

# **THE ROLE OF THE SALES PROCESS AT TRADE SHOWS**

by

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## ABSTRACT

### THE ROLE OF THE SALES PROCESS AT TRADE SHOWS

Business-to-business (B2B) marketing is one of the most underestimated and under-researched fields in marketing. Due to the unique characteristics of B2B markets, the emphasis has always been on one-on-one communication between the seller and the buyer. This means that in the communication mix, elements – such as personal selling and trade shows – play an important role in the selling and marketing of a business product and the accompanying services.

There is an indication that there will be a growth in the trade-show industry, as well as in B2B marketing. There is also an element of uncertainty on the role of personal selling, and more specifically, the sales process at trade shows. Previous studies focused on the general activities at trade shows; but none focused on the sales process that is interlinked with trade shows. Therefore, an explorative study was done to determine the role of the sales process at trade shows; so as to guide exhibitors on what to do when exhibiting.

A number of studies (Godar & O`Conner, 2007; Gopalakrishna & Lilian, 1992 and Sharland & Balogh, 1996) pointed to the role that trade shows plays in the buying task and buying stages of attendees at trade shows. In these studies the findings indicated that trade shows do not play such an important role throughout the whole of the buying process of attendees. However, studies by Bresler (2009) and Keswell (2010) pointed to the importance of trade shows in South Africa. Smith, Gopalakrishna and Smith (1999) indicated that trade shows play a major role in attendees moving through the buying process and therefore relates to the faster completion of the sales process resulting in better personal selling efficiency. This study contributes to the before mentioned studies by indicating specific actions in the selling process this can help exhibitors to improve the buying process. The findings of this study can assist the trade show industry to provide guidelines for exhibitors.

A multi-stage sample plan was followed; and a self-administered questionnaire was used to gather the data for the study from exhibitors at trade shows. To establish the factors of the stages of the sales process at trade shows, a Principal factor analysis with Varimax rotation that is explorative in nature was done. A further investigation was done for the sales process on the differences regarding (a) salespeople versus non-salespeople; (b) the type of trade show and (c) the business operations of exhibitors were assessed by means of an ANOVA, t-test, and MANOVA.

The findings depict the various factors that make up the different stages of the sales process during the pre- and at-show stage of a trade show. Firstly, the business actions of exhibitors were investigated that included a number of elements such as: trade-show marketing; written objectives; trade-show evaluation and plan, staff improvement, new product and non-financial success to name a few. Thereafter, the stages of sales process at trade shows were investigated. The first stage dealt with pre-show marketing activities used to attract attendees to the trade show indicated two factors: direct communication and promotional elements. The second stage on the at-show marketing activities used to attract attendees to the business exhibit stand at the trade show comprised two factors: trade-show sponsorship and promotional tools. The third stage deals with the sales presentation at a trade show; and it had four factors that were identified, namely: presentation methods; presentation actions; approach method and questions approach. The fourth stage dealt with objections experienced; and two factors were identified: manifested objections, and latent objections. The fifth stage deals with dealing with objections; the factors identified included standard-objection solutions and product-objection solutions. The last stage dealt with the closing methods; and two factors were identified: typical closing and product closing.

Differences were identified between sales and non-sales persons for “presentation methods”, “presentation actions” and “question approach”. All of these factors deal with actions during the sales presentation. Non-sales exhibit staff in many cases does not have the experience that sales persons of the business have, especially on how to communicate during the sales presentation. Sales staff will also be more aware of the different sales methods and how to use these methods in

different sales situations. From the findings what is of concern is that both sales and non-sales staff indicate that they do not really make use of closing methods to close the sale.

Regarding the type of trade shows (international, national or regional) there were no differences for pre-show marketing activities, at-show marketing activities, the sales presentation and closing method used for the stages of the sales process there were no differences. These findings are very interesting; since for elements, such as the marketing activities before and at the trade show, one would assume that different approaches would be applied. International trade shows would, for example, rely more on electronic and mass-promotional mix elements; since it is not possible for their sales staff to visit all the possible prospects.

Concerning the business operations (sales of goods or service industry/professionals or construction/manufacturing or other) of exhibitors and how they implement the stages of the sales process there were no significant differences evident. That means that the operations of a business have no impact on the sales process at trade shows.

The findings of this study also provides an encouraging outcome for trade show role players in that there are not major differences for sales versus non-sales persons, type of trade show or business operations of the exhibitors. This provides an opportunity for general sales guidelines to be developed to improve the effectiveness of the sales process. Furthermore, the training of exhibit staff can be done more effectively and efficiently since there are no specialised requirements. Trade show organisers will benefit since material developed can be standardised for all types of trade shows.

This study provides an interesting starting point for future research to combine the findings of this study with other studies that focus on the procurement needs of attendees of trade shows, such as Brelser (2009) and Smith *et al.* (1999). One of the main contributions of this study is that it provides a comprehensive sales process for trade shows with insights into the various sub-stages. Finally, in Chapter 7 a comprehensive figure illustrates the interconnectedness between the

various stages of the sale process with trade show activities and the attendees' decision-making buying process. With this holistic overview conceptualisation is provided on how the sales process can be integrated into the buying process and stages of a trade show. The identification of the different actions can be an invaluable tool for researchers that want to expand on/or link the sales process and buying process at trade shows.

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

#### 1.1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

*“Virtually all experts surveyed confirmed that personal contact between decision-makers, companies and customers in attractive, emotionalised setting will still be highly valued in 2020”.*- Kirchgeorg *et al.* (2010b:310) on trade shows

In today's competitive business-to-business markets, companies must make use of all possible methods, in order to gain a competitive advantage. Business markets are unique to consumer markets; therefore marketing plans must be developed specifically for the requirements of business-to-business selling (Lilien & Grewal, 2012:3). An important facet of business marketing is the integrated marketing communication mix (IMC) used to communicate with the selected target markets. The IMC mix provides a multitude of methods whereby a business can communicate with its target audience, which would include: trade shows, advertising, sales promotions, personal selling, direct marketing and the internet (Ellis, 2011:301; Dwyer & Tanner, 2009:296-299). Kellizi (2013:265) point out that trade shows is an integral part of the IMC strategy to ensure that business reach their customers. However, the cost involved with the IMC mix in business-to-business marketing has forced organisations to take a new look at the methods used to market products and to provide services to customers.

Business markets have unique characteristics, such as: fewer buyers, quantity purchased, larger volume buyers, geographically concentrated buyers, more direct distribution, professional buyers and numerous buying influences (Lilien & Grewal, 2012:3). The specific characteristics of business markets lead to communication channels being shorter; and an emphasis being placed on direct selling. Due to the differences in business-to-business markets, organisations select IMC elements that are more direct and personal in nature (Ellis, 2011:97). One of the marketing communication tools used in business-to-business markets is trade shows. These are an essential part of the sales and marketing process providing

an opportunity for direct communication with customers, and better potential customers (Clow & Baack, 2014:358; Stevens, 2005:1).

The effectiveness of trade shows, however, depends on whether they are accepted as a marketing tool by the marketing and sales departments of businesses and, how effectively the sales process is utilised at trade shows.

Marketing managers in business-to-business markets have ignored the important role of trade shows in the IMC mix. Pitta, Weisgal and Lynagh, (2006:159) note that trade shows are not clearly understood by industrial organisations; although they are the most cost-effective means of reaching customers and for providing them with the necessary hands-on knowledge and information. As noted by Andreae, Hsu and Norcliffe (2014:200) trade shows is seen as a space where attendees are wooed and seduced by the performance of actors (exhibit stand staff) and, products out of existing customer relationships into new trading relationships.

Tafesse (2013:1009-1010) and Bello and Barczak (1990:43) agree with Pitta *et al.* (2006:159) that trade shows are a major promotional tool for industrial firms; and these authors add that many businesses fail to exploit their full marketing potential as a marketing communication medium. The sales force of an organisation uses trade shows to find sales leads, to inform and educate the customers, to demonstrate their products, and/or sell products and services (Manning, Ahearne & Reece, 2014:210). Semenik (2002:404) confirms that trade shows are a major promotional tool – by indicating that they form a significant resource to reach potential wholesalers and distributors for an organisation's brand in business-to-business markets.

Although trade shows form an important promotional tool, they have received little attention from academics in terms of their evolution and theoretical development (Gottlieb, Brown & Drennan, 2011:1642; Wilkinson & Brouthers, 2006:238).

Even with the trade shows not being used to their full marketing potential, sales people do apply them to a certain extent (Smith *et al.*, 1999). The sales force of an

organisation uses trade shows to find sales leads, to inform and educate their customers, and to demonstrate their products, and/or sell products and services (Yuksel & Voola, 2010:293). Previous research has addressed a number of theories on the role of personal selling at trade shows. These aspects include: what sales actions are taken by sales people before, at, and after, a trade show. Elements, on the pre-, at- and post-show activities such as how attendees are invited to trade shows; what sales methods are used; how exhibitors follow up after the show were investigated (Adcock, Halborg & Ross, 2001:345; Manning & Reece, 2001:172, Naudi, 2006:11, Valero, 2006:3, Pitta *et al.*, 2006:159, Drohan, 2007:32; Ling-Yee, 2008:35; van Eck, 2008:11; Gopalakrishna, Roster & Sridhar, 2010:245; Rinaldo, Borghini & Golfetto, 2010:255; Blyth, 2010:57; Yuksel & Voola, 2010:293).

The above-mentioned research, however, focused on general selling – and not on the sales process as such – at trade shows. It must also be noted that little or no research were done up to 2014 before data gathering was done for this study in the South African context. Two South African studies were found. The first study focused on the financial contribution of trade shows and the second on what attracts attendees to trade shows. In the literature chapters of this study, the previous local as well as international research on selling at trade shows will be discussed in more detail.

## **1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT**

According to Pitta *et al.* (2006:159), 70 percent of trade show attendees plan to buy products that is offered by exhibitors at trade shows, 75 percent actually make a purchase, and 90 percent indicated that a trade show influence their purchases decision. Furthermore, Gopalakrishna *et al.* (1995:79) indicate that trade shows move possible buyers through the buying process and reduce the need for marketing communication activities after the show. In a study in Germany by Kirchgeorge, Springer and Kästner (2010a:67) the findings was similar that trade shows is an effective instrument in building customer relationships and move customers through the phases of purchasing of a brand. In a study done by

Bresler (2009) that focused on attendees' procurement needs when attending a trade show in South Africa found contradictions regarding buying at the show.

Besler (2009:6) indicate in a study done in 2004 and the follow-up study in 2006 that there was a decrease of 52.2 percent in the buying intent of attendees at trade shows. It must however, be noted that although there was a decrease in purchasing, some attendees still planned to buy capital items exhibited at the trade show (Bresler, 2009:10). The concern still remains that there is a decrease in the purchasing intent of buyers. This trend of not selling at trade shows is nothing new with earlier research also referring to this problem (Hansen, 1996:41). To ensure that attendees purchase, exhibitors have to sell at a trade show. Ling-Yee (2007:35) states that at trade shows attendees goes through a buying process, while exhibitors on the other hand is involve in a multi-stage selling process.

There is therefore a link between the buying phases of attendees and the sales process (Smith *et al.*, 1999). The question however is how applicable is the sales process at trade shows? Åge (2011:19) indicate that due to the dynamic nature of B2B selling the so called "seven stages of selling" must be adapted. The seven stages was later adapted to the ten stage selling process due to stronger focus on customer relationship building and the integration of technology in sales (Futrell, 2011:228; Long, Tellefsen & Lichtenthal, 2007:667).

A conceptual frame work was developed by Gopalakrishna and Lilein (1995:25) that included the sales process at trade shows with six stages namely: prospecting; opening relationship and qualifying attendee; presenting the sales message; closing the sale and account service. A study by Ling-Yee (2008:43-44) found that the Gopalakrishna and Lilein (1995:25) sales process oversimplifies the relationship between exhibitors inputs, process and outputs. It is therefore advisable to adapt the sales process for trade shows that is part of B2B markets (Sirias, Krupp & Biskup, 2013:9).

According to Parvinen, Aspara, Kajalo and Hietanen (2013:242), in B2B markets researchers should study the sales process to enhance their sales activities. This is supported by Borg and Young (2014:550) that the sales process should be

expanded to include the nature and purpose of selling activities in B2B markets. In South Africa context little research could be found investigating the sales process and trade shows. This lack of research, competitive B2B markets and growth of trade shows as a marketing communication tool as pointed out in Chapter 3, requires the investigation of the role of the sales process within trade shows in a B2B context.

Once literature was investigated pertaining to trade shows and the sales process and a gap was evident (Step one), the second step was to establish an industry perspective on the problem identified. Malhotra (2010:72) states that one of the ways to help formulate the research problem is to interview industry experts. In Chapter 5 a synopsis of an interview held with Mr. Gary Corin is included on the topic of the role of selling at trade shows. Mr. Corin is the Managing Director of Specialised Exhibitions Montgomery the largest B2B exhibition organiser in South Africa (Tassiopoulos, 2010). Some of the main concerns evolved around the lack of knowledge on the sales process at tradeshow and some more specific concerns identified in the interview were that: exhibitors do not set objectives especially for sales and the obtaining of sales leads, and that exhibit staff lack sales knowledge and skills to sell effectively at trade show.

Research on the role of the sales process will assist exhibitors to enhance their selling activities at trade shows and provide industry with sales guidelines that can be provided to exhibit staff to improve value.

### **1.3 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES AND HYPOTHESES**

As stated above, there is no clear indication of the role that of the sales process plays at trade shows and exhibitors are unclear on what sales activities takes place. To achieve the objectives of the study four South African trade shows was used that operates in the business-to-business sector.

The **main objective** of this study is, therefore, to explore the stages of the sales process and its sub-stages at trade shows.

Through focusing on selected trade shows in South Africa, the following research objectives and hypotheses were set for this study:

- To determine the profile of exhibitors at trade shows and exhibit staff.
  - To determine if sub-stages exists within each of the stages of the sales process at trade shows.
  - To determine if sales persons and non-sales persons differ regarding the sales process followed at trade shows.
- H<sub>01</sub> There exist no significant differences between sales persons and non-sales persons regarding business actions used.
- H<sub>02</sub> There exist no significant differences between sales persons and non-sales persons regarding pre-show marketing activities.
- H<sub>03</sub> There exist no significant differences between sales persons and non-sales persons regarding at-show marketing activities.
- H<sub>04</sub> There exist no significant differences between sales persons and non-sales persons regarding the sales presentation.
- H<sub>05</sub> There exist no significant differences between sales persons and non-sales persons regarding objections experienced.
- H<sub>06</sub> There exist no significant differences between sales persons and non-sales persons regarding dealing with objections.
- H<sub>07</sub> There exist no significant differences between sales persons and non-sales persons regarding closing methods.
- 
- To determine if the various types of trade shows influence the sales process followed.
- H<sub>09</sub> There exist no significant differences for the type of trade show regarding pre-show marketing activities.
- H<sub>010</sub> There exist no significant differences for the type of trade show regarding at-show marketing activities.
- H<sub>011</sub> There exist no significant differences for the type of trade show regarding the sales presentation.
- H<sub>012</sub> There exist no significant differences for the type of trade show regarding objections experienced.

- H<sub>o13</sub> There exist no significant differences for the type of trade show regarding dealing with objections.
- H<sub>o14</sub> There exist no significant differences for the type of trade show regarding closing methods.
- To determine if the type of business operations of an exhibitor influence the sales process followed at trade shows.
- H<sub>o15</sub> There is no significant differences for business operations of an exhibitor regarding business actions used.
- H<sub>o16</sub> There is no significant differences for business operations of an exhibitor regarding pre-show marketing activities.
- H<sub>o17</sub> There is no significant differences for business operations of an exhibitor regarding at-show marketing activities.
- H<sub>o18</sub> There is no significant differences for business operations of an exhibitor regarding the sales presentation.
- H<sub>o19</sub> There is no significant differences for business operations of an exhibitor regarding objections experienced.
- H<sub>o20</sub> There is no significant differences for business operations of an exhibitor regarding dealing with objections.
- H<sub>o21</sub> There is no significant differences for business operations of an exhibitor regarding closing methods.

The above objectives and hypothesis was set to endeavour to contribute to academia and industry. In Section 1.8 the contribution of the study as a result of investigating the objectives and hypotheses, is indicated.

The rest of this chapter consists of, firstly, a definition of the key terms, followed by a short background with the literature review on business-to-business (B2B) marketing, trade shows and personal selling. Then, the research design and methods that were followed are discussed. Finally, the outline of the thesis is provided.

## 1.4 DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

Before the literature review is discussed, it is necessary to clarify the meaning of certain key concepts used in this study, as well as the context in which they are used. The following concepts are explained:

**Business-to-business marketing:** Organisation-to-organisation marketing, industrial marketing, and organisational marketing. These are all synonyms for business-to-business marketing, as used in the literature. Business-to-business marketing is the marketing of products or services to other companies, government, institutions (hospitals, universities) and other organisations (Halvadar, 2014:1; Dwyer & Tanner, 2002:6). Pride and Ferrel (2011:3) point out that B2B marketing is the marketing of goods and/or services in industries, which comprises those markets essentially for the production process or the provision of services, as well as marketing to organisational buyers and users. Sarin (2013:4) indicates that business marketing is the activities of building mutually value generating relationships between organisations.

Business-to-business marketing takes place whenever a product or service is sold for any other purpose than personal consumption. Therefore, business-to-business marketing involves different channel members who do not only include industrial organisations, but also wholesalers, retailers and organisations of different sizes. In this proposal, business-to-business marketing will be used throughout; and it will be discussed in **Chapter Two**.

**Integrated marketing communication:** Clow and Baack (2014:20) defines IMC as “the coordination and integration of all marketing communication tools, avenues, and sources in a company into a seamless program to maximize the impact on customers and other stakeholders”. Kotler and Keller (2006:558) point out that IMC is the creation of a comprehensive plan for all the elements that make up marketing communication. Semenik (2002:8) defines IMC as follows “...the process of using promotional tools in a unified way, so that a synergistic communication effect is created”. Lamb, Hair, McDaniel, Boshoff and Terblanche (2015:315) refer to the IMC mix as the promotional mix; and they indicate that it

consists of numerous elements, which include advertising, public relationships, publicity, personal selling and sales promotion. It may, therefore, be concluded that the IMC mix is the process of combining all the elements of marketing communication, in order to give a unified message to the customer. This would include trade shows and personal selling. The IMC mix is discussed in **Chapter Two** as a part of business-to-business marketing.

**Trade shows:** Exhibitions can be divided into three categories, namely: trade and consumer exhibitions, agricultural shows and private events. To **exhibit** is to display something to the public; while an **exhibition** is a public display or demonstration of art, products, skills and activities (Oxford English Dictionary, 2006:499). It must, however, be noted that in South Africa consumer exhibitions are done for the consumer market; and they differ from trade shows. **Trade fairs, trade exhibitions, trade expositions** and **trade expos** are used as synonyms for trade shows. The focus of this study is on trade shows in South Africa that takes place in a business (B2B) context.

For the purpose of this study, trade shows will be used as the terminology. Weitz, Cattleberry and Tanner (2007:180) define **trade shows** as follows "... short (usually less than a week), temporary exhibitions of products by manufacturers and retailers". Trade shows can comprise a conference, convention or gathering arranged and managed by a company or organisation that brings multiple sellers and buyers together; where sellers display their products in some type of exhibition hall (Stevens, 2005:5). The definition that is used for this study for trade shows will be given in **Chapter Three**.

**Exhibit staff:** For the purpose of this study is any person that mans an exhibit stand be it a sales person or any other employee (marketing, production, engineering etc.) of the exhibiting business.

**Personal selling:** According to Manning, *et al.* (2014:37), personal selling happens when the representative of a business directly interact with a customer or prospective customer to present information about their product offering. Futrell (2011:7) defines personal selling as "... the personal communication of information

to unselfishly persuade a prospective customer to buy something – a good, service, an idea, or something else – that satisfies that individual's needs". Personal selling is the process, whereby a salesperson examines a customer's situation and needs, provides information and advice, and seeks to gain a commitment from the customer that would be of continuous benefit to both the customer and seller (Rix, 2006:10). The definition that is used in this context, for the purpose of this study, is defined in **Chapter Four**. Different names are used to define personal selling; therefore, for the purpose of this study that deals with sales at trade shows, the terms **sales person, salesman, saleswoman, sales people, sales force, sales representative** and **professional sales representative** are used as synonyms. Some organisations call salespeople in business markets, **business-to-business** or **industrial sales' representatives**. For the purpose of this study, the term salespeople or sales persons will be used.

**Sales process:** The sales process is the stages that a sales person will go through and consist of seven to ten stages that consist of: prospecting, pre-approach, approach, presentation, trail close, determining objections, dealing with objections, trail close, close and follow-up (Sheth & Sharma, 2008:7; Donaldson, 2007:68-71; Futrell, 2011:228). In **Chapter Four** the sales process is discussed in detail. Research on the sales process at trade shows is however limited as found in the research of Rodriguez, Dixon and Peltier (2014:302).

## 1.5 THE LITERATURE REVIEW

In this section of the introduction, the literature review will be conducted. In Section 1.5.1, B2B marketing is discussed and the focus is placed on the IMC mix followed in business marketing. Section 1.5.2 investigates trade shows and the various stages that have been identified, namely: pre-, at- and post-show. Personal selling will be discussed in Section 1.5.3; and the sales process will be highlighted.

### 1.5.1 Business-to-business marketing

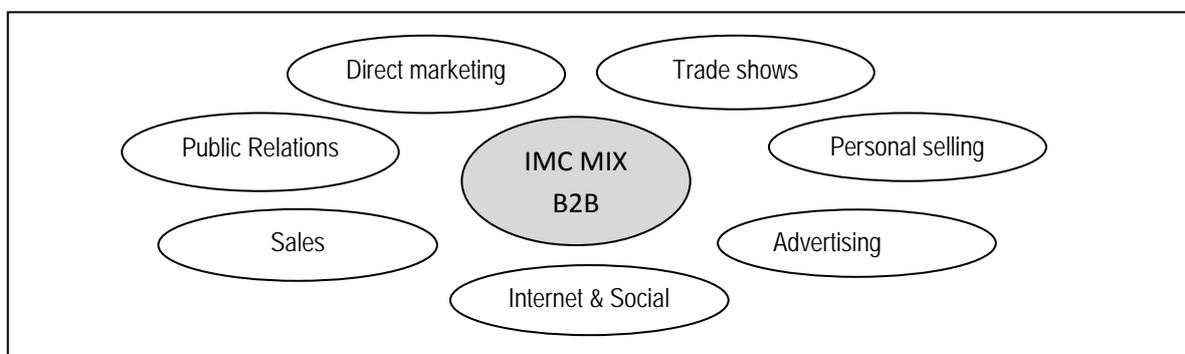
According to Dwyer and Tanner (2002:6), marketers started to realise the important role that business marketing plays in the economy in the beginning of

twenty-first century, and that marketers are placing more emphasis on improving the effectiveness of business-to-business marketing. The function of B2B marketing is to bring about an exchange, in which a product or service is sold for any use other than personal consumption (Zikmund & d'Amico, 2001:186). Business marketing is, therefore, the marketing of products and services to business enterprises, such as manufacturing companies, the government, the private sector, educational institutions, hospitals, distributors and dealers (Halvadar, 2014:1).

Business markets have specific characteristics that differ significantly from those of the consumer markets. Therefore, to better understand business markets, the differences that exist between business markets and consumer markets are described. It is important to note these differences; since they have an impact on how marketing is implemented in the context of business marketing.

In B2B marketing, the IMC is a two-way communication targeted to specific customers and their needs, all co-ordinated through a variety of media (Dwyer & Tanner, 2002:306). According to Russell and Lane (2002:27) and Semenik (2002:8), the B2B IMC mix consists of personal selling, sales promotions, trade shows, public relations, advertising, Internet marketing and social media, and direct marketing. It may, therefore, be surmised that the IMC mix consists of a multitude of different elements that can be used to promote the different business brands.

**Figure 1.1 Integrated marketing communication mix for B2B**



Source: Own compilation

In Figure 1.1 the elements that make up the B2B IMC is illustrated. In Section 2.7.5 the IMC is discussed in more detail and in Figure 2.6 the interconnection between the different elements is illustrated. Blyth (2006:273) points out that a number of elements of the IMC mix are interconnected with one another. Kellezi (2013:265) further indicates that trade shows is an integral part of the marketing communication strategy to improve customer relationships. Figure 2.6 provides an indication where this interconnectedness occurs between sales promotion, personal selling and trade shows and the other elements of the IMC mix.

