

Title: Profanity in language in the sales setting: Sales meeting vs. Customer interactions

This research seeks to understand the phenomena often depicted in entertainment (Glengarry Glen Ross, Car Dogs, etc.) that sales people often curse and use profanity in the work place, at sales meetings, or during interaction among themselves. We wanted to find out how close these accusations by cinema are to reality. We would like to ask a few research questions: To what extent do sales people push the boundaries of social taboo in language? What is the cause of this? Our current hypotheses draw from two psychological mechanisms: 1. Sales people do this to release their stress; 2. They do this to motivate themselves and each other. We may also look into the interaction effect of these two mechanisms.

Our preliminary research results from the field (Prechel) and from popular culture (Perez) confirms some of our hypotheses. In both cases, we are looking into the automotive retail setting. In real life, Prechel observed a sales person cursing and swearing among themselves and even with selected customers. In entertainment, Perez's content analysis of the movie "Car Dogs" shows that sales people curse constantly throughout their day at work. We plan to collect more data and try to identify the impact of this type of behavior on sales performance.

Key words: sales, swearing, cursing, psychological process, sales performance.