Marriott International has grown to approximately 144,000 employees and fiscal year 2001 reported system-wide sales of $ 20 billion.

Marriott International is a leading worldwide hospitality company with over 2,600 operating units in the United States and 65 other countries and territories. Marriott International operates and franchises hotels under the Marriott, JW Marriott, The Ritz-Carlton, Renaissance, Residence Inn, Courtyard, TownePlace Suites, Fairfield Inn, SpringHill Suites and Ramada International brand names; develops and operates vacation ownership resorts under the Marriott Vacation Club International, Horizons, The Ritz- Carlton Club and Marriott Grand Residence Club brands; operates Marriott Executive Apartments; provides furnished corporate housing through its Marriott ExecuStay division; and operates conference centers (Marder, 2003, January 15).

In an April 24, 2003 press release Marriott International reported that despite the current travel industry slowdown and uncertainty of terrorism and SARS they will continue to grow. "We continue to expect to add between 25,000 and 30,000 hotel rooms annually in 2003 and 2004 to our worldwide lodging portfolio (Marder, 2003, April 24, p. 1)."

The following is an exemplar mini-case briefly describing Marriott International's entry into Global Account Management (GAM). The discussion is guided by the model (Figure 1) adapted from Yip, Montgomery, and Villaloga (1998).

Global Customer Demand for GAM

Given Marriott's global presence and its wide range of hotel brands and types, it is well positioned to provide hotel accommodations and other hospitality services to selected global accounts. For example, a globally dispersed customer has many and varied hospitality needs such as: high-end executive meetings, economical training meetings, frequent business travel at moderately priced hotels, extended stay for relocating personnel or extended customer projects, etc. Thus, selected global account customers might find it more economical to establish a GAM relationship with Marriott. Marriott International recognized this potential in the mid-1990s.

On April 15, 1996, Marriott International's Lodging Sales 2000 Task Force circulated an internal memo to all Marriott hotel managers. It was designed as a piece to solicit feedback to the Task Force from the Marriott field management. This memo stated that the task force had been working on this project since mid-1995 and outlined the rationale for the reorganization effort labeled, *Lodging Sales 2000.* Implementation of the project was projected to be the first quarter of 1997. As we will see later, this initial realignment evolved into the Marriott GAM: *Global*

Sales Organization. The following are highlighted research findings that spurred Marriott's sales force reorganization (Hanks, 1996, April 15):

1. Customer Demand for Coordination of Supplier Resources to Serve Customer. Research indicates that no one organization or person has the responsibility to coordinate sale/service strategy and direction among the Marriott hotel brands. This current organization structure provides little integration between sales initiatives. A large portion of Marriott's business is routine and does not coordinate or focus Marriott's resources to best address customers: Small meetings account for 90% of group business transactions but 35% of revenue. Should we focus our expensive sale force on larger accounts and find other, less expensive ways, to serve small groups?

2. Customer Demand for a Single Point of Contact. Major customers are confused by and find inefficient the multiplicity of contact points with Marriott as a supplier. Over 23 different ways of buying from and interfacing with Marriott were documented by research. Operating within Marriott there is over 40 independent sales structures.

3. Customer Demand for Standardization of Products and Services. Customers are showing less allegiance to individual hotel companies and are becoming more brand indifferent.

4. Customer Demand Consistency in Service Quality and Performance. Marriott's sales force is a single-hotel focused, transaction-oriented, and primarily reactive. Customers are satisfied with Marriott's service, yet Marriott fails to deliver in a consistent manner across brands and properties. Consistency is required for competitive advantage.

5. Competitive Reorganization Drivers. (a) Competitors are actively changing sales processes and systems to improve and seek competitive advantage, (b) Marriott's sales technology lags some of our competitors, and (c) Marriott has benchmarked against world class sales/service organizations in other industries outside the hotel business.

Marriott International's Global Account Management Response

Marriott International reorganized its sales force to address customer demand. The response was labeled, *Global Sales Organization* (GSO). Let's let Marriott International directly explain GSO:

The Global Sales Organization manages a vast global portfolio that includes both direct and distribution sales efforts. This sales team operates above market-level sales activity leveraging Marriott's strength in the global marketplace with highly valued customer and market segments whose activity in the hospitality industry impacts all Marriott brands. With locations in all major international markets, the associates of our global sales offices manage relationships with their corporate and association customers, including FIT producers and leisure travel providers around the world. The GSO widens its reach with the addition of General Sales Agent in over 50 countries. These teams act as Marriott representatives in countries where Marriott has less of a market presence, and generate business by influencing outbound travel from their respective areas to Marriott brands worldwide. (MARRWEB 2002, May, p. 1).

Marriott's GSO is distinguished by its:

1. Central global leadership
2. Consolidated organization and integrated Global and Market Sales approach.
3. Broad, deep, and strategic customer relationships spanning all business segments worldwide.
4. Customer and sales associate support services.
5. Strong global brands and distribution.