As pointed out in B2B markets, the emphasis is more on direct communication; and therefore, advertising does play a major role in business markets (Dwyer & Tanner, 2002:313; Hutt & Speh, 2007:292-294). In the IMC mix of B2B markets, public relations are, however, done – frequently with the help of trade shows; since a large number of trade show attendees are usually journalists who inform the public about new developments (Kirchgeorg, Dornscheidt, Giese & Stoeck, 2005:367-369). This is an example of the interconnection between IMC mix elements, trade shows and public relations.

In B2B markets, direct marketing is also used; and its role is to produce sales from current customers, to create leads or actions, such as visiting a website or trade show (Dwyer & Tanner, 2009:296). Internet marketing has also become important in B2B marketing as part of direct marketing that includes the company's website and electronic mail (Ellis, 2011:303).

As pointed out above, in B2B marketing, IMC is used to market one's products or services to potential clients. It was also pointed out that communication is direct in nature. Two ways in which direct communication can be facilitated is through trade shows and personal selling.

### **1.5.2 Trade shows**

The first reference to trade shows in human history is in the Bible in the book of Ezekiel, written in 588 BC (before Christ), where reference is made to merchants trading in silver, iron, tin and lead (Cavanaugh, 1976:100; Simons, 1955:186).

However, the first official international industrial exhibition opened in the Crystal Palace, Hyde Park on the first of August 1851 (Northrup, 2005:351).

In the following millennium, trade shows grew; and by 1955, the 100<sup>th</sup> international trade show was held. Over the next three decades, it expanded to 8000 trade shows in 1983, with 91 000 firms participating and 31 million visitors attending such shows (Kerin & Cron, 1987:87). The trade show bureau indicated that in 1994 alone, 1.3 million organisations exhibited from the United States and Canada, which was attended by 85 million business people (Hansen, 2004:1).

The first trade show held in South Africa was called “Electra”; and it was arranged by an engineer from Wits University in 1966. After that a number of other trade shows had been held that included the “Crinkle Paper Show” and the “Business equipment Show” in 1967. By 1968, the first exhibition’s organisers were established in Cape Town (Gannon, 2012:24-25). Today, the average trade show in South Africa attracts 7 500 visitors and the economic impact per visitor is R546.64 (van Eyk, 2008:10). It is estimated that in South Africa, trade shows revenues should reach R4 billion by 2017 (Viviers, 2013:210). Indicating that trade shows is growing as a business communication element. In Section 3.5 of this study the three main role players at trade shows are explained.

It is clear from Table 1.1 that trade shows provide a number of important benefits for businesses that wish to exhibit. A number of the activities are part of the sales process that occurs at a trade show. However, most organisations only participate in trade shows; since their competitors in the industry do likewise (Pitta *et al.*, 2006:159). At present, there is some uncertainty about the role that trade shows play in their marketing and communication mixes and what their exhibiting activities should be (Blythe, 2002:627). Godar and O'Connor (2001:77), however, point out that trade shows are becoming more important to both sellers and buyers. Bathelt, Golfetto and Rinallo (2014:165-166) points out that trade shows provide exhibitors an opportunity to meet new customers and build relationships with existing customers.

**Table 1.1 Views on the importance and role of trade shows**

Author	Activities of trade show
Kerin & Cron (1987:88)	Identifying prospects, servicing current customers, introducing new or modified products, improving the company's image, testing new products, improving business moral, gathering information about competitors and selling at the show
Seringhaus & Rosson (1998:398)	Trade shows provide business with the opportunity to compete and succeed in the fast-growing global business market
Dwyer & Tanner (2002:347-349)	Buying departments in organisations depends on trade shows to provide information and to see new products that is on the market, it creates dialogue between buyers and sellers, buyers can see demonstrations and the offerings, provide the opportunity to attain new prospects, builds customer relations, provide attendees with the opportunity to meet upper-level management and that provide them with strategic information about the organisation and exhibiting organisations are provided a chance to build relationships with trade press.
Rinaldo & Golfetto (2006:865)	Trade shows provide attendees the opportunity to experience geographical and culturally distant markets in a central location
Burgess & Bothma (2007:349)	Gathering information about competitors and new developments, research benefits in which accompany can gather in-depth information from customers, promotional benefit and selling benefit where new customer can be recruited and current customers maintained
Tafesse & Korneliussen (2011:47)	Trade shows are multidimensional marketing tool in.
Bettis-Outland, Johnston & Wilson (2012:390)	Trade shows are an ideal way for new business relationships to start, for current relationships to grow, and for the obtainment of new information that would positively influence organisations.

Trade shows consist of three stages and is discussed in Section 3.6 of this study. The pre-show stage consists of activities such as promotions, staff training, communication with possible attendees and setting objectives (Søilen, 2013:4). After the pre-show stage the at-show stage occurs. At this stage all at-show activities take place such as demonstrations, presentations, attendee tracking, on-site promotions and selling. Once the trade show is concluded the post-show activities take place. Post-show activities include following-up and measurement or evaluation of the show. The three trade show stages will be discussed using the activities identified by Tanner (2002:231), Seringhaus and Rosson (2004:153-154), and Lee and Kim (2008:785). Although the focus of this study is at-show activities, reference will also be made to pre-and post-show activities as these three activities do not take place in isolation. Next, personal selling will be discussed with the emphasis on the sales process.

### 1.5.3 Personal selling

Personal selling forms an integral part of the marketing-communication strategy of an organisation. The role of personal selling is especially important in business markets, where organisations rely on direct communication with the customers,

due to the unique characteristics found in these markets. The salesperson, therefore, has numerous functions, which would include prospecting for new customers, building long-term relationships with current or potential customers, helping implement marketing programmes, as well as gathering information for organisations (Cant & van Heerden, 2004:20-21).

The elements of the integrated marketing communication mix assist the salesperson to be more productive and effective in the execution of his/her selling functions (Futrell, 2001:61). Trade shows are seen as an effective medium for personal selling; since these two communication elements complement one another (Ling-Yee, 2008:35). Metcalf (as quoted by van Eck, 2008:11) noted that trade show provide personal interaction between the consumer and the organisations that provide the seller with the opportunity to demonstrate and show the customers the products they are about to purchase, which could close the sale. It is, therefore, necessary to study the nature of personal selling, in order to understand its interaction with trade shows.

The primary role of trade shows in the communication strategy is that of selling. According to Kerin and Cron (1987:87), trade shows are more than just selling tools; and they can complement or expand other elements of the marketing mix. This can be divided into selling and non-selling activities. Selling activities include prospecting, closing the sale and qualifying leads. Non-selling activities might include building goodwill with current customers, public relations, market research, meeting new intermediaries, introducing new products and improving the staff morale (Blyth, 2001:627).

Trade shows assist in selling activities by providing certain advantages to organisations, such as: face-to-face interaction with the customers in a central location. They also attract active buyers; they support buyers in their purchase decision by supplying information; they accelerate the selling process; they help identify new prospects; they combine sales with marketing; they are attended by hard-to-reach decision-makers and influencers; and they are also attended by qualified leads and other exhibitors, who could be potential customers (Stevens, 2005:14-16).

From the above it is clear that selling makes up an important function of trade shows.

According to McCormack (1996:1-2), management theories and concepts have been through numerous fads in the past few decades; but personal selling has remained the same in its main functions: to identify, reach and persuade customers to buy. Ingram, LaForge, Avila, Schwepker and Williams (2001:2), however, disagree with McCormack. And these authors state that selling has changed over the last few decades – becoming more sophisticated, due to lengthy and complex sales processes. Ingram *et al.* (2001:3) have pointed out that one of the key distinctions of personal selling in the current era is professionalism; in which the emphasis is placed on customer-orientation in the sales process. Johnston and Marshall (2005:5) agree with Ingram *et al.* By indicating that personal selling has become more than just the selling of products with a focus on building long-term relationships that are beneficial to both sellers and buyers.

Jones, Stevens and Chonko (2005:5) refer to professional selling as an interpersonal communication process, in which the salesperson not only discovers the customer's needs and wants, but they satisfy it – to the long-term benefit of both parties. Weitz *et al.* (2007:4) have gone further; and they state that personal selling has become customer-centric, in which the buyer has become the centre of the sales process. Blyth (2010:57) argues that one of the main problems with trade shows is that the focus is too much on selling and not enough on relationship building. One reason for this could be, as pointed out by Blythe and Rayner (1996:21-22), that the trade show objectives of the organisation are not communicated to the exhibit staff. It is estimated that 80 to 85 per cent of trade-show attendees never interact with a salesperson (Cateora & Graham, 1999:394).

Consequently, the question regarding the success of personal selling in building long-term relationships with customers at trade shows can be debated. Organisations that exhibit at trade shows would, therefore, have to look at the selling process that is followed, and ensure that it builds long-term relationships with potential and current consumers. Rix, Buss and Herford (2006:10) agree with

the above-mentioned authors and indicate that the sales person must acquire a measure of commitment from the customer in the sales process.

According to Manning and Reece (2007:5), the sales process includes the developing of relationships, discovering prospect needs, matching the organisation's products with these needs and communicating benefits through informing, reminding, or persuading. It is therefore clear that sales goes through different stages and activities. Ling-Yee (2008:35) indicates that this is also true for trade shows, where an exhibitor-seller faces a multistage sales process.

Cant and van Heerden (2004:20-21) assert that the sales process in personal selling consists of ten stages, namely: prospecting, pre-approach, approach, presentation of a trial, determining objections, dealing with objections, trial close, close and follow-up. In this study the role of the sales process at trade shows is researched using the ten stages sales process of Futrell (2011:228). The reason for using the ten stages as set out by Futrell (2011:228) is that it provides a very comprehensive outline of the sales process. In Section 4.6 the ten stages of the sales process is discussed in greater detail. The sales process and its activities in trade shows is not clear; and it can be questioned whether it is the same as other B2B selling situation.

According to Drohan (2007:32), trade-show exhibitors must do three things to maximize their return-on-investment at trade shows: firstly, the marketing team must have the skills to motivate prospects to begin the sales process; secondly, an inside sales team must be put in place to deal with the follow-up from trade shows; and lastly, the trade-show lead-qualification specialist should be partnered, in order to improve the quality of the leads obtained from such trade shows. Tanner (2002:229) indicates that trade shows give organisations the opportunity to sell one-on-one to customers at a lower cost than an industrial sales call.

It may therefore be argued that the salesperson at a trade show must have the same characteristics, such as good communication skills and sales knowledge, to ensure success in the sales process.

According to Goldblatt (2005:11) trade shows can be seen as one of the most cost-effective ways to achieve sales; since attendees are more likely to purchase than a prospect that is encountered in industry. Brennan *et al.* (2014:195) point out that the best person to man the exhibit stand is a sales person since they have the necessary skills and knowledge to move through the sales process. According to Whitefield and Webber (2011:446), at trade shows sales persons need to be able to communicate technical aspects of products. Golpalakrishna *et al.* (2010:245) further point out that closing the sales at a trade show is less costly - this is due to trade shows moving the sales process further. Yuksel and Voola (2010:295) refer to the importance of highly qualified and knowledgeable staff manning travel trade shows because of the complex nature of selling a service. Gottlieb, Brown and Ferrier (2014:103) and Rinallo, Borghini and Golfetto (2010:255) agree that exhibit staff must be highly competent personnel that that have product knowledge. It may then be argued that highly competent personnel are not just of importance at trade shows of services – such as travelling trade shows – but at all types of trade shows.

It is, therefore, imperative when planning the trade show exhibit that organisations must ensure that exhibit staff is highly trained and knowledgeable person (Li *et al.*, 2011:442). If this is not done, exhibitors make the mistake of selling the features of the product, rather than focusing on the benefits (Naudi, 2006:11). The product's advantages and features must be related to the benefits since attendees are buying benefits and not only features. Incorporating benefits into the sales presentation is part of the sales process (du Toit, 2011: 149-150). In Chapter 4 the differences between features, advantages and benefits is discussed in more detail.

This study has researched the role of the sales process at trade shows, in order to provide exhibitors with an indication of what activities should be employed. This information should help trade-show exhibitors to plan better for their activities during the show.

## **1.6 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODS**

### **1.6.1 Description of the inquiry strategy and the broad research design**

According to Zikmund (2003:58), research design is the plan that specifies the methods and procedures for collecting and analysing the required information. The research design is, therefore, the blueprint that needs to be followed to ensure that the research was completed properly, and that the research objectives have been achieved (Churchill & Iacobucci, 2005:74). The choice of a specific research design depends on how much is known about the problem to be investigated; the purpose of the research; the research questions; the accuracy of the hypotheses formed; and the data-collection methods that are to be used.

The research design that was used for the purpose of this study is both exploratory and descriptive research. Hair, Wolfinbarger, Ortinau and Bush (2010:36) maintain that the function of exploratory research is twofold: firstly, it provides the researcher with the necessary information to define the problem; and secondly, it deepens the understanding of consumer behaviour. In this study, the researcher consulted with the trade show industry, in order to get a better understanding of the research problem.

From the explorative research done, the researcher formulated the research problem and set out the objectives. In this study, the role of the sales process at trade shows was established. Consequently, a descriptive research method was followed.

### **1.6.2 Sampling**

Sampling is any procedure that uses a small number of items, or a portion of the population, to draw conclusions applicable to the whole population (Zikmund, 2003:62-63). According to Hays (1997:84), sampling is the method of selecting a sample from the larger population. Sampling implies that the researcher cannot interview each and everyone in a large population; therefore, it is necessary to survey only a relatively small sample that is representative of the larger population.

The target populations in this study comprise the exhibition staff. The researcher made use of multi-stage sampling; that is a probability-sampling method. Multistage sampling involves a number of steps that combine certain of the probability methods (Zikmund & Babin, 2010:431). The multistage sample consists of the researcher dividing the population into various groups or clusters, and then drawing a representative sample by using a random-selection method (Wiid & Diggines, 2015:205).

The researcher obtained a list of 32 trade-show organisers from Exhibition Association of Southern Africa (EXSA), which is part of their association. From this list, every trade show organiser was contacted to obtain permission to conduct interviews at the trade show, which was managed by them. Once permission was obtained, the questionnaires were distributed at the trade shows, for which approval had been given.

### **1.6.3 Sample size**

The researcher attempted to ensure that a large sample was obtained, in order to ensure that the study becomes more accurate (Zikmund & Babin, 2010:459). The occurrence of random sampling varies with samples of different sizes. By increasing the sample size, one decreases the width of the confidence interval at a given confidence level. It must, however, be noted that there are a number of generalisations regarding sampling size, including that an increase in sample size means an increase in accuracy (Wiid and Diggines, 2015:198; Burns and Bush, 2010:401; Housden, 2007:200).

If the research sample is classified as being homogeneous, the researcher does not need to make use of a large sample to get sufficient data (Tustin, *et al.*, 2009:359). In this study, the respondents can be viewed as being homogeneous; since the exhibitors who exhibit at trade shows and sell to other businesses were questioned.

#### **1.6.4 Data collection**

A self-administered pre-coded structured questionnaire was used and distributed by trained interviewers, so as to satisfy the objectives of the study and the testing of the hypotheses (McDaniel & Gates, 2010:66). The questionnaire consisted of nine sections. Section A of the questionnaire consisted of the demographic profile of the exhibitor's business and exhibit information. Sections B, C and D made use of scaled questions to determine business actions, marketing activities, before and at the trade show. These questions were obtained from previous research and insights obtained from industry. Sections E, F, G and I obtained information on the use of the sales process in regard to the sales presentation, the type of objections, dealing with objections, and closing the sale. The scales of Jaramillo and Marshall (2004:9-25) were used extensively in these sections. Lastly, in section J, multiple-choice questions were asked to obtain the demographic profile exhibit staff.

The questionnaires were tested in a pilot study with members of the defined populations, in order to ensure that all the questions and statements were clearly understood; to avoid biased questions; and to ensure that the questionnaire meets the objectives and hypotheses of the study. Inputs were also obtained from Specialised Exhibitions and from the Exhibition Association of Southern Africa (EXSA) – for comments and recommendations – before the pilot study were done.

In addition to the layout of the questionnaire, another aspect of importance is the covering letter. Hair *et al.* (2010:192) and Zikmund (2003:227) maintain that a covering letter is a letter that accompanies a questionnaire to induce the reader to complete and return the questionnaire. In this study, a covering letter was included as one of the requirements set out by the University's ethical guidelines in conducting the research and to motivate the respondents to participate in the research.

#### **1.6.5 Data analysis**

For data to be useful, they have to be presented in a format that the researcher can use. The researcher applied a structured data-capturing method, so as not to

have any data-capturing errors. Zikmund (2003:531) refers to data transformation as the process of transforming the data from their original form to a suitable format for analysis – with the aim of achieving the research objectives. The data captured in Excel were transformed and analysed using SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) statistical software packages. In the study, both descriptive and inferential statistics are applied; and therefore, the specific statistical analysis used with these two statistical methods, are discussed.

**Descriptive statistics** is used extensively to analyse the demographic information of the respondents. Demographics include characteristics, such as age, education, occupation, marital status, gender, income and social class. The data gathered on the demographic characteristics of the respondents was combined with other variables that were researched, in order to gain greater insight into the subject under investigation. The demographic data serve as the background of the population that were sampled for the analysis and interpretation of the findings (Malhorta, 2010:106; Churchill, 2001:238).

McDaniel and Gates (2010:406) indicate to descriptive statistics as arranging, summarising and presenting a dataset in such a way that the meaningful essentials of the data can easily be extracted and interpreted. Simply put, descriptive statistics is the collection, organisation, summarising and presentation of the data; and therefore, they can only describe a dataset that was obtained (Bluman, 2004:5). Descriptive statistics use graphic techniques and numerical descriptive measures to summarise and present the data; therefore, in this study inferential statistics is used.

Bluman (2004:7) indicates that **inferential statistics** generalise from samples to populations, perform estimations, test hypotheses, determine relationships between variables and make predictions. Keller and Warrack (1997:4) stated that inferential statistics are the methods used to draw conclusions or inferences about the characteristics of populations, based on the sample data. Zikmund (2003:446) agrees that inference statistics are used to make a judgment about the population from which the researcher seeks information. Tebachnick and Fidell (2013:7) state that multivariate statistics are necessary for inference.

In this study, multivariate statistics is briefly discussed. According to Hair *et al.* (2000:586), **multivariate analysis** is concerned with the simultaneous relationships between two or more phenomena; and it is used to group those phenomena that show a relationship between one another. With multivariate analysis, either of two techniques can be used, namely: the dependent technique, or the independent technique. The dependent technique is used when one or more variables are dependent on one another; and the independent technique is used where a whole set of independent relationships are examined.

In this study, the independent technique is used; and a factor analysis applied to group the variables into factors (Hair *et al.*, 2000:587-589; Tustin *et al.*, 2009:647-648). To meet the objectives and hypotheses of the study Analysis of Variance (ANOVA), Multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) and t-test was done.

## **1.7 ASSESSING AND DEMONSTRATING THE QUALITY AND RIGOUR OF THE PROPOSED RESEARCH DESIGN**

According to Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2009:326), three types of data quality issues can be identified in using semi-structured interviews, namely: reliability, form of bias, and validity and generalisability. In this study, a questionnaire was applied for the exhibit staff. To overcome any reliability problems of the questionnaire, a pilot study was done and is discussed in chapter 5 in greater detail. After the pilot study, in which a limited number of respondents were asked to complete the questionnaires, a Cronbach's Alpha was conducted to determine the reliability of the questionnaires. Cronbach's Alpha coefficient is a technique employed by taking the average of all possible split-half coefficients to measure the internal consistency of multidimensional or summated scales.

In this study, a questionnaire consisting of a Likert scale was used; and therefore, the Cronbach Alpha is of importance. Scale reliability is the extent to which a scale can produce the same measurement results in repeated trials (Hair *et al.*, 2000:390-391).

According to Malhotra, *et al.* (2012:433), reliability analysis allows the researcher to study the properties of measurement scales and the items that comprise them. The reliability analysis procedure calculates a number of commonly used measures of scale reliability; and it also provides information on the relationships between the individual items in the scale. Individual indicators or items of a scale measuring the same construct should be highly inter-correlated. Cronbach's Alpha coefficient is the measurement of reliability that ranges from 0 to 1, with values of 0.60 to 0.70 deemed to be the lower limit of acceptability (Hair *et al.*, 2010b:89 & 118).

Once reliability testing had been done, the research was also validated. Validation is the process of ensuring that the interviews were conducted as specified by the researcher (Malhotra *et al.*, 2012:574). According to Hair *et al.* (2000:480), validation is done to ensure that the research was conducted correctly, and no bias has occurred. In this study, there was no interview bias – due the training of the interviewers before the questionnaires were distributed. Validation is discussed in more detail in the research methodology chapter of this study.

## **1.8 CONTRIBUTION OF STUDY**

A number of studies point to the limited research regarding trade shows as a business to business marketing communication tool (Gottlieb, *et al.*, 2011:1642; Wilkinson & Brouthers, 2006:238; Pitta, *et al.*, 2006:160). This study expands on current research regarding trade shows in academia and furthermore provides the industry with guidelines on the sales process for trade shows.

The findings in this study provide exhibitors with practical guidelines on what, activities focus, should be placed on in the sales process at trade shows. Although, the stages or steps of sales process have been established for a multitude of different industries there is no clear indication of its role at trade shows. This study contributes to the expansion of the sales process at trade shows by identifying the sub-stages that makes up each of its stages. Furthermore, the study contributes on existing models that deals with buyer decision-making and the stages (pre-,at- and post-show) of trade shows. This

information will add to the field of trade shows and personal selling research, and can assist in future research that will be done.

In the study the pre-, at- and post-show stages of a trade show is linked with the sales process ten stages to provide a better understanding of the linkage between the various stages. The identified factors at each stage are linked not only to the sales process, but also that of the stages of a trade show. This provides a better understanding of how the sales process fits in at each stage of a trade show. In Chapter 7 a figure is provided that indicates the link between the sales process and the stages of a trade show.

The information obtained on the sales process at trade shows can also be applied practically by the main role players namely, exhibitors, organisers and attendees. Firstly, the study provides exhibitors with a guide regarding the sales process that should be followed at trade shows to help them plan their show activities. More specifically exhibitors will be able to plan what sales actions should be taken at each stage of the sales process when exhibiting. The information furthermore can guide exhibitors on training staff and the setting of objectives to improve their participation at trade shows.

Secondly, the research can be used by trade show organisers to improve service delivered to both exhibitors and attendees. It was pointed out in Section 1.2 of this chapter that one of the main problems experienced by trade show organisers is that exhibitors do not exhibit effectively. Due to ineffective exhibiting exhibitor's experience of trade show are not positive. Trade show organisers can use the information from this study to set general exhibiting guidelines and develop training material for exhibitors. Lastly, attendees will benefit since a standard format of sales information will be provided from trained exhibit staff to guide them through the buying decision-making process and therefore improving customer relationship.

In the last section of this chapter the layout of this study will be discussed to provide an overview to the reader.

## 1.9 LAYOUT OF THE STUDY

This study consists of seven chapters. **Chapter One** is an introduction to the study and provides the background. The reason for the study is defined; and the objectives are set, in order to answer the questions in the research problem discussed.

**Chapter Two** consists of a theoretical discussion on business-to-business marketing. That provides a background to B2B marketing, and the four Ps. The IMC for B2B marketing is also discussed to provide insight on where personal selling and trade shows fit in.

In **Chapter Three**, the trade show, as an IMC element, is expanded on and discussed in more detail. The types of trade shows, the role players and the stages in trade show are also discussed here.

Personal selling is discussed in **Chapter Four**. The role of personal selling within a business and marketing are discussed, with the emphasis in this chapter on the selling process.

The research problem, the objectives and the hypotheses set for the study are discussed in **Chapter Five**. Also the research methodology to be used is covered.