The GSO sales force is referred to as a coordinated cluster of *Sales Engines*. The GSO structure coordinates the activities of these sales engines to avoid unnecessary duplication of efforts as well as to present a single face to the customer. The sales engines are organized around key strategic accounts that support all business segments including Group, Business and Leisure Transient, Extended-Stay and Special Segments. Marriott's GAM manager equivalent sales engine manages ALL select global accounts' needs. Other sales engines specialize in other market segments. When a global account needs products and services that can best be provided by other specialized sales engines, these appropriate specialized sales engines are summoned to team effort by the GAM managers. GSO also includes a *Global Sales Services & Support* (GS3) to support all of GSO's efforts (MARRWEB 2002, May). The following are Marriott International's seven sales engines:

1. **(a) *Alliance Account & (b) National/Multi-National Accounts* Managers**. These sales managers are equivalent to Neil Rackham's (Rackham & De Vincentis, 1999) *Alliance/Partnership* salespeople and *Strategic Account Managers* and *Global Account Managers.* These two sets of account managers manage Global and Multinational customer accounts. Which experience a wide distribution of travel, operate some type of a centralized buying source and have requirements or needs that are more complex than can be handled at a regional or local level. These account managers are responsible for the development of the overall account strategy, establishing joint initiatives with the customer, and involving internal resources to successfully achieve partnership status with these highly valued accounts. The account team leaders leverage the power of all market, cluster and local sales efforts by directing integrated global sales and service teams, which are customized to an account's specific need. They identify key buyers in every revenue stream (business transient, group, extended stay) and deploy/match Marriott salespeople against each buyer to gain share and achieve competitive advantage at every level, for all Marriott brands worldwide. **Note:** These account managers do not specialize only in group or transient business, but handle **ALL** of the hospitality needs of their global customer accounts. They do this by coordinating with other managers who are specializing in the sales engines described below.

Marriott International's *Alliance Account Program* (Marriott's Global Account Management channel) selectively focuses on customer accounts with $25 million in actual or potential lodging spent per year for Marriott. But the program is not just looking for dollars. It looks for accounts whose culture aligns with that of Marriott. It looks for market leaders, for those customers looking to reduce their supplier base and for those accounts that currently partner with key suppliers. The program's goals are to increase the targeted accounts' global preference for Marriott's brands, to increase global loyalty to Marriott's brands and to increase profitable global share of each account's business. The Alliance Account Program doesn't simply sell rooms – it sells productivity, business solutions and strategic relationships. It sells Marriott's core competencies (Sperry, 2002, summer).

2. ***National Group Account Managers (NGA).*** These sales managers are equivalent to Neil Rackham's (Rackham & De Vincentis, 1999) *Consultative* salespeople. Accounts managed include: Large group business from both national and internationally based associations, corporate, special market and intermediary (incentive, site selection, full-service meeting management companies). The NGA team focuses on accounts that produce large to mid-size meetings. When the NGAs are working on accounts that are part of the *global customer accounts* managed by the Alliance and National/Multi-National Managers, NGA managers coordinate and act as group segment specialists.

3. ***EventCom Technologies.*** Accounts handled are any business requiring a technology link to single and multiple sites worldwide. EventCom is a department within NGA and serves both GSO and non-GSO customers to facilitate technology-based meetings.

4. ***National Group Sales Managers (NGS).*** These sales managers are equivalent to Neil Rackham's (Rackham & De Vincentis, 1999) *Transactional* salespeople. NGS salespeople handle small to medium, high transactional accounts that buy nationally. This team is responsible for handling requests of 10 to 249 peak rooms. NGS runs the *National Group Sales Desk*, *Internet Sales* desk (respond to incoming Internet RFPs), the *Extended Stay Housing Solution Desk*, *National Catering Accounts*, *International Desk*, *Sports Market* and *Telesales*. NGS operates on both in inbound call/request or outbound basis. They manage all needs of a small group from initial inquiry to final disposition. In addition, as small meeting specialists, they coordinate with the Alliance Account

&National/Multi-National Accounts Managers to help them fulfill the needs of global customer accounts (when the global account needs a small meeting).

5. ***Wholesale and Receptive Operators Managers.*** These sales managers handle inbound receptive operators, domestic wholesalers and international wholesaler customer accounts. This selling team I made up of *proactive*; they actively seek out business versus *react* to incoming calls from the customer.

6. ***Travel Sales.*** Accounts handled include: Large travel management companies and American Automobile Association.

7. ***Global Sales Service & Support (GS3).*** The GSO sales force receives support through this dedicated team of professionals who carry the responsibility of providing products, services and programs that are necessary to position Marriott International as the leading business solution provider within the hospitality industry.

Performance Effects

In 2001, with seven distinct sales engines and over 300 sales associates, the GSO portfolio of accounts generated over $4 Billion (US) in revenue. This represents 20% of Marriott International system wide revenue. This business represents 32 million *room nights* across all brands, worldwide.