**Chapter Six** contains the statistical analysis, the findings and the interpretation of the data.

**Chapter Seven** deals with the conclusions and the recommendations of the study.

## CHAPTER 2

### BUSINESS-TO-BUSINESS MARKETING

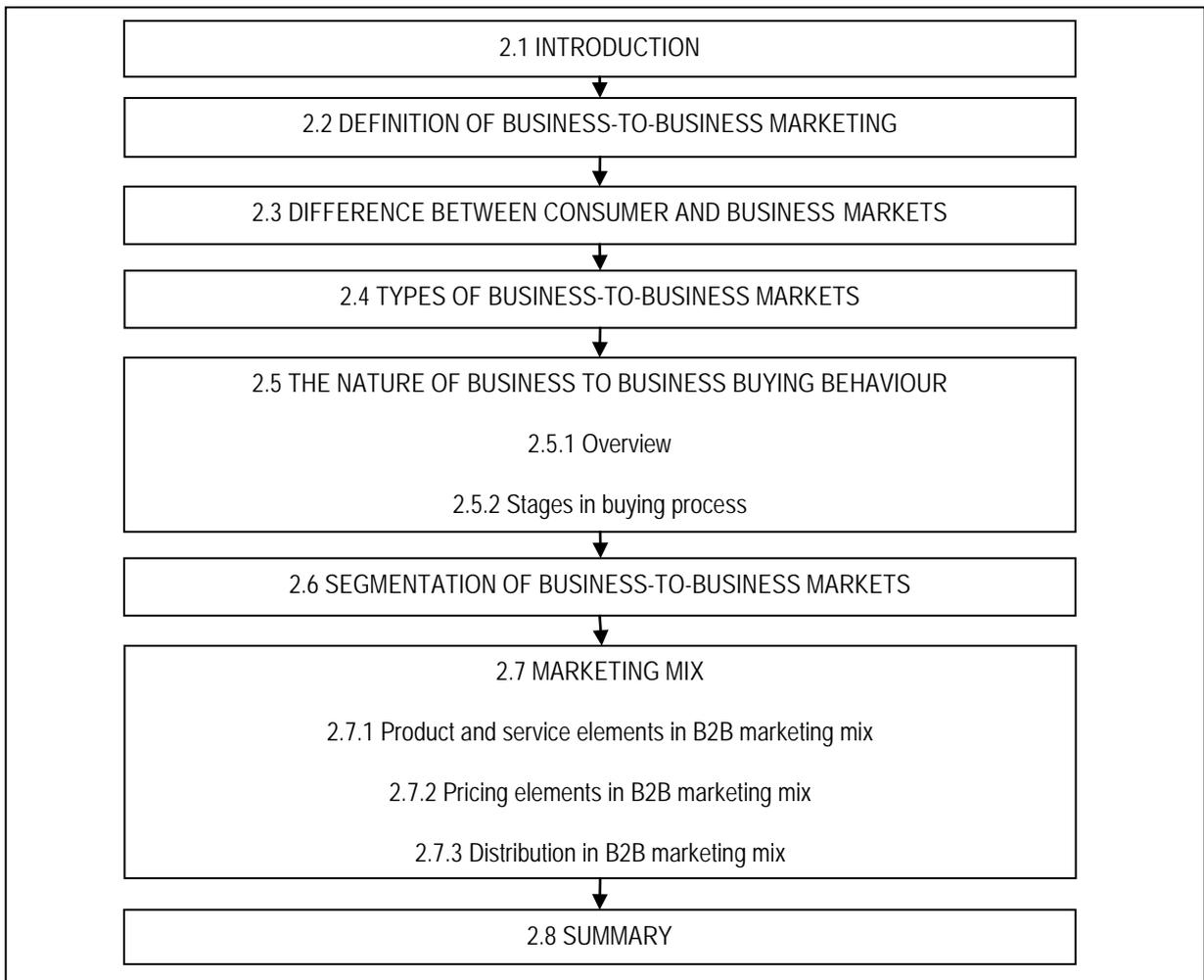
#### 2.1 INTRODUCTION

To understand the role of personal selling and trade shows, as part of the business-to-business (B2B) Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) mix, it is necessary for this study to discuss the nature of B2B marketing. Business-to-business marketing is unique, in that the distribution and communication channels are more direct than in conventional consumer marketing. Business markets also have a complex buying process between the buyer and the seller that places the emphasis on personal selling and negotiation, which, in turn, result in a more unique communication strategy (Hutt & Speh, 2007:391).

With the emphasis being on more direct communication, the relationship that is created between buyer and seller plays an important role in B2B marketing. This direct communication process is reflected in the communication at trade shows between the salesperson and the attendees.

In Figure 2.1, a layout of Chapter 2 is provided. This chapter deals with the nature of B2B marketing. Firstly, a definition will be provided of business-to-business marketing. Secondly, the difference between consumer markets and business markets is explained. Thirdly, business buying behaviour will be discussed; and lastly, the B2B marketing mix that consists of the product, price, distribution and the IMC mix are described. The emphasis will be placed on the IMC mix in B2B marketing, in order to provide context to the study.

**Figure 2.1 Layout of Chapter 2**



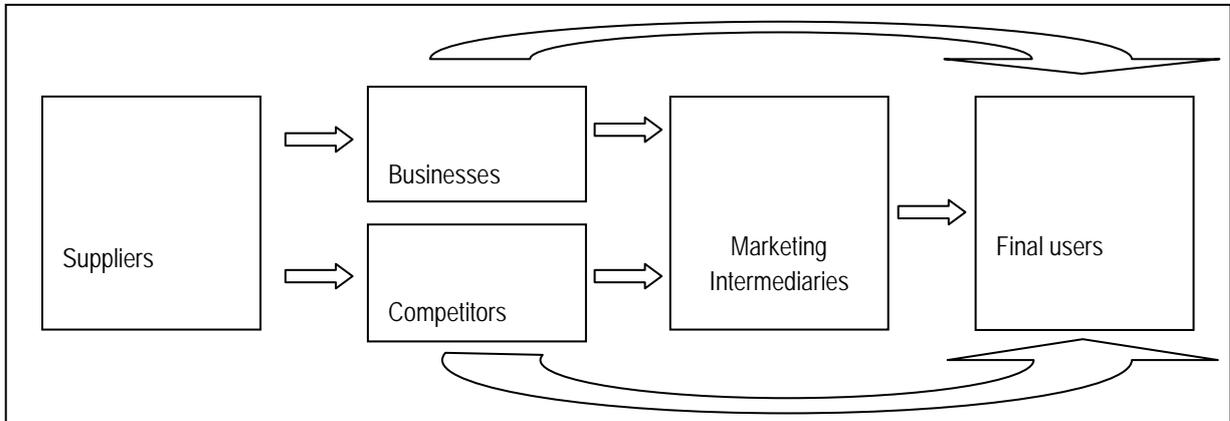
Source: Own compilation

## **2.2 DEFINITION OF BUSINESS-TO-BUSINESS MARKETING**

There are people who incorrectly think that marketing is the same as personal selling or advertising, although marketing is a much broader activity (Kerin, Hartley & Rudelius; 2008:8). Kotler and Armstrong (2010:19) define marketing as “...the process by which firms create value for customers and build strong customer relationships, in order to capture value from [their] customers in return”. Another definition is that of Pride and Ferrel (2011:3), who define marketing as “...the process of creating, distributing, promoting, and pricing goods, services and ideas to facilitate satisfying exchange relationships with [their] customers, and [to] develop [and] maintain favourable relationships with [the] stakeholders in a

dynamic environment”. The definitions of marketing do not clearly indicate the process or elements in the marketing environment.

**Figure 2.2 Elements of the modern marketing system**



Source: Adapted from Kotler & Armstrong (2010:22)

In Figure 2.2, the process and elements of a modern marketing system are illustrated. From Figure 2.2, it may be concluded that the products would flow from the supplier to the final user, and that marketing is not just aimed at the final user, but includes all the other elements of the marketing system, in order to facilitate the flow of goods. This flow of goods can be viewed as part of the supply chain. The supply chain is discussed in this chapter in more detail as part of the distribution channels in Section 2.7.3.

The terms organisation-to-organisation marketing, industrial marketing, business marketing, and organisational marketing are synonyms for business-to-business (B2B) marketing. According to Halvadar (2014:1), business marketing is the marketing of products and services to business enterprises, such as manufacturing companies, government, the private sector, educational institutions, hospitals, distributors and dealers. Another definition is that of Kerin *et al.* (2004:122). These authors maintain that business marketing is defined as “... the marketing of products to companies, governments, or non-profit organisations for use in the creation of goods and services that they then produce and market to others”.

Dwyer and Tanner (2009:6) provide a very similar definition; and they define B2B marketing as the marketing of products or services to other companies, government, institutions (hospitals and universities) and other organisations. Lamb, Hair, McDaniel, Boshoff and Terblanche (2015:484) define business-to-business marketing as "... the marketing of goods and services to individuals and organisations for purposes other than personal consumption".

A definition given by Căescu and Dumitri (2011:275) focuses more on the delivery of value; and they define B2B marketing as "... a set of processes used for creating, communicating and delivering value to other organisations, in such a way as to benefit both the organisation and stakeholders".

From the definitions, the key concepts and the various elements arise. Taking all of the definitions into consideration, B2B marketing – for the purpose of this study – is defined as the marketing of products and services to other companies, government, non-profit institutions, dealers and other business organisations for re-sale, or for use in the production of goods and services, while adding value.

From the definitions, it is clear that differences exist between business-to-consumer (B2C) and business-to-business (B2B) marketing. Cova and Salle (2008:3-11) point out that there exists cross-fertilisation between B2B and B2C marketing; and that the comparisons between the two are based on out-of-date criteria that are no longer relevant. Although the afore-mentioned definitions might hold true; there are still key differences between them. The differences between B2B and B2C will be discussed – in order to provide a better understanding of why personal selling and trade shows are important for business marketing.

### **2.3 THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN CONSUMER AND BUSINESS MARKETS**

Business markets have specific characteristics that differ significantly from those of the consumer markets. This study focuses on trade shows, and not on consumer exhibitions; and therefore, it deals with business markets. To better understand business markets, the differences that exist between business and consumer markets will be described. According to Lilien and Grewal (2012:3),

Lamb *et al.* (2015:155) and Kotler and Keller (2006:211-212), the following differences can be identified between business and consumer markets:

- The **sales volume** in business markets is greater; although there are fewer buyers than in consumer markets; and the total amount of sales is larger. For example at trade shows where moulding equipment is sold one machine can be millions of Rands, while at an expo aimed at consumers buying baby goods, individual sales will be less.
- **Business markets have fewer buyers** than in consumer markets, which means that it is easier to identify prospective customers and analyse their needs. With fewer buyers in business markets, more personal attention can be given to the customers, due to the importance that each customer plays in the business organisation's success. Because there are fewer buyers, more direct communication, rather than mass communication, can be used, such as personal selling and trade shows. The Afrimold trade show, for example, focuses only on the industrial moulding industry, where the numbers of users is limited, which means that there are only a few buyers. This is in contrast with the huge number of consumers attending an expo that exhibits crafts, for example.
- The location of buyers in business markets is usually **geographically concentrated** to specific areas; whereas consumers are found virtually everywhere. With business markets in centralised locations, producers have lower selling costs. Trade shows provide sellers with a central location; where all the different buyers from across a region – be it a province, country or continent – can gather to see what products are on the market. In South Africa B2B trade shows mainly takes place in Johannesburg that is seen as the economic and business hub, while consumer shows takes place in most of the big cities.
- The **supplier-customer relationship** is closer in business markets than in consumer markets, due to the smaller customer base, the customisation of purchases, the greater volume and the average cost of a sale, and the power that larger customers have over suppliers. In business markets, personal selling plays an important role in building and maintaining customer relationships. At trade shows large amount of products are purchased that cost millions of Rands and therefore the relationship

between buyer and seller is closer. At expos where consumer products are sold the relationship only lasts while the person is at the exhibit stand.

- In consumer markets, the distribution channels are more complex than in business markets, where more **direct channels of distribution** are found. The afore-mentioned characteristics contribute to direct channels of distribution being more common in business markets. At trade shows, the buyer makes direct contact with the seller, thereby facilitating not only the flow of products, but also the dissemination of information. Exhibitors at consumer expos often sell through retail, wholesale and/or electronic outlets that makes the channels of distribution more complex.
- The majority of business organisations buy products and services, in order to produce other products and services. Therefore, the demand for products and services is derived from the demand for the consumer and other markets. **Derived demand** gives rise to the importance for business marketers to monitor the buying patterns of consumer markets.
- Price changes in business markets do not have much effect on demand; therefore, in business markets **inelastic demand** is found. The demand for a product category does not easily change, because of the set production methods and the price of the product used in the production. The final product is often a small part of the final production cost.
- The **fluctuating demand** for business-to-business products tends to be more unstable than the demand in consumer markets. The acceleration principle, where a small increase or decrease in the demand for consumer products can lead to a larger increase or decrease in the demand for plants and equipment to produce the output required, contributes to the fluctuating demand.
- **Joint demand** in business markets is more common; where a combination of products is frequently used in the production of products and services.
- In business markets, goods are purchased by well-trained **professional purchasing** agents who must stay within their organisation's policies, constraints and requirements, when acquiring products and services. Trade shows play a role; since purchasing agents can view a number of products at a central location.

- Business markets use **direct marketing communication** with a greater emphasis on personal selling and trade shows – as a marketing-communication tool over consumer markets preference for mass media advertising.

From the discussions, regarding the differences between business and consumer markets, the importance of personal selling and trade shows becomes apparent. Consumers mainly buy products and services for their own personal use or household consumption; whereas business markets, on the other hand, buy products and services for production purposes, for the use in production operations, or for the resale to other customers (Pride & Ferrel, 2011:154).

In B2B marketing, there is more rationale in making decisions. It also takes longer and more information is gathered before decisions are made (Coviello & Brodie, 2001:395). A company that, for example, wants to purchase new equipment that costs millions of Rands can get information from sales people and trade shows, before making a decision.

Now that the uniqueness of business markets has been pointed out, the different types of business markets that can be categorised. This will shortly be discussed. This is important for this study; since many industries arrange trade shows, according to the type of business market in which they trade.

## **2.4 TYPES OF BUSINESS-TO-BUSINESS MARKETS**

According to Halvadar (2014:12), and Dwyer and Tanner (2009:12-14), B2B markets can be categorised into three groups, namely: **government customers**, **institutional customers** and **commercial enterprises (markets)**. It must be noted that many trade shows focus on specific B2B markets. Each of the different B2B markets will now be discussed.

The central, provincial and local **government** departments, such as defence, schools and municipalities, purchase all kind of business products. Boone and Kurtz (2012:188) mention that B2B marketers must be aware of the distinct

challenges of selling to the various government departments. These challenges include: (1) The government's compliance policy to maintain affirmative programs for specific groups, such as the handicapped and women; (2) set-aside programs; where a certain percentage of a contract is set aside for Black Economic Empowerment (BEE); and (3) subcontracting that may require major contractors to allocate a certain percentage of the given government contract to the previously disadvantaged groups (Hutt & Speh, 2007:47). Although the afore-mentioned challenges exist, many business rely on trade shows to sell their products to government.

In South Africa there are trade shows, such as IFSEC South Africa, Rail Africa and Road Trans Africa that focus on government departments from different countries.

**Institutions** (public and private), such as universities or hospitals, require industrial marketers to understand the purchasing process and the procedures of each of the different institutions. Lamb *et al.* (2015:485) describe an institution as any business that seeks to accomplish goals different from everyday business goals, for instance, such as profit, market share, and returns on investment. Some of the institutions use purchasing procedures similar to those used by government departments (Dwyer & Tanner, 2009:14). Businesses that want to market and sell to the institutional market must be aware of the diversity of this market, such as different goals and fewer resources (Dwyer & Tanner, 2009:14; Pride & Ferrell, 2008:227).

Therefore, it may be assumed that businesses that sell to institutions would have to tailor their personal selling and trade show strategies to meet the particular needs of the customers. The afore-mentioned tailoring provides businesses that exhibit at trade shows with the opportunity to select specific shows to best promote their products; for example, Lab Africa that focuses on hospitals and other medically related institutions.

**Commercial enterprises** consist of three different groups: namely resellers; Original Equipment Manufacturers (OEMs) and users. **Resellers** consist of retailers and wholesalers that buy products without re-processing them, and then

re-sell them to the commercial, governmental or institutional markets at a profit (Lamb *et al.*, 2015:484). In South Africa trade shows such as Markex focuses on re-selling market promotions. **OEMs** are businesses that buy products, which they incorporate into the products that they produce, and then sell them to the business or consumer market (Halvadar, 2014:12). An example of this is the Afrimold trade show that focuses on moulding equipment that is mostly used in the manufacturing industries. **Users** buy products to support a manufacturing enterprise. The products or equipment are used to produce parts that will be incorporated into the products they produce.

These purchases do not necessarily become part of the final product; they only assist them in producing of the final product.

Many of the trade shows in South Africa cover all three segments. The IFSEC trade show, for example, sells to government, institutions and commercial enterprise, because of the nature of the products that are exhibited. Therefore, in this study all three segments will be dealt with.

As indicated, there are differences in each of the markets as regards their buying behaviour. The differences in buying behaviour influence both the selling and the type of trade show at which a business decides to exhibit.

## **2.5 THE NATURE OF BUSINESS-TO-BUSINESS BUYING BEHAVIOUR**

### **2.5.1 Overview**

According to Boone and Kurtz (2012:185), B2B buying behaviour is the decision-making and other activities of organisations as buyers, that include the selection of suppliers, sources or vendors. The buying behaviour in B2B markets can be viewed as a process, and not just as an isolated act (Hutt & Speh, 2007:63-64). As stated before, B2B buying is a process that consists of a number of stages; and each of these leads to a decision. Trade shows and selling facilitate this movement between the stages, by providing information to the customers (Ling-

Yee, 2006:173). The buying process is normally initiated by someone in the organisation who recognises a problem that must be solved.

The problem could be triggered by both internal and/or external factors. An example of an external factor would be a person from a business attending a trade show and seeing a new product on exhibition. There is no specific sequence to follow in the stages; and these may differ, according to the complexity of the buying situation; where some of the stages can be combined or bypassed. The different stages are also influenced by buying centres that consist of a number of individuals or departments within a business. Three aspects influence business buying behaviour: The stages of the buying process; the buying situation; and the buying centre (Hutt & Speh, 2007:64; Dwyer & Tanner, 2009:71).

### **2.5.2 Stages in the buying process**

According to Boone and Kurtz (2012:185), the buying process starts when a problem is recognised within an organisation; and the realisation that it can take place anywhere within the organisation. In the business-buying process, more focus is placed on need awareness – right up to the selection of a supplier (Ghingold & Wilson, 1998:97-99). At each stage of the buying process, decisions are made to eliminate products and vendors (Morris, Pitt & Honeycutt, 2001:82; Hutt & Speh, 2007:63). Trade shows can play a role at each stage – be it from making a customer aware, to providing information on vendors and products to the potential buyers.

Unlike the normal consumer buying process; where mental steps cannot be observed, the buying process of organisations can; since there are different individuals participating at each stage (Reeder, Brierty & Reeder, 1991:76). The business-buying process is much more complicated than normal consumer decision-making – due to the large number of individuals involved in the process (Hawkins, Mothersbough & Mookerjee, 2010:752). Business-buying processes are also influenced by both internal and external stimuli (Kotler & Armstrong, 2010:177-178).

Factors that influence the buying process include: the nature of the product; the cost involved; and the experience of the organisation in buying the needed products (Zikmund & d'Amico, 2001:189).

According to Sarin (2013:13), Ellis (2011:47-48), Phadtare (2008:26), Hutt and Speh (2007:63) and Havaladar (2010:42-43), the business-buying process is more complicated than consumer decision-making due to the number of factors that have an influence namely:

- **Buying centres.** A buying centre consists of a number of individuals or groups that are involved in the process of making a decision to purchase. Unlike personal selling, trade shows, for example, provide an opportunity for every member of the buying centre to see a product demonstrated at an exhibition stand. This means that trade shows facilitate the selling process.
- **Environmental concerns.** The company will base its purchasing decisions on what it anticipates demand will be for its own products. In stable markets, this is a comparatively easier task than in turbulent markets (where demand is uncertain). It can also be easier in the case of straight re-buys, and, in some cases, modified re-buys, where the demand is more certain. For example, attendees can get information from trade shows to assist in making decisions when buying.
- **The purchasing situation.** Whether it is a straight re-buy, a modified re-buy, or a new task, this would determine the level of involvement required in orchestrating the purchase. With new task buying, for example, trade shows can provide a buyer the opportunity to observe a number of possible products that might satisfy their needs. If a buyer from the mining industry, for example, attends Electra Mining, they can see hundreds of different mining-related products such as drilling machines and earth moving equipment.
- **Access to information.** The greater the buying organisations access to information, the greater their ability to search for more favourable buying situations. Both personal selling and trade shows are the sources of information for buyers.

- **Relationship with the supplier.** The closer the organisation is to its suppliers, the less likely they would be to search for other suppliers. This closeness does necessitate higher up-front costs to the buying organisation; however, a greater capacity to generate profits between both organisations could be the result of close inter-organisational collaboration. Businesses use trade shows as a way to interact with suppliers, and to build business relationships.
- **Position within the supply chain.** If the company is further upstream in the supply chain, its inputs would mostly be raw materials. This determines the organisation's buying structure. That is, the organisation would be geared to be more able to buy large quantities for lower prices, than for a company further downstream in the supply chain, whose inputs are usually finished or near-finished goods.
- **Organisation size.** The size of the organisation will determine its power within the marketplace (in most situations). Trade shows, for example, can provide smaller organisations with the opportunity to find a number of buyers within their industry in its central location.
- **Organisational orientation.** The more customer-centric an organisation is, the greater the influence of customer requirements would be on its purchasing habits.

The business-buying process has a number of stages that consist of the following stages: need recognition, characteristics and quantity of needed item (product definition), the identification of alternatives (product specification), search for qualified supplier, analysis of products, selection of supplier, order placement, product inspection and product review (Lamb, *et al.*, 2015:551). Some of the stages in the selling process at trade shows can mesh in with the stages of the business-decision process. The stages in the decision-making process for business will be briefly discussed:

### **Stage 1: Anticipation or recognition of a problem or need**

Problem- or need-recognition in the buying organisation can be the result of internal or external stimuli. Internally, the company may decide to launch a new

product that requires new production equipment to replace outdated equipment, or an equipment breakdown. External stimuli could be a selling organisation that initiates the decision process or creates a demand for products by identifying a new capability or a higher quality product. From the selling organisation's point-of-view, the identification of where the first step of the decision-making process starts, is of importance, as well as to understand and satisfy the needs and problems of the buying organisation better (Halvadar, 2014:36-37).

Trade shows could be possible external stimuli, since an attendee can be exposed to a new product or services that cause them to recognise a need or a problem.

### **Stage 2: Determination of the characteristics and quantity of a needed item**

The buying organisation will try and determine the possible solutions to the problems or needs that were identified. In the determination of possible solutions, a number of members inside the buying organisation may be consulted. These would include engineers, users or buyers. External sources consulted in this phase include, suppliers, salespersons or marketers from selling organisation that can help the buyers define their needs and provide information about the different product characteristics. In this stage, the sales person and the trade shows can provide valuable information (Phadtare 2008:16).

### **Stage 3: Product specification**

In this stage, a formulation of the exact specifications or the characteristics of the product that would solve the problem is done. The buying organisation would obtain the advice from technical personnel inside the organisation, or the advice from outside sales personnel. In this stage, the selling organisation has the opportunity to get involved in developing the product specifications, which give an advantage to ensure that the company's product characteristics and specifications are included in the product that will solve the problem or need (Sarin, 2013: 38; Hutt & Speh, 2007:64). Trade shows, for example, provide a buyer with an opportunity to see a number of different products. If a company is, for example, looking at safety equipment, the Organisational Health and Safety (OSH) trade

show each year might have over a hundred exhibitors, with a number of products that could meet the business-product specifications.

#### **Stage 4: Supplier search**

In this stage, the buying organisation firstly searches for suitable suppliers; and secondly, selects a supplier. In searching for potential suppliers, various sources are consulted, such as trade shows, sales calls, catalogues, the internet and trade journals (Ellis, 2011:52; Morris *et al.*, 2001:76). Trade shows can, for example, be an easy way for a business to search for suppliers, because of the concentration of a large number of suppliers that exhibit in a specific industry.

#### **Stage 5: Obtaining proposals and the analysis thereof**

At this stage, the qualified suppliers are requested to provide detailed proposals. Proposals include product specifications, prices, taxes and duties, packaging charges, insurance, cost freight, conditions, warranties and delivery schedule (Ellis, 2011:52). Trade shows, for example, could be a good place for salespersons to start the process of gathering information, in order to develop proposals for possible buyers.

#### **Stage 6: Supplier selection**

The received proposals are evaluated, and additional information if required, is obtained. Further negotiations might take place on price, delivery and payment. The buyer organisation brings all the suppliers down to the same level, to make a comparison. Each possible supplier is evaluated on a set of agreed-upon attributes or factors (Phadtare, 2008:17; Halvadar, 2014:36-37). Trade shows can assist a business in selecting suppliers, due to the number of different organisations exhibiting their products or services in one central place, and in many cases demonstrating them, as well.

### **Stage 7: Selection of order routine**

The buying organisation reconfirms the content of the proposal with the supplier and negotiates various factors, including price, commercial terms and delivery schedule. After negotiations are completed with all suppliers that submitted a proposal, a final decision is taken; and the order is placed with the selected supplier (Ellis, 2011:52).

### **Stage 8: Performance review**

In the final stage, the whole decision process is evaluated; and three possible outcomes are possible: either the buying organisation can continue, modify or cancel the agreement. The selling organisations need to ensure that the customer's needs have been satisfied; and failure to follow through would leave the marketers at risk of losing the customer (Hutt & Speh, 2007:64).

It must be noted that the stages of the decision-making process may vary with the complexity and the buying situation. If an organisation is, for example, looking for a new product compared to a straight re-buy, their intentions for visiting a trade show would differ greatly. Due to the impact that the buying situation can have on both the sales process and the reasons for visiting a trade show, the different buying situations will be discussed next.

### **2.5.3 Buying situations**

According to Ellis (2011:49-51) and Havaladar (2010:41), there are three types of buying situations, namely: new tasks; modified re-buys and straight re-buys. The type of buying situations (buy-classes) are determined in three ways: firstly, whether it is a new purchase, and the business has had some experience with the product or service; secondly, the amount of information required by the those who influence the buying decision; and lastly, the number of alternatives that are being considered (Morris *et al.*, 2001:79). Next, each of the buying situations will be briefly discussed.

In a **new purchase situation**, the buying decision is different from previous buying decisions, due to the internal and external factors that may have caused the new problem. The buyers have limited knowledge of the new purchase; and they lack previous experience. Therefore, they need large amounts of information in making the purchase decision, and a number of potential suppliers to solve the new problem (Sarin, 2013:30). The afore-mentioned information might, for example, be obtained from a trade show.

A business looking for a new industrial moulding machine might then, for example, visit a trade show in that industry to see what new products they could purchase by demonstrating how they can solve the organisation's problems.

In the majority of cases, a **modified re-buy** occurs, when the company is dissatisfied with their existing suppliers. This could be due to post-sales service, changing business needs or technology. If it is a simple modified re-buy, then the information search can be limited; while with a complex modified re-buy, large amounts of information are needed (Sarin, 2013:30). Trade shows, for example, could be an opportunity for an organisation to convince business to switch or its change suppliers.

**Straight re-buy (repeat purchase)** occurs when a business buys the same products that were bought in the past. It is a routine decision with low risk, and less information is needed. Elements, such as the product, the delivery, price and payment terms remain unchanged, according to an original purchase order (Ellis, 2011:51). Trade shows, for example, can be used to maintain relationships with current customers to ensure that they buy again. At trade shows, for example, different customers or buying centre members would visit the exhibit stand where their purchase decisions of the past can be reconfirmed.

#### **2.5.4 Buying Centre**

The buying decision in an organisation is normally made by a buying centre; and only a few purchases decisions are made by managers only. To market a product successfully to a business, marketing (specifically the sales department) requires

knowledge of each member in a customer organisation, and the role they play in the decision-making process. These members are known as purchase participants, or buying-centre members. The members of a buying centre usually consists of the purchasing department and people at all levels within the organisation, who have individual objectives, but share the common risks, and participate in the buying decision (Phadtare, 2008:26; Havaladar, 2010: 42-43; Brennan, Canning & McDowell, 2014:43; Morris *et al.*, 2001:67-73).

As stated, trade shows provide a great opportunity to get all the members of a buying centre together in one central place.

According to Havaladar, (2010: 42-43), buying centres can be influenced by four dimensions, namely: the time dimension, vertical and horizontal dimensions, and the formalisation dimension. The **time dimension** is the period of time that different members have been involved in the decision-making process. The decision time can be lengthened, when the buying centre consists of many personnel, and/or is composed of inexperienced members. A shorter time dimension benefits the salesperson; since more prospects can be contacted. The sales process at trade shows can, for example, make this time dimension shorter – by persuading and providing information to buying centre members. The **vertical dimension** refers to the number of managers that are involved; and the **horizontal dimension** indicates the number of departments that will participate in the decision-making process (Dwyer & Tanner, 2009:99-103).

In the promotion of trade shows, the salesperson or the exhibiting business must ensure that the correct members of the buying centre are invited to the show. The **formalisation dimension** comprises the processes and policies describing the task and roles of the buying-centre members (Dwyer & Tanner, 2009:99-103).

According to Boone and Kurtz (2012:191) and Morris *et al.* (2001:67), the personnel in the buying organisation can influence the decision-making process in one way or another. Their influences can be positive or negative, depending on the product and/or the buying firm. The buying influences may be described by the role the personnel play in the buying centre (Havaladar & Cavale, 2007:43-44;

Brennan *et al.*, 2014:43). It may, therefore, be assumed that each of the buying-centre members' roles would influence their decision-making when visiting a trade show. Next, the different roles that the members play will be briefly discussed.

**Initiators** are those individuals who first recognise or anticipate a problem, a need or an opportunity. The initiator can be any person within the organisation, who defines the buying situation. At a trade show, an attendee might be influenced by the booth staff, through a sales presentation, to recognise a problem; and s/he might start the process of looking for more information (Boone & Kurtz, 2012:191). For example, an engineer visiting the Electra Mining trade show might see a new drilling machine, and initiate the process of the organisation possibly buying it.

**Buyers'** main responsibility is to send enquires; obtain quotations (proposals); evaluate, compare and select suppliers; negotiate with vendors; process the purchase orders expediting deliveries; and implementing the purchasing policies of the organisation. A number of the afore-mentioned actions can take place at a trade show, such as comparing suppliers, selecting suppliers and negotiating with vendors (Ellis, 2011:48).

**Users** are the department or individuals who initiate the purchase and actually use the product (Ellis, 2011: 48). For example, exhibitors at trade shows can invite users that work within the business to attend; and in doing so, make them aware of what products are available through demonstrations.

**Influencers** are individuals within the organisation that make the choice, but influence the buying process. Influencers can include managers; and it would, therefore, be advisable to invite them to such trade shows (Munuera & Ruiz, 1999:21).

**Deciders** are those individuals who make the final decision, but do not always have formal authority, but have considerable influence. They are individuals in senior positions within the organisation, and who approve the recommendations of buyers. The deciders are the most difficult role to identify for marketers in a buying centre (Ellis, 2011: 48).

**Gatekeepers** have power over the flow of information regarding products or suppliers between the different members of the buying centre, when making a specific buying decision. By providing information to salespeople and other representatives, the gatekeeper can decide which marketing material or product information reaches the key influencers (Sarin, 2013:33). Gatekeepers can decide whether salespeople must be given access to the right buying-centre members. The advantage of trade shows is that it is usually the user, influencer, decider or buyer that attends; and there is no gatekeeper between them and the exhibitor (Bettis-Outland, Johnston & Wilson, 2012:390).

At trade shows, for example, through the sales process, users, influencers and deciders can be influenced to purchase from an exhibiting firm. The sales process used at trade shows must be adapted to each member; as some members might only need information, such as the users; while others might be intent on buying, such as the buyers. In this study, the exhibitor's interaction with each of the different buying centre members will be examined. Many businesses not only classify their customers, according to a buying centre; but they go even further and segment their customers. Trade show organisers often use segmentation to classify different types of trade shows (Kirchgeorg *et al.*, 2005:48-49).

## **2.6 SEGMENTATION OF BUSINESS-TO-BUSINESS MARKETS**

Segmentation, targeting and positioning can be viewed as part of a single process in B2B marketing (Zimmerman & Blyth, 2013:106; Ellis, 2011:173-176). The first step in the process is to group customers together along common variables; this is followed by choosing the most attractive segment for the market effort; and lastly, there is a need to develop a position that attempts to place the marketing firm uniquely in the minds of the buyers (Lilien & Grewal, 2012:22). Trade shows, for example, are mostly established, according to the interests of industry – be this safety, health, mining, or moulding or any other.

According to Bingham, Gomes and Knowles (2005:196), businesses have different needs and wants, different structures within the procurement function; and they

engage in different types of economic activities. Due to the afore-mentioned issues, B2B marketing managers need to do market segmentation. A common error that business marketers make in segmentation is viewing an entire industry as one segment (Zimmerman & Blyth, 2013:95). Morris *et al.* (2001:124) define a market segment as "...a group of existing or potential customers sharing some common characteristic that is relevant in explaining their response to a company's marketing programs". Business market segmentation involves the division of the market into meaningful groupings or segments that are homogeneous with respect to their response to a marketing mix (Brennan *et al.*, 2014:147). Trade-show organisers recognise this; and they have industry- or product-specific shows to cater to the needs and wants of specific industries.

The targeting of selected segments assists management to have diverse and unique marketing mixes for each particular segment to benefit efficiently in the use of business-marketing resources (Lilien & Grewal, 2012:3; Zimmerman & Blyth, 2013:95). Marketing segmentation can benefit an organisation by enabling the marketer to be more efficient, to identify specific client prospects, and to identify and make the most of the limitations of its relevant competitors. An organisation, for example, that sells water purification systems can target only the Water Utilities Africa trade show to sell their equipment, and thereby using their marketing effort more effectively.

Market segmentation also enables the business-marketing manager to select a specific trade show to exhibit the products. Kirchgeorg *et al.* (2010b:290) explain that the exhibitors and their characteristics help the trade-show management to understand market developments; and that the exhibitors' typology is determined by their corresponding market position, their targets and their expectations of a trade show. The afore-mentioned issue will impact the business-marketing mix; and it will, therefore, be discussed next.

## **2.7 THE MARKETING MIX**

In Section 2.2, a definition of business marketing was given, in which different elements of the marketing mix were identified, namely: product, price, distribution and communication. In this section, each of the elements will be discussed.

### **2.7.1 Product and service elements in the B2B marketing mix**

According to Halvadar (2014:115-116), a product in a B2B situation is more than just the physical product. Products are more complex in B2B markets, with different elements, such as: economic, legal, technical and the personal interaction between buyer and seller. A product, therefore, is more than just the physical aspects; but it rather includes all the benefits obtained (Dwyer & Tanner, 2009:224). It is suggested that the generic term “product” must be replaced by “product offering” that includes the physical product and all the accompanying services and benefits (Brennan *et al.*, 2014:268-269). This must be applied at trade shows, where the exhibitor sells the benefits of the products, and not merely focuses on the physical aspects of the product (Pitta *et al.*, 2006: 160).

Trade shows are not only used to sell products, but also for new product development, as well (Ling-Yee, 2008:37; Hanchett, 2007:11) In this section, the new product-development process in B2B markets and the classification of B2B products will be discussed – due to its importance in trade shows. It was indicated in Chapter 1 of this study that trade shows are used for testing new product developments and therefore are important in new product development.

#### **2.7.1.1 New product development**

According to Judson, Schoenblacher, Gordon, Ridnour and Weilbacher (2006:196-197), the salesperson is useful as an information source in the early stages of new product development. Ling-Yee (2008:37), Hanchett (2007:11), Pitta *et al.* (2006:160) and Herbig, O`Hara and Palumbo (1998:427) all point out that trade shows are used by organisations to assist them with new product development and fresh ideas.

According to Ellis (2011:224), the development of new products is becoming more difficult, due to shorter product-life cycles and the need for more products because of customer demand. New products are launched more rapidly than in the past; and old ones are removed more quickly, rendering product development more important (Dwyer & Tanner, 2009:230). Trade shows assist businesses in this process to determine customer demand; and they can then develop product offerings that the customer wants due to the interaction that takes place at shows between buyers and exhibitors (Pitta *et al.*, 2006:160).

Zimmerman and Blyth (2013:180), Ellis (2011:225), Brennan *et al.* (2014:285) and Halvadar (2014:128) indicate that in business markets, new product development is made up of a number of steps.

### **Step 1 - Idea generation**

New ideas for products can come from a number of different sources these include salespeople, customers, service staff, market research, the Research and Development (R&D) department, and engineers. Businesses often make use of trade shows to do market research on customers' needs to assist in the development of new products (Pitta *et al.*, 2006:160). Trade shows are also used by businesses to see what their competitors' newest developments are to help in product-idea generation (Ling-Yee, 2008:37; Hanchett, 2007:11). In this study, these issues will be investigated.

### **Step 2 - Idea screening**

The purpose of this stage is to select those ideas that would have the best chance of succeeding. Ellis (2011:226) and Dwyer and Tanner (2009:233) indicate that in the idea-screening stage, a business must have predetermined criteria for the selection of the best ideas. The business should screen any new idea on: whether it fits in with the company goals; whether it satisfies customers' needs; its market potential; the competitive advantage that would be achieved; and whether the business can produce the new product. Trade shows can be used at this step by having attendees indicating which of the product ideas they would consider as feasible.

### **Step 3 - Business analysis and planning**

The purpose of a business analysis is: to predict sales patterns; to estimate the profitability by doing a demand analysis; to establish the market segments; to discern competitors' reactions; the costs of product development; manufacturing and marketing. Furthermore, the investment in plant, equipment, the additional capital required and market development must be calculated as part of the analysis (Ellis, 2011:226).

### **Step 4 - Product development**

Prototypes of the product concept are developed and tested. The prototype is tested in terms of design, functional performance and manufacturing requirements. In today's competitive market, the concept "concurrent engineering" is practised, to ensure that new products are launched in the market before those of the competitors (Ellis, 2011:226).

### **Step 5 – Test marketing**

In a B2B context, market testing is done by using methods, such as: alpha and beta testing. Alpha testing is done within the business to test the product's performance and the working cost. When in-company testing is satisfactory, the business will go for the beta testing. Marketing and salespeople can also identify the potential user that would permit confidential testing at their factories (Halvadar, 2014:132). Another method used, is to introduce the product at trade shows, where any potential buyers are exposed to the new product; and their reactions, intentions or placement of orders can be evaluated (Hansen, 1996:47).

It must, however, be noted that by placing the product at trade shows, the business should be ready to launch the new product as soon as possible, due to the exposure to the competitors (Halvadar, 2014:132).

### **Step 6 – Product launching**

The launch of the product occurs when it is introduced to the target market. With the introduction of the product, the marketing activities of the business must be kept in mind. The production and that marketing activities must be

synchronised, in order to ensure that the market entry timing and the needs of stakeholders, distributors and advertising agencies are considered. Trade shows are used by many businesses to introduce new products (Tafesse & Korneliussen, 2011:44-46).

In this study it will be investigated whether exhibitors employ new product launching at trade shows.

The products developed can be classified into different categories, according to the purpose for which they will be used.

### **2.7.1.2 Classification of products in business-to-business markets**

B2B products can be classified into: installation, accessories, raw materials, manufactured materials, components, spare parts, supplies and business services (Ellis, 2011:215; van Rensburg, 2008:132; Cant, Strydom, Jooste & du Plessis, 2006:206-208). The classification of B2B products is done on the basis of what businesses are buying the product for, and the purpose for which they will be used (Dwyer & Tanner, 2009:15).

Many trade shows are categorised, according to the classification of products that are being exhibited at the show (Hanchett, 2007:1-2). A short description of each of the different classifications will therefore be given (Cant *et al.*, 2006:206-208; Dwyer & Tanner, 2009:15; Lamb *et al.*, 2015:489-490):

- **Installation products** are seen as major purchases; and they consist of long-term investment items.
- **Accessories** are any moveable products that have a wide range of applications in the business, and do not become part of the finished product.
- **Raw materials** are untreated or agricultural products that are still in their natural state.
- **Manufactured materials** consist of all the raw materials that have been transformed before being used in the manufacturing process.

- **Components** are products that need very little or no transformation before they are used in the manufacturing of a product.
- **Parts** are installed directly in the product, in order to make the finished product.
- **Supplies** comprise those operating products that do not become part of the final offering; and they are used in maintenance and repairs.
- **Business services** comprise those maintenance and repair services provided by outside providers. The services provided do not become part of the final product.

In this study, all of the products will be looked at, with the exception of raw materials. Due to the specialised nature of raw materials trade shows for these are limited and they are not usually combined with other products or services mentioned above and are therefore excluded for the purposes of this study. At trade shows, exhibitors not only exhibit different types of products but they also need to consider how they should price their products.

## **2.7.2 Pricing element in the B2B marketing mix**

According to Indounas (2009:86-88), in B2B price strategies are important; because they provide the direction when setting prices. Prices can be either quantitative (be measured in terms of money or profits) or qualitative in nature (relationship between customer and the business) depending on the business objectives (Indounas & Avlonitis, 2011:27). The researcher established that there is no literature that deals with price-setting at trade shows, or on how it influences pricing strategies (Zimmerman & Blyth, 2013:232). For the completeness of the study, pricing will, however, be discussed shortly.

### **2.7.2.1 Definition of Pricing**

Cant *et al.* (2006:323) define price as the value that one puts on the utility one receives from products and services; whereas Dwyer and Tanner (2009:401) define price as the amount of money paid by a buyer to a seller for a particular product or service. Pricing in B2B has an economical impact on a business.

Businesses might, for example, see trade shows as a way to access different sellers, in order to get the most economical price.

According to Mèndez, Oubiña and Rubio (2006:402), price is a central marketing factor; since price is present in all purchasing situations. Price represents the lowest possible amount of financial cost; and it is the only changeable factor that generates instant profits. A price has a different meaning and value for consumers than it has for a business. Price is an exchange between benefits and sacrifices (Hutt & Speh, 2007:367-371). Core benefits and add-on benefits contribute to the value in business markets. Add-on benefits are the joint working relationships that include supplier flexibility and commitment.

On the other hand, sacrifices in the business markets are a broad perspective. Business buyers place the emphasis on the total cost in use; and they consider three different types of costs, namely: acquisition costs, possession costs and usage costs in pricing products.

Kotler, Keller, Ang, Leong and Tan (2009:422) mentioned that prices are not just a number on a label or tag; but that throughout history, price have been set by bargaining or via negotiations between the buyers and sellers. Cant *et al.* (2006:321) agree with Kotler *et al.* (2009:422) that historically, prices have been set by negotiations between buyers and sellers; and the bargaining process is still important in determining the prices of industrial products in the B2B marketing process. Trade shows, for example, can be used as a place where price negotiations take place, or competitive talks start between the buyers and sellers.

In modern days, businesses set the prices of their products or services in different ways. The price of a product contributes to the profits of a business; and it can be established by an individual, or by a department, depending on the size of the business. The risk estimates in B2B pricing, as perceived by management, would inevitably influence their pricing strategy.

### **2.7.2.2 Pricing strategies**

There are different pricing strategies that can be followed in B2B marketing. B2B organisations frequently adopt dynamic price strategies; and there are factors that play a role in dynamic pricing (Zimmerman & Blyth 2013:234). Lee, Illia and Lawson-Body (2011:531-533) refer to the price fairness of dynamic pricing, as a price strategy providing consumers or customers with different prices. Dynamic pricing can be divided from a seller's point of view into analytical and systematic pricing. The analytical approach to pricing is based on the demand curve and optimal inventory level; while systematic pricing is determined by expanding tools for decisive improved pricing policies for sellers (Levin, McGill & Nediak, 2010:40-44).

B2B organisations adopt policies that are influenced by factors, such as: the speed price can be changed; that it is easier to gather and analyse customers' data for making price decisions; and that it is more convenient to segment customers to provide custom pricing (Elmaghraby & Keskinocak, 2003:213-215). Trade shows can, for example, be used as a place where sellers get an indication from a large number of possible buyers on the pricing of their products.

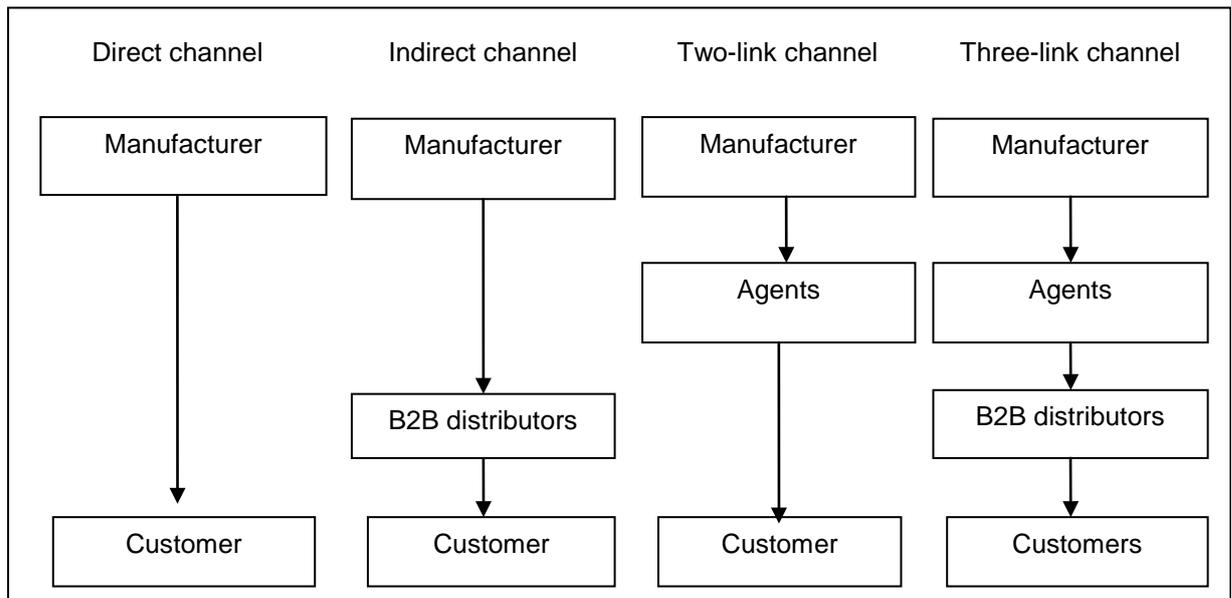
### **2.7.3 Distribution in B2B marketing mix**

Distribution in the marketing mix is part of the supply chain management. Supply chain management focuses on the relationship perspective in business marketing, when considering the chain of suppliers involved in the creation of a product (Hutt & Speh, 2007:16). Cant *et al.* (2005:45) define a supply chain as ... "all those upstream linkages (sources of supply), the internal linkages inside the organisation, and [the] downstream linkages (distribution and ultimate consumer)". Supply-chain management, therefore, is the integration of business processes from the end-user through to the original suppliers to provide products, services and information that adds value for the customers (Blyth, 2006:661). From the definitions it is clear that supply chain management is a process where different businesses work with one another to get products and services through the distribution channels, from producer to final consumer (Widd, 2013:20).

According to Blyth (2006:642), distribution is an important element of the marketing mix. Distribution provides four utilities to a product, namely: place; time; ownership and information (Zimmerman & Blyth, 2013:285). The main function of B2B marketing channels is to shorten the gaps between the producers and the users of products (Dwyer & Tanner, 2009:252). Trade shows, for example, can help overcome a number of these gaps by bringing the buyer and the seller to a central point. In B2B markets, the products would move between different channels members to get to the final user of the product (Ellis, 2011:95). Within a business-distribution channel, a number of tasks are performed that include: contacting possible buyers; negotiating; contracting; transferring ownership; communicating; financing; after-sales service; transportation; and storage (Hutt & Speh, 2007:292).

In Figure 2.3, Cant *et al.* (2005:409) indicate that distribution channels for B2B products can be either direct, indirect, two-link channels, or three-link channels. In a direct channel, the manufacturers sell directly to the customer or user. With an indirect channel, the manufacturer makes use of B2B distributors to sell products across a wide geographical area. A two-link channel is used by small manufacturers that do not have the necessary resources to develop their own distribution network; and so they appoint agents to distribute their products and provide after-sales services. In a three-link channel, small manufacturers make use of agents to establish their products to B2B distributors. Trade shows can be a very useful distribution method in the one-link channel, where the manufacture can have direct contact with their customers. Trade show for example that focus on retail products can be a place of where agents are used extensively as a link between the manufacturer and the customers.