Recognizing Marriott's successful sales force restructuring and performance, in 2002, the Strategic Account Management Association (SAMA) awarded Marriott International prestigious *SAMA Performance Award* (Sperry, 2002, Summer). Marriott, however, is not new to the restructuring game. In 1996, Marriott first initiated radical sales force restructuring and by 2000 became the first hospitality firm ever to win *Sales & Marketing Management (SMM)* Magazine's ranking in its *Top 25 Sales Forces of the Year (SMM, 2000, July).*

For the purposes of clarity, it must be emphasized that Marriott did not simply scrap all previous approaches to selling in favor of alliance selling. As with all things, over time the new is phased in and coordinated with the old. Overtime and with experience, the organization learns and evolves. In Marriott's case, traditional sales technologies are, at least in the present, operating simultaneously with their newest innovations. And, judging by the results cited above, Marriott has been very successful.

Marriott did not wholly invent the GAM/Alliance account approach to selling. They began rethinking and then restructuring their sales force based upon and after careful study of previously reengineered sales force models operating in other industries. These other industries, too, had found their inspiration for restructuring from other sources. By the late 1980s and 1990s industry experts and academicians began reporting the changing structures of American businesses in the wake of the 1980s *Quality Movement* and the early 1990s *Reengineering Movement*. Marriott's winning example has not ignored by Hilton, Hyatt, and many other major hospitality firms. They, too, have begun rethinking and restructuring their sales forces. However, Marriott was a first mover in the hospitality industry. It learned best practices lessons from outside its industry, implemented them, and entered history as the first hospitality firm to institute a successful Global Account Management strategy.

CONCLUSIONS

Go-to-Market systems are defined as the full array of multiple marketing channels that link and facilitated economic exchange between the supplying firm and the customer firm. These channels include: sales through Internet, telemarketing, distributors, field salespeople (transactional and consultative), and specialized salespeople/facilitators (alliance/partnership or SAM and GAM).

This article focused on the frontier of go-to-market systems. We focused on the salesperson channel with the array of multiple marketing channels. We further narrowed our focus by examining the most sophisticated form of salesperson channel – Global Account Management (GAM).

After providing a brief history of selling from traditional to Strategic Account Management (SAM), we examined the dimensions of Global Account Management (GAM). We then illustrated the GAM strategy with a mini-case of Marriott International – the first hospitality firm to pioneer the GAM strategy.

We now conclude with answers to the problems poised at the beginning. The answers given are not to be considered as definitive, but are provided to stimulate thought. Our purpose has been to stimulate both industry and academicians to rethink their current potentially limited view of selling and salespeople. Our intent is to urge readers to seek more information and in the process improve praxis. Now, problems and answers:

1. Selling has traditionally been taught and practiced utilizing methodologies designed over 80 years ago. Does such a single selling methodology describe and inform today's go-to-market or selling realities?

No. Today's selling world is very different from 1922 when Edward K. Strong codified his selling methodology. As discussed, salespeople were heavily employed in selling to consumers – the B2C markets. Additionally, customers both in both B2C and B2B markets have many choices in when, where, and how they wish to conduct exchanges with supplier firms. Today, we live in a world of multiple channel go-to-market systems.

2. Does a methodology appropriate for one time and place have viability and instructive power in today's changed environment?

No. The world is ever changing with technological and communication advances that permits managerial business processes coordination at increases levels of effectiveness and efficiencies. Selling once was once only possible on a person-to-person basis and on a provincial geographic scale. Today, selling is conducted electronically and on a global scale. Geographic proximity is no longer a barrier.

3. What remains familiar and what has changed?

Customer focus. Selling methodologies over 80 years ago stressed satisfying the motivations (fear or greed) of customers. These motivations are basic customer needs. A GAM strategy theorizes that if a supplier company can match its resources to fully satisfy the global customer account's needs, then they will achieve competitive advantage. Thus, satisfying customer needs is the unifying and familiar characteristic that transcends time. What has changed is the complexity of needs and the means through which are addressed.

4. What is this new go-to-market frontier that heralds the new realities of the 21st Century?

A highly coordinated system. GAM relies on technology and communication; however it is distinguished by the full support and coordination of all key human resources and business processes to match their capabilities to the goal of satisfying customer needs. Strategic and planned coordination is the emblematic mark of a GAM strategy. The example and learning that takes place from pursuing a GAM strategy (currently only a single marketing channel) will eventually influence and color ALL of the marketing channels in an organization's go-to-market system.

5. What can the most highly evolved form of selling/exchange, Global Account Management (GAM), tell us about the shape of future go-to-market systems and the place of the salesperson/facilitator in this system?

A reduction in the number of people defined as *salespeople*. Generally, simple products both in the B2C and B2B market place will be sold through electronic and non-personal channels. Complex products will be sold by a few well educated consultative salespeople and selling team support. Consultative salespeople will be transformed into even fewer SAM and GAM account managers/facilitators with technical support teams. People who enjoy the

economic exchange or selling process will find an outlet in the above mentioned environment. However, they will not be called salespeople.

Global Account Management is a single marketing channel within a multiple channel go-to-market system. It's complexity and sophistication of execution places it at the frontier of economic exchange processes. It is expected to accelerate and form the basis of global competition in the twenty-first century. This should cause academicians and industry practitioners to rethink the way they teach and practice sales.

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