**Figure 2.3 Distribution channels for business products**

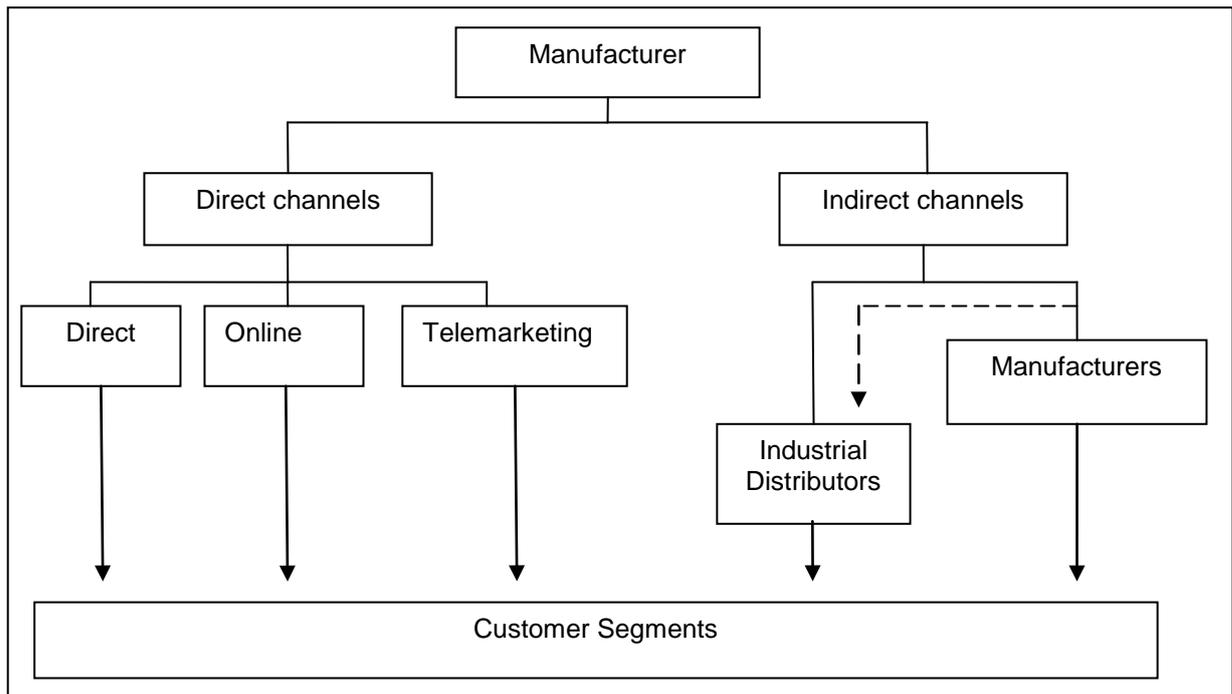


Source: Adapted from Cant *et al.* (2006:410)

The approach of Hutt and Speh (2007:292-293) to distribution channels differs from that of Cant *et al.* (2005:409), indicated in Figure 2.4 below. According to Hutt and Speh (2007:292-294), distribution channels consist only of direct channels and indirect channels. Direct channels have no intermediaries; and the manufacturer deals directly with the customers through direct sales, online marketing or telemarketing. The method of dealing directly with customers is viable, when: customers are large in size and well-defined; and where the customer prefers direct sales, and negotiations are needed. Trade shows can be useful in direct channels; where there is direct selling to the buyers.

Indirect channels consist of at least one type of intermediary between the manufacturer and the customer. Where markets are fragmented and widely dispersed, low sales volumes are common; and buyers purchase a variety of brands; and indirect channels is used. In indirect channels, the majority of sales are done by either the manufacturer's representative or by business distributors.

**Figure 2.4 Structure of business marketing channels**



Source: Adapted from Hutt and Speh (2007:293)

As indicated in Figure 2.3 and Figure 2.4, distribution channels consist of different intermediaries and distributors. Distribution channels consist of both direct selling and the use of different intermediaries and facilitators (Ellis, 2011:97-98). Each of the channel members will now be briefly discussed.

According to Dwyer and Tanner (2009:255-260) and Ellis (2011:256), **wholesalers** sell to other intermediaries; and they take little of the products. Different types of wholesalers can be identified in B2B markets, depending on the functions they perform. These consist of full-service and selective-service wholesalers. Full-service wholesalers provide a wide variety of services to both their suppliers and the customers. These would include: re-grouping products; providing information; providing credit; selling; as well as storing and risk management.

Selective service wholesalers comprise limited-function wholesalers, single-line wholesalers, specialty wholesalers, cash-and-carry distributors, drop-shippers, desk jobbers, truck jobbers and catalogue wholesalers. Each of the aforementioned wholesalers takes on specific functions and specialises in specific

aspects of the distribution of the products between the suppliers and the customers.

Ellis (2011:98) indicates that **retailers** or **dealers** sell directly to the end-users, usually business. Noad and Rogers (2008:1002) argue that there are numerous products and business-customer types, which are appropriate for B2B retailing, where the number of transactions is low; and the buyers want to try out a variety of products.

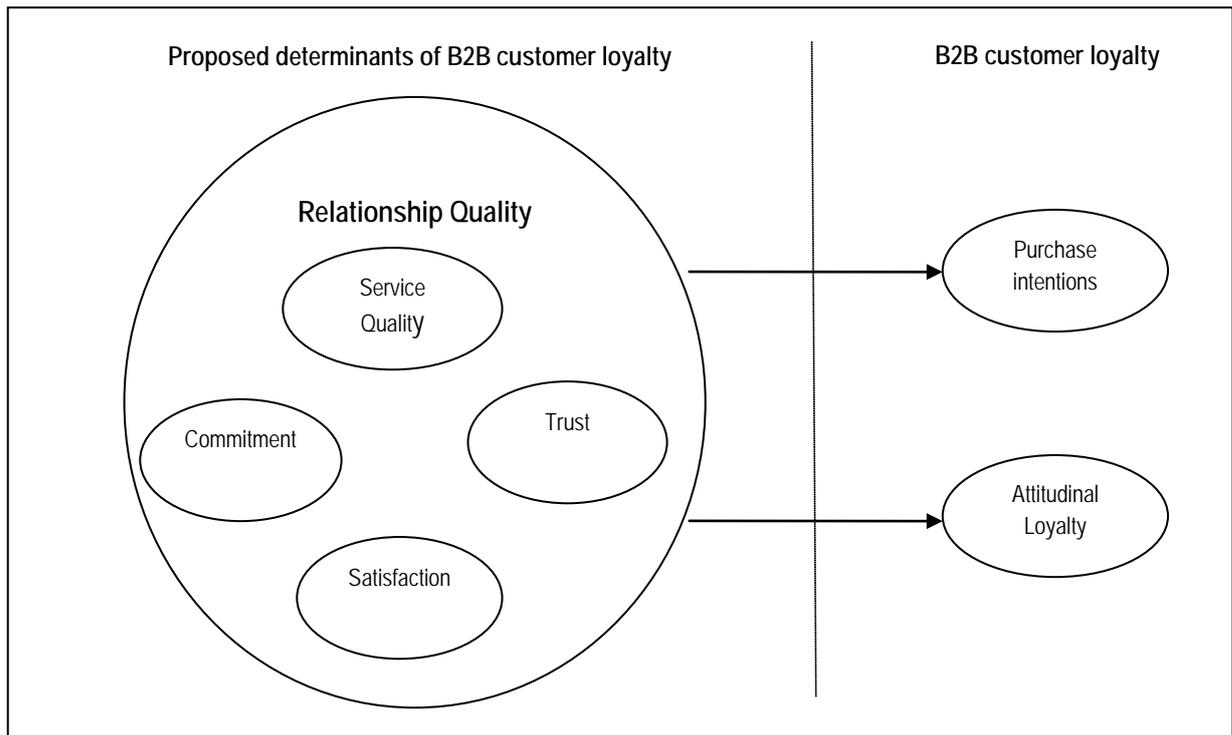
In B2B distribution channels, the customer relationship must be managed; because their customers spend large amounts of money in their purchases.

#### **2.7.4 Customer relationship in B2B marketing**

B2B and B2C marketing are both part of the same marketing context (Gummesson & Polese, 2009:337-343). Customer relationships in marketing are direct in B2B markets and indirect in B2C markets, and far more personal in B2B markets. Hansen (2009:227-234) points out that the buyer-supplier relationships have changed over the years; and that businesses have changed from information-sharing to integrated value chains that lead to specifying the value-chain customer and the changing roles of sellers' sales force.

Customer-relation management (CRM) can be used by marketers in B2B marketing to secure co-operation in loyalty programs, and to increase customer life-time value through quality relationships, perceived service quality, commitment, trust, satisfaction and the willingness to remain committed, by sharing information that could assist in building relationships and attitudinal loyalty (Lacey & Morgan, 2009:3-5).

**Figure 2.5 Theoretical model of relationship quality**



Source: Adapted from Rauyruen & Millar (2006:25)

The concept of relationship quality can be promulgated through trade shows, due to its nature. Rauyruen and Miller (2007:25) propose a theoretical model of relationship quality, as a predictor of customer loyalty, as indicated in Figure 2.5. Relationship quality consists of service quality (measurement of the difference between expected service quality and perceived service quality), commitment (intention to continue to maintain a relationship with a business), trust (the feeling of being safe when dealing with a supplier, and that their interaction is treated as confidential), and satisfaction (Kotler *et al.*, 2009:404 - 406).

Relationship quality leads to customers' purchase intentions and attitudinal loyalty. The channel relationships are supported by the integrated marketing communication the supplier applies to keep customers informed about the products and new product development. Trade shows are not only used by businesses to inform their customers about new products and recent developments, but could also be used to build and maintain relationship with new and existing customers.

### 2.7.5 B2B integrated marketing communication mix

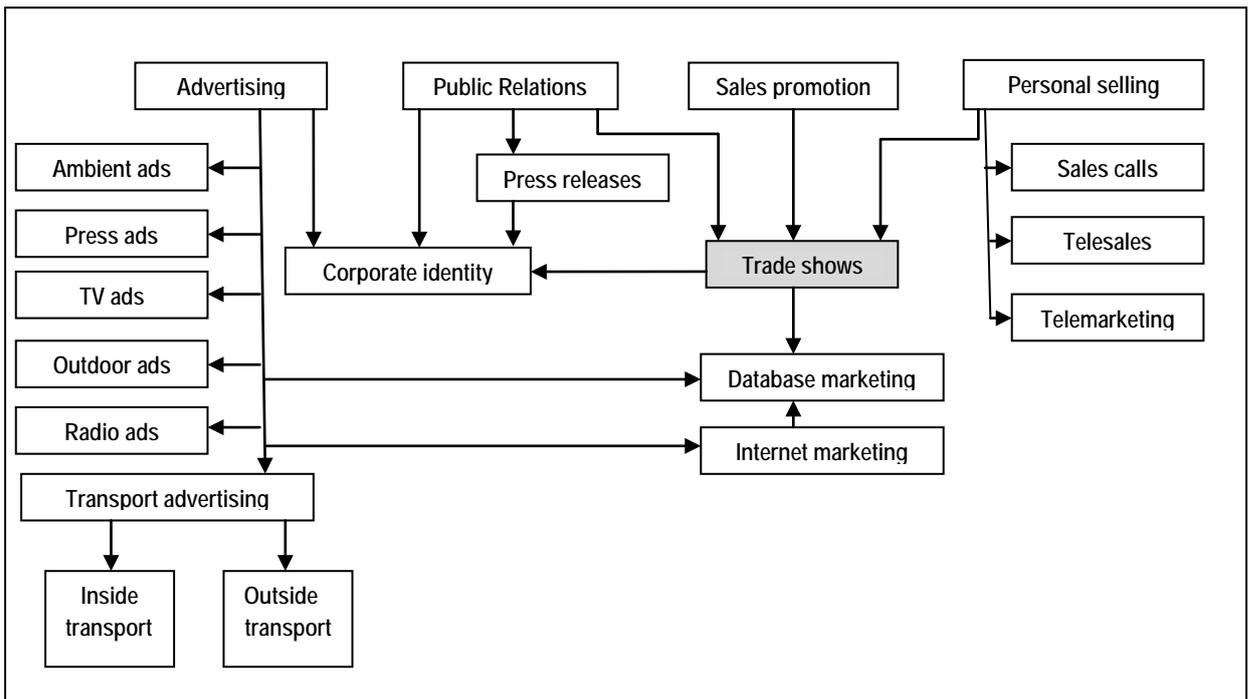
The communication process consists of three basic elements: firstly, the source of the message; secondly, the message that provides the information; and lastly, the receiver (Yeshin, 2006:57). According to Brennan *et al.* (2014:171-172), business marketers send regular messages to their buyers, in order to achieve their communication objectives. Marketing communication is the process of transferring information and ideas, or the process of finding common ground between a sender and a receiver (Belch & Belch, 2007:139).

The following elements can be identified for B2B integrated marketing communication (IMC): advertising, direct marketing, public relations, the internet and websites, trade shows, telemarketing and personal selling (Dwyer & Tanner, 2009:296-299; Ellis, 2011:301). Pride, Hughes and Kapoor (2012:432) indicate that in B2B markets, the IMC mix used would be influenced by the type of product being sold and the business target market.

IMC in B2B markets consist of a mixture of different methods and communication instruments, both personal and impersonal, aimed at communicating with the business buyer (Căescu & Dumitri, 2011:283). There is, however, the problem of boundary-spanning; because some of the communication elements go beyond communication into the distribution and product realms (Blyth, 2006:271-272). To illustrate the interconnections, the elements can be seen as an arrangement of marketing communication methods (as in Figure 2.6).

The communication message can be sent by applying different methods, as illustrated in Figure 2.6, which then make up the IMC mix. Jensen (2008:203) is of the opinion that the planning and selection of the IMC elements in B2B marketing is determined by the audience of the message. Căescu and Dumitri (2011:283) support the view of Jensen (2008:203); and they add that there must be interaction and synergy between the IMC elements, in order to ensure a congruent communication process.

**Figure 2.6 Interconnection between communication elements**



Source: Adapted from Blythe (2006:273)

Advertising and sales promotions are seldom done alone in B2B marketing; but they can be used with other communication elements, such as personal selling, or trade shows (Hutt & Speh, 2007:292-294). For small businesses, personal selling and trade shows are the only IMC elements available in many industries (Pitta *et al.*, 2006:158). Lichtenthal, Yadav and Donthu (2006:236) support this view; and they add that although personal selling is the main means of communicating in B2B markets, other non-personal communication methods play a unique role. Trade shows, for example, are playing a bigger role; and they have become one of the most important elements of the IMC – for buyers to gain purchasing information on B2B markets (Pitta *et al.*, 2006:159).

The discussion has addressed the communication elements of IMC in B2B marketing communication. For the purpose of this study, only those elements applicable to B2B marketing communication will be discussed.

### 2.7.5.1 Advertising

Advertising is a paid form of communication used by businesses. The business pay for different media (vide Figure 2.6) to transmit the communication message to the target audience. It is used to inform prospective buyers about the product and its benefits, in order to arouse awareness and evoke needs. Lamb *et al.* (2015:339) define advertising as ...“any form of paid communication, in which the sponsor or firm is identified”. Semenik (2002:9-10) provides another definition, and defines advertising as...“a paid, mass-media attempt to persuade”. Pride *et al.* (2012:432) agree with Lamb *et al.* (2015:339) and Semenik (2002:9-10); and they add that advertising is a form of non-personal communication. Advertising in B2B markets is also non-personal; and it comprises a one-way communication between a buyer and the seller (Dwyer & Tanner, 2009:296).

For the purpose of this study, B2B advertising will be defined as paid non-personal one-way communication from an identifiable sponsor, in order to persuade prospective buyers.

According to Ellis (2011:300) and Zimmerman and Blyth, (2013:211), advertising is not as effective in B2B marketing as it is in B2C marketing, due the unemotional and technical nature of business products. Zimmerman and Blyth, (2013:211-212) point out that advertising plays different roles in B2B marketing, namely:

- To create a positive environment for personal selling.
- To research those inaccessible decision-makers that influence the buying decision, and which the salesperson cannot contact.
- To reach those unknown influencers in the buying decision, of which the salesperson is not aware.
- To generate leads, and to allow the salesperson to spend more time on live prospects, and less on cold calling.
- To communicate with customers in between sales calls.
- To inform the channel intermediaries of new products, or to remind them of the business and current products.
- To create and stimulate derived demand.

- To develop a positive corporate image.
- To provide the most economical promotional mix.

B2B communication advertising adds two more functions, namely: creating awareness for new products or brands and building brand image (Shimp, 2007:35-36). Advertising is, however, not as important as personal selling in B2B marketing (Hollensen, 2010:499). Marketing managers in B2B markets must be aware that their marketing communication, such as advertising, may receive little attention from the prospects (Jensen & Jepsen, 2007:347). The afore-mentioned aspects emphasise the importance of selling and trade shows as B2B communication elements.

B2B marketers mostly use advertising to advertise in trade, industry, or professional publications (Dwyer & Tanner, 2009:296). Business publications used in B2B advertising can be either horizontal or vertical (Hutt & Speh, 2007:400). **Horizontal publications** are directed at a specific task, technology or function, wherever the industry might be; whereas **vertical publications** are aimed at a broader market and include every possible reader. Other media used by B2B marketers are the Web, radio and billboards. Advertising in B2B marketing provides support for the salesperson, by creating a favourable climate to make an appointment to visit a prospect; and it creates awareness to strengthen the business image.

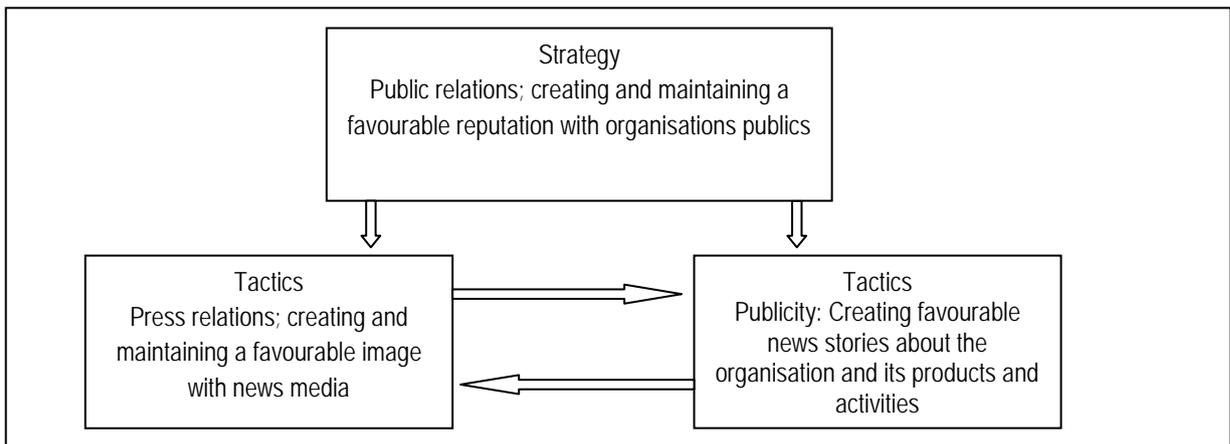
B2B advertising is almost always used by organisations to promote trade shows, in which they plan to exhibit. Businesses can also make use of publicity and public relations; therefore, these issues will be discussed next.

#### **2.7.5.2 Publicity and public relations**

Dwyer and Tanner (2009:297) define public relations as “the management function that focuses on the relationships and communication with individuals and groups, in order to create mutual goodwill”. Publicity differs from public relations; and the terms are not synonymous; but they are often used interchangeably, although they have different meanings (Duncan, 2005:10). Publicity is described as “stories and

brands mentioned and delivered by the mass media, without any payment”; while public relations are “communication activities that help a business and its public adapt mutually to each other, in order to gain the support and co-operation of the public and the stakeholders” (Duncan, 2005:10).

**Figure 2.7 Publicity, Public Relations and Press relations**



Source: Adapted from Zimmerman & Blyth & Zimmerman (2013:276)

As indicated in Figure 2.7, public relations comprise the maintenance and the creation of a favourable image of a business. Public relations can be used to influence publicity and press relations. Publicity is the creations of news stories about the business, such as new products being realised, event sponsorship, or issue sponsorship. This is frequently done at and for trade shows. Press relations, on the other hand, comprise the maintenance and creation of a favourable image with the media.

In B2B markets, a business have a wide array of public-relation options available (Ellis, 2011:303). Lamb *et al.* (2015:385) and Zimmerman and Blyth, (2013:278) state that the public-relations methods that a business can use include:

- A **press release** is a story about a business that is designed to place them in a good light, and keep the organisation in the public’s view. Businesses, for example, would do a press release if they intend to be exhibiting at a trade show.
- **Product publicity** is the introduction of new products that provide information about the product’s features and benefits, and how more

information can be gained. Shimp (2007:580) noted that product releases are regularly published in trade magazines that cater for specific industries. A number of businesses make use of trade shows to introduce products. In this study product publicity at trade shows will be investigated.

- **Corporate communication** can be used to provide an understanding of the business via internal and external communication. Corporate communication is aimed at improving the image of the business, and is not just to sell products (Zimmerman & Blyth & Zimmerman, 2013:278).
- **Publicity stunts** are when a business stages an event with the aim to create a news story.
- **Lobbying** is communication with government, legislators, or politicians, in order to either promote or oppose regulations and legislation.
- Employee and investor relations comprise communication aimed at the internal stakeholders of the business. **Employee relations** focus on the establishment and maintenance of a system of communication with the workforce of a business. **Investor relations** include the development or collaboration in developing communication directed at investors, analysts, stockbrokers and the financial media (Duncan 2005:562).
- **Crisis management** deals with setting and maintaining a response system for when a disaster hits a business.
- **Sponsorship** can be done for an individual, event, cause or organisation. Event sponsorship is one of the fastest-growing sponsorship methods; since it provides an organisation with the opportunity to segment their markets – in order to reach specific customers (Hollenson, 2010:504). Businesses will co-sponsor a trade show as part of their publicity, such as NEC that sponsored the 2014 IFSEC show. This includes sponsoring events, hand-outs – such as bags and pens.

Public relations can use the internet as a medium to communicate with individuals or groups, and thereby to create goodwill. Customers can obtain information by visiting a website or a trade-show booth that gives them direct access to the sellers (Dwyer & Tanner, 2009:296).

### 2.7.5.3 Direct Marketing

O`Guinn, Allen and Semenik (2003:671) define direct marketing as... “an interactive system of marketing, through which organisations use one or more of the advertising media to communicate directly with target customers, [in order] to generate a response or transaction”. Duncan (2005:573) defines direct marketing as...“an interactive data-driven marketing communication process that uses a range of media to motivate a response from customers and prospects”. In B2B, the markets direct marketing role is to produce sales from current customers, and to create leads, or actions, such as visiting a website or a trade show (Dwyer & Tanner, 2009:296).

According to Blyth (2006:617-627), businesses can use the following marketing tools, namely: direct mail, telemarketing, mobile marketing, direct-response advertising and radio and catalogues.

According to Hollensen (2010:507), for **direct mail** to be effective in B2B a market, an accurate customer profile needs to be prepared that includes: industry classification, size of the target company, who to approach in each business, industry-buying procedures and the purchasing motives. An advantage of direct mail is that it is cheaper in comparison with other communication methods. Direct mail supports the salesperson by providing leads; and it can be used to notify your prospective clients about the distribution outlets. Business and exhibition organisers make use of direct mail to inform customers about up-and-coming trade shows (Hutt & Speh, 2007:402).

**Telemarketing** can be divided into “inbound telemarketing” and “outbound telemarketing”. Inbound telemarketing is used when the customer calls to the organisation, when responding to some marketing communication or advertising effort (Cant *et al.*, 2006:474). In B2B, inbound telemarketing is used to collect orders, supply technical support, and to provide new product information to the customers (Ellis, 2011:303). Outbound telemarketing occurs, when the business initiates the call; and it is useful for the following activities: direct selling, supporting

the sales force, generating and screening leads, and creating or updating the marketing database (Blyth, 2006:621).

Telemarketing can be used in B2B marketing to inform possible attendees about any up-and-coming trade shows.

Hollensen (2010:507) defines **mobile marketing** as ... “the application of marketing [techniques] to the mobile environment of smartphones, cellular phones, personal digital assistants (PDAs) and telematics”. An element of mobile marketing is short-message services (SMS) and the multimedia message system (MMS), whereby customers receive text or multimedia messages about organisations’ products (Cant *et al.*, 2006:478; Blyth, 2006:623). A number of exhibition organisers and exhibitors use mobile marketing to keep their customers updated about future trade shows.

**Direct-response advertising** refers to advertising, where the product is offered; and a direct response is solicited through one direct marketing tool, or more (Belch & Belch, 2007:475). Direct-response advertising differs from normal advertising; since it induces a direct response from the customer; it provides a channel for response; and it is a strong call-to-action advertising (Blyth, 2006:624). Direct-response radio is similar to direct-response advertising, except radio is used to get a response from customers.

Business can send **catalogues** to customers in print, on compact discs (CDs), videos and/or online formatting. Catalogues can be combined by direct marketers with the internet, in order to be more effective (Kotler *et al.*, 2009:604). A number of businesses exhibiting at trade shows use electronic catalogues, such as DVDs that are handed out to attendees as a promotional tool.

#### **2.7.5.4 Internet marketing and social media**

According to Belch and Belch (2007:489), B2B organisations see the internet as a necessity, and not just as a ‘nice-to-have’ add-on. The internet forms an important part of direct marketing in B2B; and it includes the company’s website and

electronic mail (Ellis, 2011:303). Virtsonis and Harridge-March (2008:702) refer to website communication elements in B2B that can be defined as ... “any of the components of a website that are used to convey meaning, information or messages through them”.

**Three** website components can be identified: they are **structural elements** – web page titles, paragraph headings, and hyperlink titles; **technological elements** – e-mail links, discussion forums, scroll bars, images and video streaming; and **communication elements** – corporate themes; atmospheric, aesthetic, graphic imagery and multimedia, ergonomics, access and interaction, customisable elements, links, community, marketing-communication integration, online demonstration, online price quoting, online service delivery/integration platforms, value-adding elements, and online-data collection.

These elements can serve as a checklist to help improve web performance as a communication medium (Virtsonis & Harridge-March, 2008:707-708). Weitz and Rosenthal (2010:63-64), however, found that there is no indication that if web traffic increases it results in an increase in sales; and they conclude that B2B customers only purchase when there is a contract at hand.

Electronic-mail (e-mail) marketing can be developed in four formats, depending on the communication objectives of the organisation. Firstly, **electronic-mail advertising** includes plain text or rich media (e-mail that features audio and/or video). Secondly, a **discussion list** that can include hundreds or thousands of people and markets, to which marketing messages can be added at the bottom, and sent out to selected markets. Thirdly, **newsletters** that are mass e-mails sent on product-related topics, where customers can respond directly back to the marketers. Lastly, **publicity** in which news releases can be distributed online to people of interest regarding business announcements (Duncan, 2005:395-396).

Ellis (2011:308-309) notes that e-mail lists must be sent to the right persons in the organisation, in order to not become “junk mail”. This is something that businesses could make use of to promote their trade shows. However, they need to make sure that the email gets to the correct person.

The internet is a very useful instrument for disseminating sales-promotion information to customers (Belch & Belch, 2007:498-499).

In the last few years the use of social media by business to connect directly with their customers has grown and includes for example popular social media sites such as: Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, Digg, MySpace, StumbleUpon, Delicious, Scribd and Flickr (Neti, 2011:3). In a study by Brennan and Croft (2011:17) on the use of social media in technological business markets they found that media such as Facebook, Twitter and blogging is used to build relationships with customers by business.

In business markets social media such as Facebook and twitter is used for; networking and creating relationships with other businesses, increases brand exposure; focusing more on relationships than sales, increases sales; interesting content promotes interaction (Cox, 2012:30). Social media is viewed as of the best ways to in creating and sustaining communication with an entirely new segment of customers that the business is not selling to yet (Columbus, 2013:1). Social media are also used by exhibitors at trade shows in B2B markets since it provide benefits such as increased booth traffic, increased brand awareness, improved relationships with clients, increased event attendance, additional press coverage, and increased sales as a direct result of their social media campaigns (Han, 2014:242).

#### **2.7.5.5 Trade-sales promotions**

According to Shimp (2007:490) and Pride and Ferrel (2008:566), sales promotions refer to any incentive applied by a producer to encourage or motivate the trade (wholesalers, retailers or other channel members) to purchase a brand. And, they encourage the sales force to sell it aggressively. Belch and Belch (2007:513) define sales promotions as ... “a directed inducement that offers an extra value or incentive for the product to the sales force, distributors or the ultimate consumer, with the primary objective of creating an immediate sale”. Sales promotions are marketing or sales efforts that do not include advertising, personal selling and public relations to stimulate sales (Gitman & McDaniel, 2009:333).

Trade promotions have four main objectives, namely: obtaining initial distribution, increasing the order size, encouraging co-operation with consumer-market sales promotions, and increasing store traffic (O`Guinn *et al.*, 2009:576). Other objectives include balancing the demand for products, and responding to competitors' marketing efforts (Duncan, 2005:495). It is clear that trade sales promotions have different functions; and that in order to achieve these, businesses have to use different methods. The different methods for accomplishing trade-sales promotions will be discussed next.

### **Incentives**

Dealer contest is used by manufacturers to motivate dealers and their sales staff to reach a specific sales volume or percentage; and that contest is incentivised in the form of gifts or prizes (Duncan, 2005:499). Incentives are given to intermediaries for reaching a specific sales volume, or to encourage additional attention to a manufacturer's brand (Semenik, 2002:402).

### **Trade allowances**

According to O`Guinn *et al.* (2009:577), different types of allowances can be offered for the purpose of increasing the attention given to their brand. Pride and Ferrel (2008:566) and Shimp (2010:462-464) identify different types of trade allowances that can be used by businesses: buying or off-invoice allowances; buy-back allowances; scan-back allowances; merchandise or bill-back allowances, and slotting allowances.

### **Displays and point-of-purchase materials**

Shah and D`Souza (2009:592) state that manufacturers provide the reseller with attractive point-of-purchase material that displays the business's products. Point-of-purchase displays are an essential part of manufacturer promotional tools for in-store merchandising (Belch & Belch, 2007:550).

### **Co-operative advertising**

According to Shah and D`Souza (2009:592), co-operative advertising involves the sharing of local advertising costs between the dealer and the company. In co-operative advertising, the cost is shared by more than one party (Belch & Belch,

2007:552). Cooperative advertising can be done in different media (newspapers, magazines or local radio), where either one brand or more are advertised, and are being sold by a reseller (Percy & Elliot, 2005:276).

### **Sales-training programmes**

Personnel at the resellers of manufacturers' products require knowledge on the features, advantages and benefits of these products – in order to provide consumers with the information (Belch & Belch, 2007:551). The training of intermediaries can be complex – due to the nature of certain products (Lamb *et al.*, 2015:390). Semenik (2002:402) supports the view of Lamb *et al.* (2015:390), and adds that proper accurate information and persuasive themes must get to consumers at the point-of-purchase.

Sales training can be done via training sessions, or by providing the sales staff with product educational materials (Duncan, 2005:499). Trade shows can be a possible place to train or educate sales personnel about business products.

#### **2.7.5.6 Trade shows**

A trade show is as an event that is held for a specific period of time at regular intervals, where a number of organisations exhibit their products to one or more industries – with the aim to inform and sell. Due to the absence of shopping malls, as with consumer markets, trade shows can be used as a method to promote products and services in business markets (Dwyer & Tanner, 2002:11).

Kirchgeorg *et al.* (2005:IX) define a trade show as ... “a temporary market event, where a large number of buyers (attendees) and sellers (exhibitors) interact, for the purpose of purchasing displayed goods and services: either at the time of presentation, or in the future”. Belch and Belch (2007:551) further support the viewpoint of Kirchgeorg *et al.* (2005:IX) that trade shows have additional functions. These include: demonstrating products, gathering information on competitors, and customers, identifying new prospects, and acquiring sales.

Trade shows serve as a marketing communication tool; and they offer the advantage of personal interaction with the attendees (Dwyer & Tanner, 2009:298). The interaction can be both verbal and non-verbal. Here, salespeople have the opportunity to observe the non-verbal communication; while at the same time listening to the verbal communication that can help to establish the needs of the attendees. Trade shows bring prospective buyers into contact with salespeople; and they offer the opportunity to the salespeople to demonstrate the product to the attendees in a cost-effective way.

This emphasises the importance of the salesperson's role at the trade show, both as the representative of the exhibitor and the buyers (attendees) during the tradeshow. Tradeshow will be discussed in detail in Chapter 3.

### **2.7.5.7 Personal Selling**

Blythe (2006:546) states that personal selling differs from the other elements of IMC; in that it offers a two-way communication; whereas the other elements only offer one-way communication. Zimmerman and Blyth, (2013:227) argue that it provides a personal touch and establishes a dialogue between the salesperson and the prospect. Lamb *et al.* (2015:390) indicate that personal selling offers a number of advantages over other elements of the communication mix, namely:

- Personal selling provides an opportunity for comprehensive explanation and demonstration of the products.
- The communication message can be adapted to the specific needs or interests of the prospect.
- Personal selling saves money and time; since the message can only be directed towards genuine prospects.
- Cost can be controlled, by changing the size of the salesforce in individual increments.
- Personal selling is more effective in achieving the sale, and obtaining satisfied customers.

Futtrel (2006:5) express the view that personal selling refers to ... “the personal communication of information to unselfishly persuade a prospective customer to buy something – a good, a service, an idea, or something else – that satisfies the individual’s needs. This implies that the salespeople must treat their customers unselfishly and deliver an ethical service. It is important to treat the prospect and customers unselfishly and to tell the truth about the product characteristics, price and delivery time.

The type of selling used at trade show booths is creative selling, seeing that tradeshows display a vast number of products. Creative selling needs technical advice, information and service knowledge from the business salespeople (Semenik, 2002:481-482). Personal selling is also important in B2B, due to higher priced orders, complex products, and fewer buyers (Ellis, 2011:318).

The promotional mix is an important part of B2B marketing, as is also the building of a relationship with customers via the sales process. The IMC mix ensures that all the different stakeholders of a business are reached with a congruent message. Trade shows and personal selling are both important elements of the IMC in B2B markets; and they have to be integrated with the other elements, such as advertising, direct marketing, public relations and sales promotions. From the discussions, it is clear that personal selling plays a role within trade shows; and it is viewed as an important element in B2B communication and will be discussed in Chapter 3 and Chapter 4 in more detail.

The sales process and personal selling will be discussed in detail in Chapter 4 of this study.

## **2.8 SUMMARY**

In this chapter, there was firstly a distinction made between the characteristics of business markets and consumer markets. Business markets differ; since the sales volumes in business markets are greater; there are fewer buyers than in consumer markets; these are usually geographically concentrated to specific areas; supplier-customer relationships are closer; there are more direct channels of distribution;

derived demand; inelastic demand; fluctuating demand; joint demand; trained professional purchasing agents; and direct-marketing communication can be used with a greater emphasis on personal selling at trade shows.

Secondly, B2B markets were categorised into three groups, namely; government customers, institutional customers, and commercial enterprises (markets). This was followed by a discussion on the influences on the business-buying process. The stages in the business decision-making process, that comprise anticipation or recognition of a problem or need; determination of the characteristics and quantity of any needed item; product specification; supplier search; obtaining and analysis of proposals; supplier selection; selection of order routine; and performance review: these issues were all highlighted.

Thirdly, it was stated that three types of buying situations exist in B2B markets, namely: new tasks; modified re-buy and straight re-buy. The buying decision in an organisation is normally made by a buying centre; and each member in a customer organisation plays a role in the decision-making process. These members are known as purchase participants, or buying-centre members that consist of initiators, buyers, users, influencers, deciders and gatekeepers.

In B2B marketing segmentation, targeting and positioning are both part of a single process.

Fourthly, new product development was discussed. New product development in business markets consists of a number of steps, namely: idea generation; idea screening; business analysis and planning; product development; test marketing; and product launching. B2B products can be classified into installation, accessories, raw materials, manufactured materials, components, spare parts, supplies and business services. The product in B2B marketing is more than just the physical product; and it is more complex with different elements, such as economic, legal, technical and personal interaction between the buyer and the seller.

Next, the different elements of the marketing mix were identified, namely: product, price, distribution and communication. Each of the elements was briefly discussed, with the emphasis on personal selling and trade shows. The elements of the marketing communication integrate all the messages sent out to the stakeholders – irrespective of the media used.

In this study, the integration of personal selling and trade shows are important elements in the IMC; because personal selling is used to communicate with the attendees at tradeshows.

Chapter 3 will focus on tradeshows and the different role-players. A discussion will be presented on trade-show organisers and the impact they have on exhibitors. The role of attendees will also be examined; since they have a direct impact on how exhibitors exhibit and communicate with them. Lastly, the exhibitors and the stages in tradeshows will be discussed. This will be done to provide a link between the sales process and the tradeshows.

## CHAPTER 3

### NATURE OF TRADE SHOWS

#### 3.1 INTRODUCTION

Trade shows are some of the oldest business-to-business marketing communication tools that provide organisations with the opportunity to display and exhibit their products and services to customers via face-to-face interaction (Robbe, 2006:11-12). Organisations not only use trade shows to sell products and services, but to gather information about competitors and build long-term relationships with customers. For businesses to make a return on their investment by exhibiting at trade shows; they must combine this with other marketing communication elements, such as personal selling to maximise its effectiveness.

However, trade shows should not just be seen as another communication tool; but they must have their own objectives – to ensure that they add value to sales and the marketing outcomes of a business. Studies by Kirchgeorg *et al.* (2010a:68); Whitfield and Webber (2011:446), Pitta *et al.* (2006:162); Johansson and Bengtsson (2011:73), Alessandra *et al.* (2009:69) Goldblatt (2005:11), Golpalakrishna *et al.* (2010:245) and Gottlieb *et al.* (2011:1642) have been identified to have been done on trade shows in the last decade; these indicate that in the future, trade shows will continue to be an integral part of the business-to-business (B2B) IMC mix of organisations (Kirchgeorg, Jung & Klant, 2010b:309).

In South Africa, trade shows are an important platform for face-to-face business, with revenues of as much as R2.6 billion in 2012; and these are predicted to reach R4 billion in 2017 (Viviers, 2013:210).

Organisations take part in trade shows, in order to display their products to a qualified target market; so that attendees can examine their products and services for possible purchasing (Brennan, Canning & McDowell, 2014:188). A trade show, however, can be more than just a selling tool; it can complement and/or expand on other marketing communication mix methods (Kerin & Cron, 1987:87). The

marketing functions of a trade show can, therefore, be divided into selling and non-selling activities. Selling activities include aspects, such as prospecting, closing the sale and following up on leads; while non-selling activities can include: building goodwill with customers, public relations, market research, meeting new intermediaries, introducing new products and improving staff morale (Blythe, 2001:627).

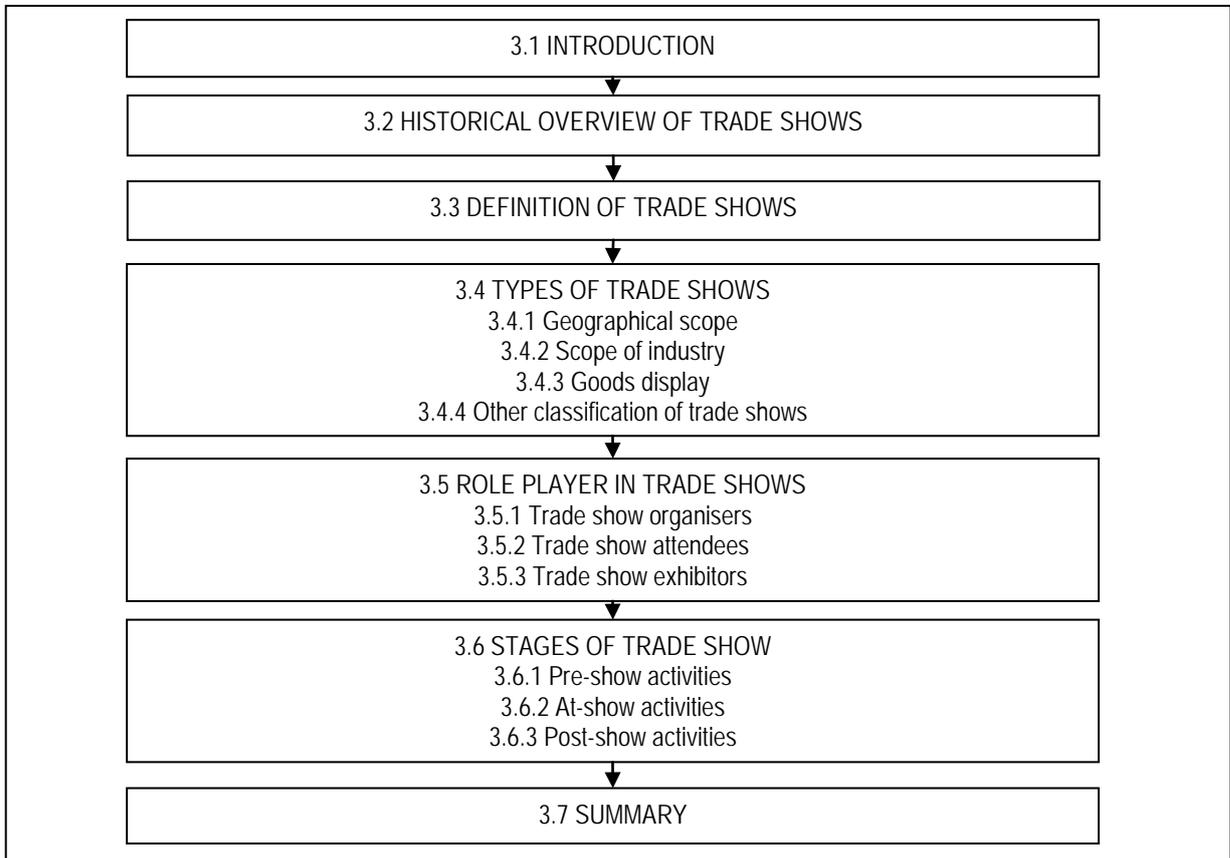
In this study, the focus will be on selling activities – although elements such as setting objectives, planning and other of the non-selling activities will be investigated if they relate, in any way, to the sales process.

Due the diverse nature of trade shows, they provide a number of advantages to business. In the first place, trade shows provide businesses with an opportunity for face-to-face interaction with active buyers in a central location; and, furthermore, they support attendees in their purchasing decisions via the information supplied by the exhibition staff. Secondly, the selling process is accelerated; and it speeds up the identification of possible prospects. Trade shows also help businesses to reach hard to-get-at decision-makers and influencers; since they are likely to attend. Lastly, trade shows are frequently attended by qualified pre-selected leads and other exhibitors at the show, who could be potential customers (Stevens, 2005:14-16). It is clear that trade shows play an important role in the dissemination of information and in the selling process.

With a clear indication of the importance of trade shows in the selling activities and in the B2B marketing mix of B2B markets, the assumption can be made that a lot of research has been done in this field. Gottlieb *et al*, (2011:1642), Wilkinson and Brouthers, (2006:238), Pitta, Weisgal and Lynagh (2006:160), however, state that trade shows have not been researched much in the new millennium; although they play an important role in B2B marketing. Their research, however, identified a number of studies that have been done on trade shows in the beginning of this century as indicated in Chapter 1. This could be an indication of a renewed interest in trade shows by academia.

The researcher of this study also found a limited number of new studies that have been done on trade shows. Consequently, older studies will also be perused in this study, in order to ensure the completeness of this chapter and thesis.

**Figure 3.1 Layout of Chapter 3**



Source: Own compilation

In Figure 3.1, the layout of Chapter 3 is provided. In this chapter, a number of elements relating to trade shows will be discussed – starting with a very short historical overview of trade shows – to provide an understanding of their role in B2B marketing. Secondly, the concept of trade shows is defined, and a definition for this study formulated. Thereafter, the different types of trade shows that can be categorised and used will be briefly discussed. Once the various types of trade shows have been discussed; it will be necessary to look at the main role-players, which comprise exhibitors, attendees and trade show organisers. In the last section of this chapter, the various stages of a trade show will be discussed by way of Figure 3.3: examining in greater detail each stage, namely: the pre-show, at-show, and post show activities. For the purpose of this study, the three stages

are of vital importance due to their impact on the sales process (Ling-Yee, 2008:40).

As stated, trade shows are one of the oldest business-to-business marketing tools; and therefore, a short historical overview will be given next.

### **3.2 HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF TRADE SHOWS**

The first reference to trade shows in human history is in the Bible in the book of Ezekiel (written in 588 BC before Christ), where reference is made to merchants trading in silver, iron, tin and lead. By 247 Anno Domini (AD), trade shows were already being held in France in the Champagne and Brue regions on a regular basis, and the Frankfurt trade show in Germany; which has been going for over 600 years (Simons, 1955:186). However, the first official international industrial exhibition only opened in the Crystal Palace, Hyde Park on the first of August 1851 (Robbe, 2006:11).

From Europe, trade shows started to spread across the world. The earliest trade shows in the United States, for example, were nothing like today's big events; and before 1928, trade shows were held in hotel ballrooms, where sales people could sell their goods. But in time, these venues became too small for the number of participants (Robbe, 2006:11-12). In the following decades after the Second World War, trade shows grew in number and size; and by 1955, 100 international trade shows were being held on a global scale. An example of this growth is the Milan international trade show of 1955 in Italy, which attracted 3585 exhibitors and four million attendees from 109 countries (Simons, 1955:187).

Over the subsequent three decades, trade shows expanded to 8000 trade shows, comprising 91 000 firms participating, and 31 million visitors in 1983 (Kerin & Cron, 1987:87); and by 1994, in North America alone, 1.3 million organisations exhibited in the United States, and Canada. These were attended by 85 million business people (Hansen, 2004: 1). Countries like Germany had 150 international trade shows that attracted as many as 170 000 exhibitors, and were attend by between nine and ten million visitors a year (Kirchgeorg, 2010a:63).

In Germany, trade shows have become so important to their economy, that high school students take part in simulated shows as part of their study syllabus (Otto, 1983:267-273). Trade shows were not only held in the Americas and Europe, but also in the rest of the world, including South Africa.

Trade shows started in South Africa in 1966; and the first show was called “Electra”; and it was arranged by an engineer from Wits University in 1966. Thereafter, a number of other trade shows were held that included the “Crinkle Paper Show” and the “Business equipment Show” in 1967. By 1968, the first exhibition organisers were established in Cape Town (EXSA, 2012:24-25). According to van Eyk (2008:10), the average trade show in South Africa attracts 7 500 visitors and the economic impact per visitor is R546.64. In South Africa, the estimated total spending directly on trade shows was around R2,96 billion in 2006, according to a study by the Exhibition and Events Association of South Africa (EXSA).

South Africa has approximately 180 000 m<sup>2</sup> of indoor exhibition space; and it will be the third fastest-growing country as regards trade shows, according to the Compound Annual Growth Rate percentage and revenue by 2017 (Viviers, 2013:217). It is therefore, clear that trade shows play an important role in the South African economy; and that they are a growing B2B marketing tool.

With the above in mind, it is important to understand the concept of trade show. Therefore, the different definitions of trade shows will be discussed; and a definition that will be used for the purpose of this study will be provided.

### **3.3 DEFINITION OF TRADE SHOWS**

A number of different definitions of trade shows exist – with many similarities in regard to the viewpoints held on: the time period of a show; what is to be displayed; and who participates. Trade shows are seen as a way for organisations to meet a large number of potential suppliers and customers in a cost-effective manner (Ling-Yee, 2008:35). They can, therefore, be seen as places that provide

opportunities for businesses to interact with their customers. Trade shows are periodic events, at which producers, suppliers and distributors in a particular industry or associated industries come together to build relationships by exchanging information or knowledge and to increase sales, in order to enhance mutual adoption, and relationship value (Geigenmüller, 2010:285, Bathelt, 2014:5). More simply put, trade shows are events that bring sellers and buyers together to view and/or sell offerings from specific industries, and to build mutually beneficial relationships (Berridge, 2007:12).

Another aspect of trade shows is that they comprise an exposition in which retailers can connect with wholesalers or suppliers, in order to introduce offerings that they want to sell (Goldblatt, 2005:11). Trade shows can, therefore, be viewed as temporary shopping centres; where potential buyers meet prospective sellers, with most of the attendees having plans to buy or influence the future buying decisions for particular products (Brennan *et al.*, 2014:189). Yet another view of trade shows is that they are a conference, convention or gathering arranged and managed by a company or organisation that brings multiple sellers and buyers together – where sellers can display their products in some type of exhibition hall (Stevens, 2005:5; Belch & Belch, 2001:413).

In a definition provided by Duncan (2005:611), the emphasis is placed on training sessions at trade shows. According to Duncan (2005:611) and Søylen (2013:2-5); trade shows are events, where customers in a particular industry gather to attend training sessions and to meet with suppliers and vendors – in order to review their product offerings and innovations. An example is the medical industry; where trade shows are seen as educational tools with well-known medical experts giving seminars at the shows for the attendees.

A number of authors who have defined trade shows place the emphasis on the time-frame, pointing out that trade shows are a one-of-a kind situation; where exhibitors and attendees can collaborate in a limited time and space, and in a unique manner (Reychav, 2011:230). As Weitz, Cattleberry and Tanner (2007:180) state, trade shows are “... short, usually less than a week, temporary exhibitions of products by manufactures and resellers”. A similar definition provided by Shimp

(2003:514) defines a trade show as “a temporary forum for [the] sellers of a product category to exhibit and demonstrate their products or services to present and prospective customers.

Kirchgeorg *et al.* (2010a:63) state that the Global Association of the Exhibition Industry (UFI) defines a trade show as...“market events of a specific duration, held at intervals, at which a large number of companies present the main product range of one or more industry sectors, and mainly sell on the basis of samples”. From these three definitions, it can be postulated that the time-frame is a vital component in the definition of a trade show.

In synopsis, from the definitions, it may be concluded that trade shows provide an opportunity for B2B organisations to communicate with their customers or prospects in a central location within a specific time-frame to inform or sell in related or diverse industries. For the purpose of this study, trade shows can, therefore, be defined as events that last for a specific period of time, in which businesses from either similar or different industries exhibit, with the purpose of communicating with their customers to either sell and/or build relationships by demonstrating and displaying their products and services in a central location.

As indicated in the definition, similar or different industries and products are exhibited at trade shows, such as ElectraMining that focuses on mining products, IFSEC that focuses on safety and security, or OSH that exhibits health and safety products. Different types of trade shows focus on different industries, regions or type of exhibitors. Consequently, these varieties will be discussed next.

### **3.4 TYPES OF TRADE SHOWS**

With the definitions in mind, it must be noted that trade shows are becoming more important to both sellers and buyers – due to the unique characteristics they provide for interaction between the two parties (Godar & O`Connor, 2001:77). There is an increase in the number of trade shows that are held each year; and with this abundance, it makes it difficult for exhibitors and participants, to decide in which shows to participate, or which to attend (Berne & García-Uceda, 2008:565).

Viviers (2013:210) states that trade shows are predicted to grow to R4 billion in 2017 from R2.6 in 2012 in South Africa. In South Africa, this holds true with businesses like the Bearing Man Group, for example, taking part in mining, packaging, agriculture, industrial and holding their own trade shows based on the range of products that they sell. While the opposite is true for some businesses, such as medical companies that specialise in disability products to exhibit at one trade show, such as the ACSA Disability Expo and Conference.

To improve trade shows, they are categorised for four reasons (Kirchgeorg, 2005:47). Firstly, this assists in the grouping of trade shows into similar categories. Secondly, it provides data on the different types of trade shows; so that the industry can compare the statistical data between shows. Thirdly, they are important, so that governing bodies and associations can take action against unfair practices in the trade-show industry. In South Africa, for example, such classification could help EXSA to see that all their members comply with their policies and guidelines for good practices. Lastly, trade-show organisers can set up guidelines for dealing with specific types of show.

The categories are, therefore, a useful tool for the trade show industry, in order to manage shows and to improve their effectiveness.

By matching the supply market with the target audience, trade shows can show off the expertise of a specific industry sector (Brennan *et al.*, 2014:189). The aforementioned statement indicates that trade shows can be either regional in a country, or for a specific type of industry. Trade shows, however, are not only classified, according to regional offerings or industries; and they can be classified in different ways as indicated below (Kirchgeorg, 2005:48-49). In this study, the researcher will classify trade shows, according to their geographical scope, the type of industry, type of goods displayed and other methods of classification.

### **3.4.1 Geographical scope**

Geographical scope refers to the region that is covered by a trade show. Three types of geographical trade shows can be identified: international, national and

regional. In this study, the researcher will determine the geographical scope of the trade show.

**International trade shows** can be defined as “shows that draw at least 10% of the total number of exhibitors, or at least 5% of the total number of visitors from abroad” (Global Association of the Exhibition Industry, 2012). International trade shows typically also last longer than other trade shows; and this provides exhibiting organisations with the opportunity to meet buyers directly, to investigate the markets and products, to observe their competitors; and they are a way to gather marketing research data (Robbe, 2000:14-15; O’Hara, Palumbo & Herbig, 1993:234).

Furthermore, international trade shows can be used to establish relationships with agents, distributors, and suppliers from different countries (Cateora & Graham, 1999:394). International trades shows are also used to generate sales, to provide sales leads, to build staff morale, to test new product ideas, and to maintain or enhance customer morale (Gibson, 2011:11). In South Africa, there are a number of international trade shows, such as ElectraMining that attracts both exhibitors and attendees from across the world. Not all trade shows, however, are international; since many takes place locally inside a country.

**A national trade show** is a trade show that is not international; and the visitors attending the trade show are only from one country or from the surrounding areas extending beyond a given region. In many cases, trade shows only focus on one country. An example of this is the SA Cheese Festival that attracts South African cheese producers and distributors.

**Regional trade shows** visitors come from a specific area or country. Dwyer and Tanner (2009:329) state that regional trade shows are held at various locations around a country; and they can attract regional exhibitors and attendees. Regional trade shows are smaller than other shows, and smaller in size. An example of this is Decorex Durban or Decorex Cape Town that is held in different cities in South Africa, or the Sign Africa Cape Town Regional Expo that only focuses on one region.

### 3.4.2 The scope of the industry

The scope of the industry refers to those who are the targeted exhibitors and attendees for a specific show. Four types of trade shows can be identified:

**General trade shows** have exhibits that consist of all aspects of life; and they are aimed at the broad consumer market and public. Gosztonyi (1997:9) states that general trade shows consist of a combination of industrial and consumer products; and in many cases they focus on agricultural goods. An example of this is the NAMPO trade show that focuses on the agricultural market, and attracts both trade and consumers due to the products that are exhibited there.

With **specialised trade shows, or vertical trade shows**, the attention is on a specific theme (Robbe, 2000:14); and the focus is on a single or associated industry segment, and is by invitation only in the majority of cases (Hanchett, 2007:1-2). Vertical trade shows attract visitors from different levels in the same industry; and they provide exhibitors with better prospects – due to the narrow industrial base of the attendees (Dwyer & Tanner, 2009:330; Shoham, 1992:337). An example of this is the annual packing trade show, Propak, in South Africa, which only focuses on that specific industry.

**Multi-industry trade shows or horizontal trade shows** exhibit products and services from more than one industry sector. This makes them more appealing to exhibitors, and attendees (Robbe, 2000:14; Hanchett, 2007:1-2). Horizontal trade shows are also more likely to occur if attendees have lower selling/buying tendencies, and/or a wider breadth of product interests, or if the industry is more inventive in terms of technological developments (Wu, Lilien & Dasgupta, 2008: 416). An example of this is the Cape Town industrial trade show that attracts different exhibitors. This show displays a multitude of different products from heavy machinery to general supplies, such as hand-held tools.

**Corporate trade shows** exhibit offerings from only one manufacturer, one wholesaler, or one purchasing group (Kirchgeorg, 2005:48-49). The Bearing Man

Group, for example, has a trade show at their warehouse, where all the different product lines that they sell are exhibited.

### 3.4.3 Goods displayed

In B2B markets, different goods exist, depending on the purpose for which they are to be used. Three types of trade shows can be classified, according to the goods displayed: capital trade shows, consumer trade shows, or a mix that includes both.

**Trade shows for capital goods** exhibit equipment and related services that are required in the manufacturing industry. Exhibitors are usually manufacturers or distributors of business offerings. The attendees are mostly end-users in the relevant industrial segment (Kirchgeorg, 2005:48-49). In this study, the researcher will focus on Afrimold that sells moulding machines to a number of different manufactures. These are used in their production processes.

**Trade shows for consumer goods** exhibit offerings aimed for the broad consumer market and public. The exhibitors are mostly retailers or manufacturers. One of the main problems experienced by retailers that exhibit at trade shows is at which to exhibit, because of the large number of such shows each year (Molofsky, 2003:4). Attendees at these trade shows are also mostly end-users. An example of this is Hostex, which exhibits products for the hospitality and catering industry, such as guest houses.

**Mixed trade shows (Consolidated shows)** are a combination of trade shows for capital goods and consumer goods. These trade shows are aimed at both the end-consumer market and business-to-business market. Robbe (2000:14) states that at a mixed trade show, the time allowed to the general public on the exhibition floor is restricted; and that the business attendees are not present at the exhibition floor at the same time. A South African example of this is Markex, where the trade show is divided; and one section of the show is only open to consumer attendees for a short period of time on the last day of the exhibits; while both sections are open to business customers.

#### 3.4.4 Other classifications of trade shows

Three other classifications of trade shows can be used, namely: importance, principal sales direction and trade-show medium. In this study, the aforementioned types of classification were not used by the researcher; and they will therefore only be discussed briefly. This types of trade shows was not used due to the classifications methods used in South Africa.

The **importance of a trade show** as a classification method can be divided into two types of trade shows: premier and secondary (Kirchgeorg, 2005:50). The most important international trade shows in a specific industry segment or multi-industry segments are known as premier trade shows; while secondary trade shows can co-exist together with a premier trade show and focus on a national or regional market.

The **principal sales direction** of a trade shows depends on whether the show focuses on exporting or importing (Kirchgeorg, 2005:52). The main aim of export trade shows is to start import and export relationships, and to deal with exhibitors and attendees. Wilkinson and Brouthers (2006:246) maintain that organisations participating in export trade shows that are sponsored by governments are likely to have positive outcomes.

The last type of classification of trade shows is dependent on the **medium used**. These comprise traditional and virtual-trade shows. Traditional trade shows are held at a particular exhibition ground that includes halls and outdoor areas. The attendees and exhibitors have to attend in person. Virtual-trade shows are those where the offerings are displayed online and permanently. With virtual-trade shows, the attendees visit virtual exhibition halls; and they stand to gain information on an exhibitor's profile, product offerings, and interaction. This takes place in a multimedia environment (Geigenmüller, 2010:286).

Communication between the exhibitors and the attendees occurs in chat rooms, or video conferences, and/or online diaries or blogs. Lee-Kelly, Gilbert and Al-Shehabi (2004:641), however, point out that many industries do not feel that

virtual-trade shows would work for them' since there is no face-to-face contact that makes such trade shows relevant. This study will focus on traditional trade shows; and it does not include virtual-trade shows; since the focus of the study is on the selling process.

With each of the types of trade shows discussed, the role-players in these shows need to be identified.

### **3.5 ROLE-PLAYERS AT TRADE SHOWS**

Trade shows consist of a number of different role-players, namely: exhibitors that exhibit their products, attendees who visit the trade show to obtain product information, and the trade-show organisers who arrange the show. Exhibitors and attendees will be discussed at the hand of Figure 3.2 in the introduction of this section – to provide a better understanding of the tactics and strategies of each. Thereafter, exhibitors will be discussed, and in more detail, at the hand of Figure 3.3 in Section 3.6 of this chapter; since they are the main focus of this study.

According to Gosztanyi (1997:110-111), trade shows have become one of the most essential methods whereby organisations can reach global markets and break down spatial barriers between geographically separated firms. Through trade shows, the attendees have the opportunity to experience geographical and culturally distant markets in a central location (Rinallo & Golfetto, 2006:865), while providing business with the opportunity to compete and succeed in the fast-growing global business market (Seringhaus & Rosson, 1998:398). It is, therefore, clear that trade shows are not a one-dimensional marketing tool; but they are multidimensional in their application in marketing (Tafesse & Korneliussen, 2011:47).

For example, there is the ElectraMining trade show held in South Africa every two years that attracts exhibitors and attendees from across the world to Johannesburg – to see what the newest developments are in the mining industry. The ElectraMining trade show is, therefore, used by organisations in the mining

industry as a marketing tool to make direct contact with both local and international attendees in one central location.

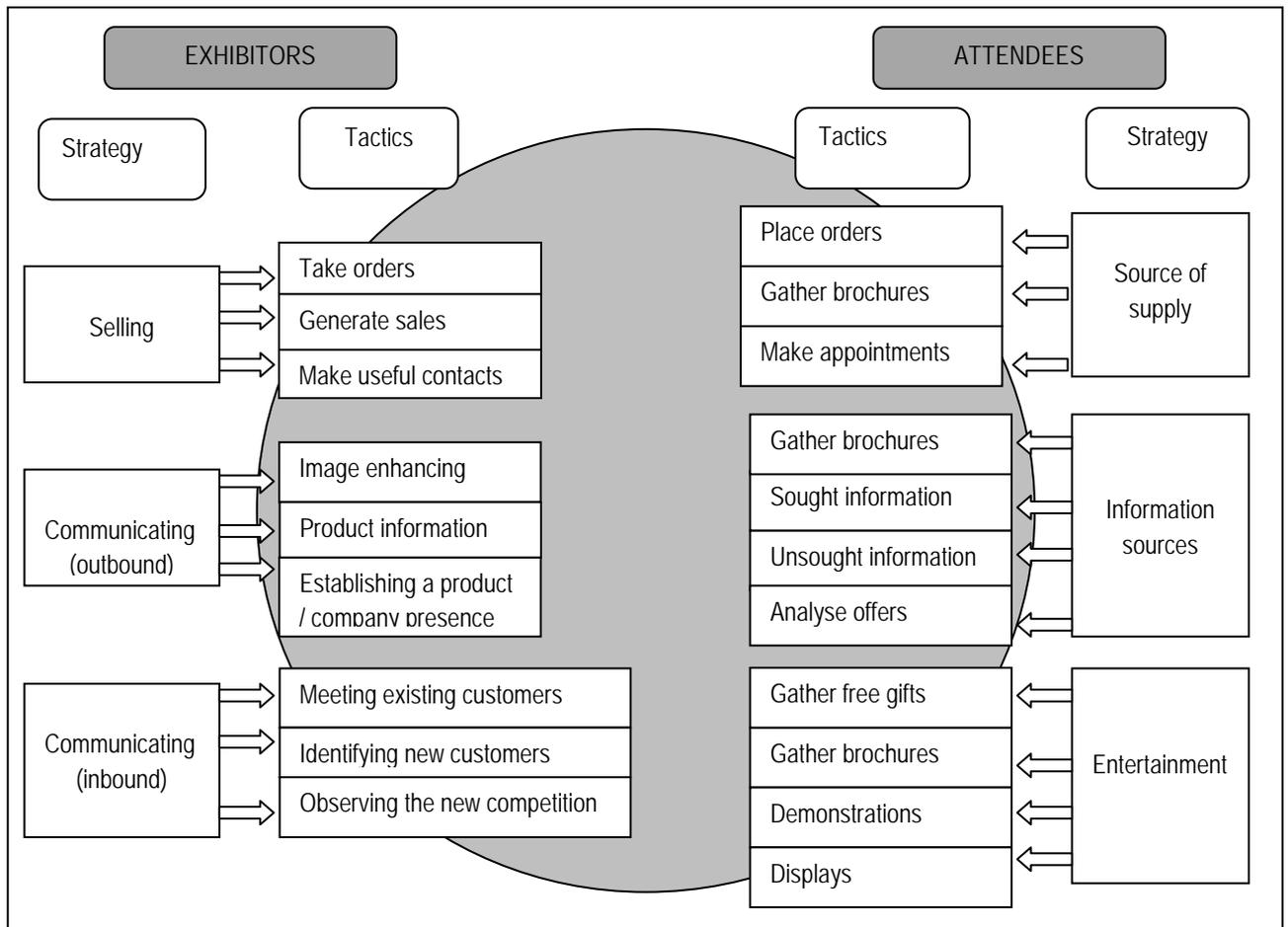
Trade shows are an ideal way for new business relationships to start, for current relationships to grow, and for the obtainment of new information that would positively influence organisations (Bettis-Outland, Johnston & Wilson, 2012:390). Therefore, in the future, trade shows will continue to play an integral part for personal contact between decision-makers, organisations and customers (Kirchgeorg *et al.*, 2010b:310); and they will do this by providing people with more compelling experiences, and better human connections than those to be found in other marketing situations (Genoist, 2007:14). At trade shows, the attendees get a chance to socialise with their suppliers, to build relationships, and to exchange information with those businesses that exhibit (Reychav, 2009:155; Ling-Yee, 2006:173).

It is clear that trade shows impact the business relationships of both exhibitors and attendees.

From Figure 3.2, it is clear that the strategies and tactics of exhibitors and attendees differ when attending trade shows. The three main strategies of exhibitors are those of selling, inbound communication, and outbound communication. Selling, as indicated in Figure 3.2, is not just getting orders and generating sales; but it includes making contact with possible customers. For example, the exhibitor's salespeople might not sell at a trade show; but they can get leads or establish future prospects for their companies.

Outbound communications deal in providing the attendee with information on the product, or simply making them aware that the product is available. Part of the outbound communication is to improve on the overall image of the exhibiting business.

**Figure 3.2 Exhibitors' and attendees' strategies and tactics**



Source: Adapted from Zimmerman & Blythe (2013:258) and Blythe (2010:60)

Inbound communication tactics for exhibitors, as indicated in Figure 3.2, include meeting current customers, doing prospecting, and observing their competitors. Trade shows have a number of benefits for exhibitors. These include seeing what competitors are doing, observing the newest trends, observing the research customers, doing promotions and selling (Burgess & Bothma, 2007:349); and all of these can improve an organisation's innovativeness through their interaction with the customers (Gosztonyi, 1997:111).

Figure 3.2 further indicates that attendees have three strategies, when attending a trade show (Blythe, 2010:60). Firstly, trade shows are seen as a source of supply, in which orders can be placed, brochures gathered, and appointments made with possible suppliers. Secondly, trade shows are viewed as a place to obtain information, where the attendees can gather brochures on different products and

analyse the different offers of the exhibitors. Trade shows are frequently seen as effective information sources by attendees; since the exhibition stands are frequently staffed by experts in specific product lines (Joseph, 2004:78). At trade shows, like IFSEC for example, security companies have their staff that install and maintain the products at their exhibit stands – to provide the attendees with technical information. Lastly, trade shows are a form of entertainment for attendees, where free gifts can be obtained, brochures obtained, and demonstrations, as well as displays viewed.

With all the strategies associated with the attendees; they need to plan their visits (Täger & Penzkofer, 2005:131); and they would have to select which trade shows to attend with their available resources (Smith, Hama & Smith, 2003:415).

Exhibitors' and attendees' perspective of trade shows can be either that of selling and/or non-selling motives (Hansen, 1996:47). For selling activities, the most important motive for exhibitors is that of enhancing and maintaining the company's profile. In Europe, however, many trade shows attract high-level decision-makers who are there to make a purchase, and not merely to gather information about products (Cateora & Graham, 1999:394). In this study, it will be established through gathering the data from the exhibit staff, whether in South Africa attendees make purchases at trade shows.

The non-selling motives for exhibitors include the introduction of new products, and to get information on new products (Hansen, 1996:47). In this study, it will be investigated whether exhibitors use trade shows to introduce new products, or not.

To facilitate the afore-mentioned interaction between exhibitors and attendees, trade show organisers need to arrange the shows properly. According to Fayos-Solá, Marin and Meffert (1994:14), trade-show organisers should not just see themselves as sellers of floor space to exhibitors; but rather as a service business, aimed at enhancing competitiveness by becoming information brokers who assist in interaction and networking between the exhibitors and the attendees (Kirchgeorg *et al.*, 2010b:302; Robbe, 2000:22). The organisers of trade shows

are not just there to attract new exhibitors, but also professional attendees and the general public, depending on the type of trade show (Munuera & Ruiz, 1999:18).

### 3.5.1 Trade-show organisers

According to Kirchgeorg *et al.* (2010b:310), future success for trade show organisers would depend on their ability to set industry-relevant trade shows; and this is best done by carefully selecting the type of shows for each specific industry (Wu *et al.*, 2008:417). Trade-show organisers must also select the most appropriate exhibitors and distributors for their show (Rinallo *et al.*, 2010:253); and they should ensure that highly motivated and qualified attendees visit the show (Robbe, 2000:42); and this can best be done by doing an evaluation on the reasons for attendance to bring the objectives of both exhibitors and the attendees in-line (Lee *et al.*, 2010:205). The afore-mentioned statement is due to the selling objectives that exhibitors set compared with the information-seeking objectives of the attendees (Blythe, 1999:106).

Organisers can attract attendees by designing their experience of the trade show at the macro-level, by creating the right atmosphere, by making compelling exhibition areas, and having the right type of exhibitors present (Borghini *et al.*, 2006:1157; Tafesse, 2013:1021). Trade-show organisers must take note that attendees find elements, such as the hotel quality, the meeting facilities, destination, exhibition image, venue image, price of parking, food services, directional signals and seating are all important factors in any decision to attend a show (Breiter & Milman, 2006:1369-1370, Lu & Cai, 2009:6; DiPietro *et al.*, 2008:273; Zhang, Qu & Ma, 2010:108).

As with attendees, the trade-show organisers need to do marketing and build relationships with the exhibitors. There are four factors, on which trade-show organisers can focus to increase the satisfaction of exhibitors, and get them to return to a show. Firstly, the nature of the exhibition that includes the promotion mix, the communication atmosphere, the quantity of buyers, the quality of buyers, trading opportunities, transaction volume, and the number of sales leads that were established (Kang, 2007:54-56).

Secondly, onsite services that include onsite order and security, consistency of service, and the expertise, attitude and efficiency of the trade-show organisers' personnel. Thirdly, the conditions of the venue comprising: the layout, equipment, ventilation, lighting, neatness, aisles set-up and the signage in the venue. The last factor is that of all the ancillary services consisting of traffic, accommodation, shopping, recreation facilities and services, dinners and social nights that provide emotional value (Gu *et al.*, 2010:3028; Kang, 2007: 54-54).

The role of the trade-show organisers is to build relationships with their customers, with the exhibitors, and to attract the right type, and number of attendees to the right type of shows by using the newest technology. Today's trade-show organisers make use of sales management software to increase their efficiency; since they need to establish the marketing needs of the exhibitors and to build more in-depth relationships with them, as well as the markets to which they sell (McCall, 2004:18). Another reason why technology is used by the organisers is to save costs, and to be more effective in delivering service to the exhibitors (Gregory & Breiter, 2001:75). An example of this is using websites to do the registration of the attendees and the exhibitors in trade shows (Gregory & Breiter, 2001:74).

Trade-show organisers, such as Specialised Exhibitions, for example, promote trade shows like IFSEC or ElectraMining through their website, and provide them with the opportunity to book an exhibit stand, or to provide possible lists of attendees who can be invited to the show. Through the use of websites, planned visits can also increase; since the attendees can see who is exhibiting at a trade show (Johansson & Bengtsson, 2011:74).

As indicated, trade show organisers assist the exhibitors to attract the best possible attendees by helping them in their promotional activities. The organisers of trade shows must make use of the different types of marketing strategies to attract attendees (Chizzoli, Pace & Rinallo, 2007:9). One option available to organisers of trade shows is to provide attendees lists to exhibitors to assist them in their promotional activities (Robbe, 2000:44; Hanlon, 1982:193). Trade-show organisers can also get permission from previous attendees to include their

companies in the brochures and documents used for future marketing purposes, in order to attract other visitors to the show (Lin, 2010:3932).

Once the attendees are at the trade show, the promotional support must continue – by conducting at-show promotions and advertising (Robbe, 2000:43). At-show promotions and advertising include things, such as: programs of events, talks, entertainment, guides, floor plans, list of exhibitors and trade magazines. An example is the promotional bags that are given out at the gates of a trade show, which contain all the relevant brochures, such as floor plans and an exhibitors' list. With this, the attendees would then know where everything is at the trade show. Next, the attendees who attend the trade shows and visit the exhibit stands will be discussed.

### **3.5.2 Trade-show attendees**

Trade shows are generally not open to the public; and they consist of attendees and members of the press. In this study, trade-show attendees are company representatives attending the trade show; and, as indicated in Chapter 2, they focus on business-to-business marketing, and selling. The reasons for attendees attending a trade shows differ from those that visit consumer exhibitions. In Table 3.1, the different authors' reasons on why attendees attend trade shows are presented.

As indicated in Table 3.1, many attendees attend trade shows to gather information, which can take place both formally and informally. Formal information can, for example, be obtained at exhibitor's exhibition stands, through demonstrations, press reviews, and talks. While informal information can be obtained, for example, by talking to the exhibitors at lunches or dinner discussions (Bettis-Outland *et al.*, 2010:269). This is not just true for individual attendees, but also for groups of buyers, as Borghini *et al.* (2006:1154) state. They also maintain that buying centres (vide. Section 2.5.4) should be called learning centres for trade shows; since they are there to gather information, and are not really interested in making purchases. Buying centres are, however, important at trade shows; since the majority of trade show attendees are consistent buying-centre members (Bello

& Barczak, 1990:49); and, their purchasing behaviours would differ, depending on their position in the business (Gopalakrishna & Lilien, 1995:23-24). It is clear that the needs of attendees differ, be they individuals or buying-centre staff.

**Table 3.1 Reasons why attendees attend trade shows**

Author	Reasons for attending trade show
Sharland & Balogh (1996:65)	Use trade shows as a opportunity to obtain important information fast, easy and cheap
Munuera & Ruiz (1999:21)	Attendees for which purchasing is not considered the most important but rather discovering new products, networking and market research.
Tanner <i>et al.</i> (2001:8)	Creating a new direction for their businesses, to look for solutions for problems; find vendors that have solutions and those attending with no specific agenda.
Breiter & Milman (2006:1366)	Attendees attended for three main reasons namely: an opportunity to network; to learn about new products in their industry; and to view the quality of the exhibits
Naudi (2006:11)	Attendees attend trade shows for two reasons to find out what is the latest developments are and to find answers to current problems, and issues in their organisations.
Bettis-Outland <i>et al.</i> (2010:269)	Attendees attend trade show as an activity for gathering information that includes: obtaining information about new products, technical updates, and to get contact information on exhibitors and other participants such as supplier, distributors etc.
Rinallo <i>et al.</i> (2010:253-254)	Trade shows provide valuable experience for professional attendees in cognitive stimulation that provide learning and new knowledge; a chance to interact with exhibitors and other attendees and a sense of society
Liu <i>et al.</i> (2011:449)	Attendees attend trade shows to exchange cards to build relationships after the show
Tafesse (2013:1021)	Indicate that attendees attend because of number of exhibitors that is at trade shows.

Organisations at trade shows should segment their markets, according to the needs of their customers, and be adaptable to these needs; since interaction with each segment would differ (Rice, 1992:43). Due to the diverse needs of customers, the different types of attendees will be discussed. Different methods of classifying trade-show attendees have been developed, with various authors using a diverse classification. For the purpose of completeness, each of the different types of classification methods will shortly be discussed, due to the impact they can have on exhibit staff.

In Table 3.2, the different authors' classification is indicated; and in Appendix B of the study each is discussed in more detail

**Table 3.2 Classification of attendees that attend trade shows**

Author	Classification of attendees
Tanner <i>et al.</i> (2001:4)	Dimensions, career, aware and shop
Pitta <i>et al.</i> (2006:162)	Interest showed towards the exhibition stand, the aggressive, curious and passive attendee.
Golpalakrishna <i>et al.</i> (2010:245)	Shoppers; the basic, enthusiast, niche, brand and apathetic
Lin (2010:3926)	Pleasure-conscious, price-conscious, adventurous-conscious, target-conscious.
Blythe (2010:58)	Tyre kickers, wheeler-dealers, technocrats, foxes and day-trippers based on communication used
Rittichainuwat & Mair (2011:1237-1239)	Buyers that consist of short-term, long-term, prospective, current and non-buyers.

Although different various classifications of attendees exist; they must still be attracted to the trade show by exhibitors and trade-show organisers. The findings from Bauer, Law, Tse and Weber (2008:233) indicate that trade-show organisers should focus less on segmenting the different types of attendees; but they should rather set realistic marketing strategies to encourage delegates to visit. In this study, the focus is on trade-show exhibitor's staff and their selling activities in regard to the attendees; therefore, trade-show exhibitors, as the role-players will be discussed.

### 3.5.3 Trade show exhibitors

Exhibitors will shortly be discussed in this section; and their specific activities at each of the three stages of a trade show (in Section 3.6) will also be investigated later on in this chapter. As indicated, trade shows are playing an important role in the B2B marketing mix (Kirchgeorg *et al.*, 2010b:309). In many industries, such as metal works a number of exhibitor's participation in, and attendance at, long-established trade shows is declining. This could be due to complacency by some of the role-players (Valero, 2006:3). However, a study done on travel-trade shows in the United States of America indicated that for the first time in history, spending on trade shows is more than that spent on business-to-business magazines (Yuksel & Voola, 2010:293).

In South Africa, trade shows grew by 13% in 2012 to an amount of R2.6 billion; and they are predicted to grow to R4 billion in 2017 (Viviers, 2013:210). There is

an indication of growth in exhibiting at trade shows; but, in order to be successful, exhibitors must select the best shows at which to exhibit.

In deciding to exhibit at a trade show, the exhibitors must determine whether the trade shows are in line with their current marketing activities; what would be their level of exposure achieved; do the attendees match their business-target market; what are their financial resources; are their human resources sufficient; and what is the timing of the event (Van der Wagen, 2005:193-194, Dwyer & Tanner, 2009:328).

According to Kaplan (2004:33), exhibitors need to take a further three actions to be successful at trade shows. Firstly, exhibitors need to select trade shows that will attract the target market they want to reach. Secondly, exhibitors need to develop integrated marketing material that is not just for the one event, but can be used with other promotional campaigns; and lastly, the exhibitors need to follow up on those leads that were obtained at the trade show. At medical-trade shows, exhibit staff, for example, make appointments with doctors and then go and visit them after the show, at a specific pre-scheduled time.

With the money exhibitors are spending on trade shows, they want to make a need to follow a plan to ensure a return on their investment. Tanner and Chonko (1995:262) suggest the following guidelines, based on their research findings, for exhibitors in managing a trade show:

- Trade-show objectives must be in line with the corporate marketing objectives of the organisation.
- Strategies and practices must be developed to achieve the objectives of the trade show.
- One employee must be responsible for arranging the trade show.
- The marketing staff must be involved in setting goals and strategies.
- Maintain the same message across the IMC.
- Staff the exhibit stand with relevant employees, such as sales personnel, sales managers and engineers.

- The staff working in the exhibit stand must be formally trained in communicating at an exhibit's stand.
- Exhibitors should ensure that enough staff are available to ensure that the exhibit stand is manned at all times, including break times.

In this study, the guidelines will be investigated with the sales process to establish whether it is followed by exhibitors. The aim of exhibitors is to make sure that they get the best possible attendees at their exhibit stands, or to interact with them at the trade show. As stated before, trade shows are used by exhibitors for competitive-intelligence, market-scanning, image-building and relational-sales with existing, and with new customers (Tafesse & Korneliussen, 2011:47).

This interaction takes place at three different stages of the trade show. And next, each of these will be discussed in more detail.

### **3.6 THE STAGES OF TRADE SHOWS**

According to Tanner (2002:231), Seringhaus and Rosson (2004:153-154), and Lee and Kim (2008:785), a trade show consist of three stages, with each stage comprising a number of activities, through which that an exhibitor would need to go. For the purpose of this study, the stages, as stated by Lee and Kim (2008:785), will serve as the guideline for the discussion, as indicated in Figure 3.3. Although the layout of Lee and Kim (2008:785) is used, different authors have different viewpoints in regard to the activities at each stage of a trade show. In Table 3.3, a comparison is provided between the approaches of the three authors on the activities that take place at each of the stages of a trade show. This study focuses mainly on the pre-show and the at-show activities of the exhibitors at trade shows.

**Table 3.3 Comparison of different authors on activities in the stages of a trade show**

	<b>Tanner (2002)</b>	<b>Seringhaus &amp; Rosson (2004)</b>	<b>Lee &amp; Kim (2008)</b>
<b>Pre-show activities</b>	1. Promotion (mail, telephone calls)	1. Communication 2. Staff training 3. Visitor attraction 4. Exhibit services	1. Quantifying objectives 2. Pre-show promotion 3. Exhibit staff training
<b>At-show activities</b>	1. Demonstrations 2. Press-conferences 3. Presentations 4. Premiums / contest	1. Exhibit event 2. Visitor contact procedure 3. Visitor tracking 4. Visitor interest 5. Buying information	1. Exhibit stand size 2. Exhibit stand location 3. On-site promotion 4. Exhibit staff density
<b>Post-show activities</b>	1. Follow-up 2. Measurement & evaluation	1. Prompt follow-up 2. Delayed follow-up 3. Participation cost	1. Follow-up 2. Measurement

From Table 3.3, it is evident that the majority of activities in the pre-show stage of the different authors correspond with each other, with the exception of minor differences – due to the adding of more detail. In the pre-show stage, Tanner (2002:231) only refers to promotion; while Seringhaus and Rosson (2004:156) refer to communication of the staff-training vision, visitor attraction and exhibition services; while Lee and Kim (2008:786) identify quantifying objectives, pre-show promotion and exhibit staff training. Woolard (2007:34) points out that pre-show planning must be done to determine how the attendees would be attracted to the exhibit; and how to target the best prospects.

Johansson and Bengtsson (2011:73) emphasise that the exhibiting stand design must provide for sufficient space, the where the exhibiting staff (sales representatives) can consult with the attendees.

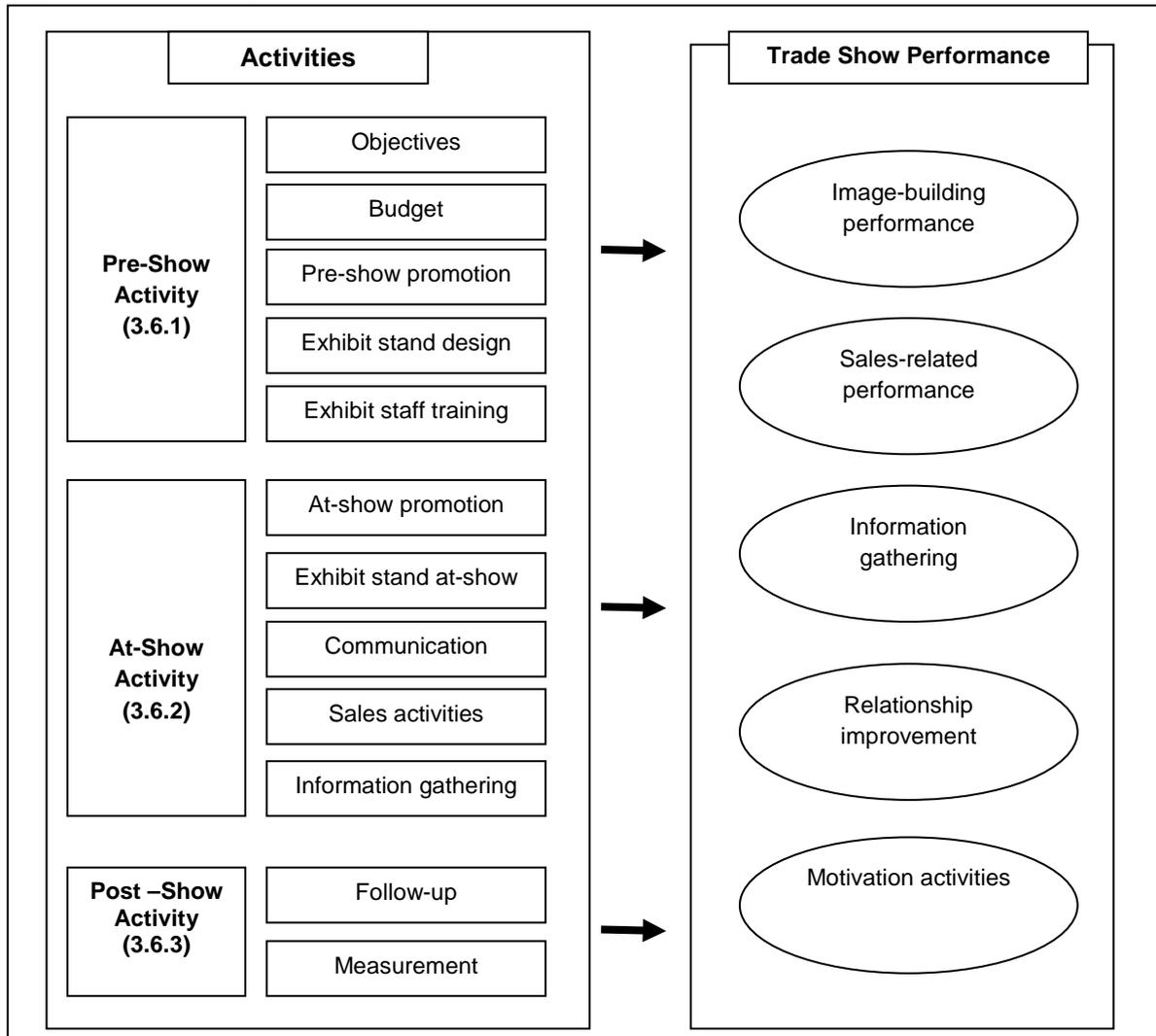
The at-show stage takes place during the trade show, where the attendees visit the show and call on the stand of a specific exhibitor to gather information, interact with the exhibiting staff and place orders. In Table 3.3, the at-show activities, as pointed out by Tanner (2002:231), comprise demonstrations, press-conferences, presentations and premiums, or contests. Seringhaus and Rosson (2004:156) add exhibit events, visitor-contact procedure, visitor tracking, visitor interest and buying information; while Lee and Kim (2008:786) classify exhibit stand size, exhibit location, on-site promotion and exhibiting staff density as part of this stage.

After the trade show has concluded, the post-show activities take place. The post-show activities include the following up of leads obtained during the show; and the success of the trade show is evaluated. From Table 3.3, the post-show activities, as identified by Tanner (2002:231) are: the follow-up, measurement and evaluation; while Seringhaus and Rosson (2004:156) include a prompt follow-up, a delayed follow-up and participation; and Lee and Kim (2008:786) refer to follow-up and measurement. Ling-Yee (2008:36) further contends that the post-show follow-up refers to the exhibitor manager's attempts to analyse the attendee roles in buying decisions, product knowledge, as well as extra information required by other role-players in those buying centres that visited the exhibit stand.

As indicated in Table 3.3, different viewpoints are held regarding the activities at each stage of a trade show. To provide the reader with a better understanding of the activities at the different stages of a trade show, a visual representation will be constructed. The model of Lee and Kim (2008:786) and Hansen (2004:4) will be used as a guideline; and the rest of the chapter will be discussed at the hand of a new figure constructed by the researcher. From Figure 3.3, two aspects can be distinguished: the determinants, which comprise the stages and activities, and the trade-show performances, which comprise the measures used to determine the success of the trade show. Performances will next be discussed briefly; and the determinants throughout the rest of the chapter will also be highlighted.

In Figure 3.3, it is indicated that the exhibitors at trade shows have five measures of performance that can be distinguished from the three stages at a trade show, namely: image-building, sales-related activities, information-gathering, relationship-improvement and motivation. Image-building consists of: getting publicity in the media; demonstrating what the business can do through product demonstrations; and meeting with the key decision-makers visiting the trade show. The sales-related activities include all those aspects related to on-site sales, and the sales after the trade show.

**Figure 3.3 Stages of trade show**



Source: Adapted from Lee & Kim (2008:786) & Hansen (2004:4)

In this study, the focus will be on sales-related activities, more specifically on how exhibit staff go through the sale process at trade shows. Information-gathering deals with compiling the information on new product ideas, market opportunities in new areas, introducing new products, and looking for the possibility of export opportunities. Relationship-building has to do with the maintenance and development of relationships with current customers, and creating new ones; and lastly, motivation deals with maintaining and enhancing the motivation of the customers, the company and the staff (Hansen, 2002:3-4; Lee & Kim, 2008:786-787; Tafesse & Korneliussen, 2011:44-46). In this study some of these performance measures will be researched if they relate to the sales process.

### 3.6.1 Pre-show activities

#### 3.6.1.1 Objectives

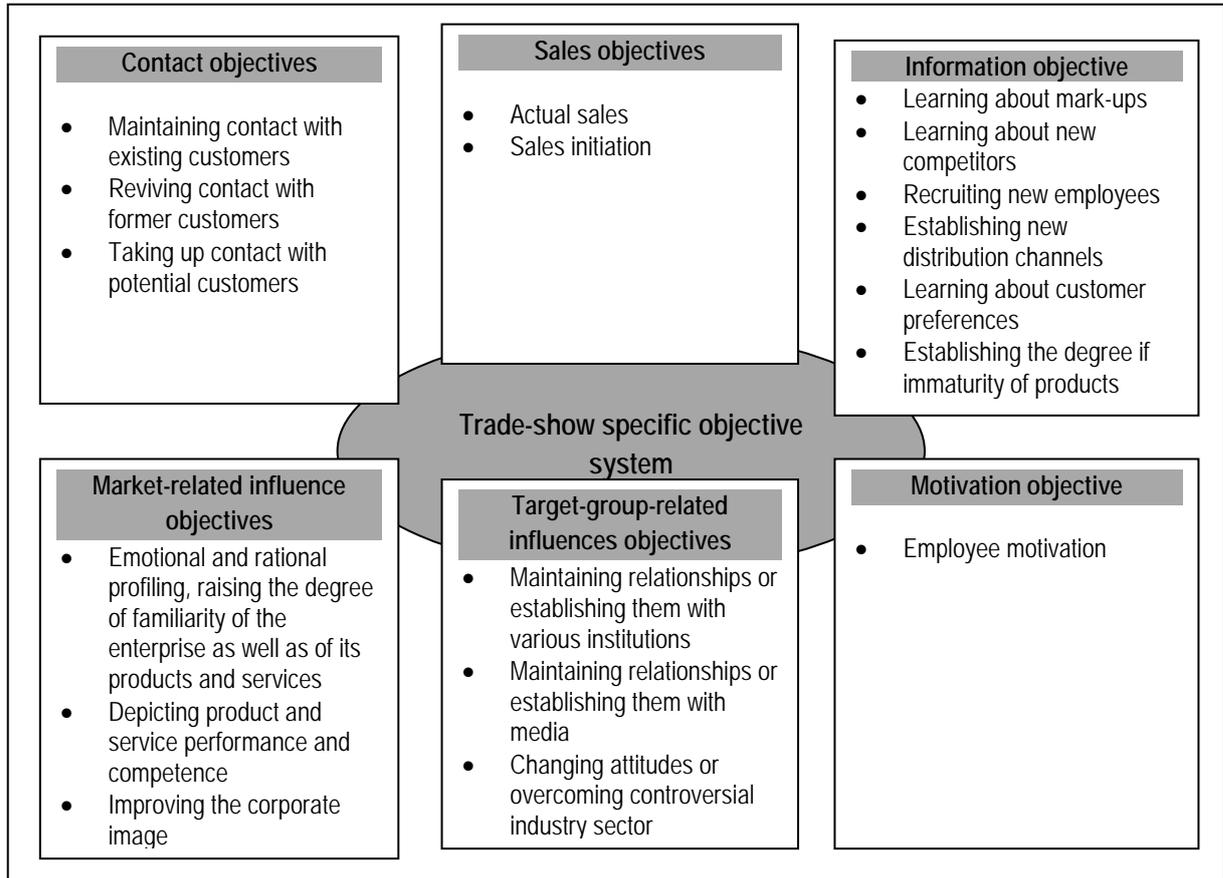
For all promotional efforts, including trade shows, the marketing objectives need to be specified before a plan can be developed (Bellizzi & Lipps, 1984:52). Exhibitors need to start with their marketing objectives; and from there set trade-show objectives, so that they can measure their success at the show. The activities at trade shows cannot be measured if the objectives have not been set out in detail beforehand (Kirchgeorg *et al.*, 2010a:64). A trade show can be a powerful and highly flexible business tool to use, however, to exhibit an organisation's need to do an in-depth plan, in order to get maximum returns on their inputs (Livera, 2003:2). It is not just good enough to set broad objectives; but specific objectives need to be set, such as lead quotas, sales, number of demonstrations etc. (Miller, 1999:44). Exhibitors, therefore, set two types of objectives: those that can be measured, such as number of sales, new prospects etc.; and those, which cannot be measured, such as image-building, market research etc. (Shoham, 1992:340).

According to Siskind (2005:10-15), there are three objectives, and not just two, that an exhibitor would have for a trade show. Firstly, there are those corporate objectives that include elements, such as branding, awareness and the image of the organisation. Secondly, individual departmental objectives that deal with specific products or services inside the organisation; and lastly, individual objectives, in which exhibit staff might see a trade show as an opportunity for personal growth.

An even more in-depth list of objectives is provided by Kirchgeorg *et al.* (2005:1003), as indicated in Figure 3.4, which comprises the main objectives and the sub-objectives. The main objectives include: contact objectives, sales objectives, information objectives, motivation objectives, target-group-related influence objectives, and market-related influence objectives. In this study, the researcher will investigate whether and what type of objectives exhibitors set for trade shows. Kirchgeorg *et al.* (2010a:64) asserts that, although a number of objectives are important, the main strategic objective at a trade show is that of the

content of communication. For example, the sales communication that takes place between the attendee and the exhibit staff at the trade show can contribute to the aims in communication.

**Figure 3.4 Dimensions of trade-show specific objectives in trade-show participation**



Source: Adapted from Kirchgeorg *et al.* (2005:1003)

It has been indicated that objectives are important to measure success; it has, however, been established that about 70% of exhibitors does not set objectives for trade shows (Pitta *et al.*, 2006:159; Stevens, 2005:50). As indicated, the researcher will investigate whether the exhibitors set any objectives for the trade shows, at which they exhibit. Another aspect that is dealt with as part of the pre-show activities is that of setting up a budget. The budget an organisation spends on exhibiting would be determined by the objectives set for a trade show (Siskind, 2005:23).

### **3.6.1.2 Budget**

The budget for a trade show relates to the resources that an exhibitor will spend on exhibiting. There is a direct correlation between the allocation of resources and the performance of the organisation at a trade show (Seringhaus & Rosson, 2004:161). This makes the allocation of resources important for exhibitors at trade shows who have to budget for items, such as rent of exhibit stand space; on-floor costs (paying exhibit staff etc.); display, graphics and accessories; freight and cartage; cost of time; travel and entertainment expenses; promotion before the show; and promotion after the show (O`Connor, 2001:185-189).

Täger and Penzkofer (2005:132) expand on the list of O`Connor (2001:185-189); and they include stand construction, personnel costs, arrival and departure costs, trade-show personnel expenses, business entertainment, and other costs such as phones, fax, holiday costs and advertising.

A number of different resources are allocated for trade shows. As indicated, budget spending includes promotional and advertising costs that are done before and during the show, in order to attract attendees (O`Connor, 2001:185-189; Täger & Penzkofer, 2005:132). In this study, the different promotional efforts of exhibitors will be investigated; and these will be discussed next.

### **3.6.1.3 Pre-show promotion**

An interesting study done on United States trade shows found that exhibitors that spend more on pre-show promotion, have larger exhibit stands, staff their exhibit stands with more personnel, and participate in vertical trade shows (vide. Section 3.4.2), in order to attract more of their target audience (Dekimpe *et al.*, 1997:60). According to Bathelt and Schuldt (2008:860), through their studies done in Germany, on the architecture and meat industries, it was determined that organisations systematically inform their current and potential customers about their presence; or they invite them to a trade show to improve their results. Effective pre-show promotion is important; since it can increase the exhibit traffic

(Tufel, 2004:8) and attract the most profitable attendees prior to the show (Alessandra, Underation & Zimmerman, 2008:67).

It should also be noted that promotional activities of trade shows have changed from being limited to small numbers of attendees to where large numbers of professionals are attracted by exhibitors through various Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) tools (Munuera & Ruiz, 1999:18).

To attract attendees, exhibitors embrace integrated-marketing communication; and they may choose to employ any combination of advertising, personal selling, word-of-mouth, promotion, or any other tool to gain attention and create awareness for a trade show, where they exhibit (Pitta *et al.*, 2006:156, Livera, 2003:4). More specifically, pre-show promotional activities can include direct mail, advertising, and invitations from salespeople, and to a lesser extent telemarketing (Dwyer & Tanner, 2009:330, Herbig *et al.*, 1997:377). Another pre-show promotional tool used by exhibitors is the use of competitions to attract attendees to trade shows – due to the ineffectiveness of direct mail (Summers, 1992:46; O'Hara *et al.*, 1993:234).

Exhibitors can also make use of the internet to attract attendees to the trade shows at which they are exhibiting (Ling-Yee, 2010:272); and this not only assists in attracting attendees; but it also increases awareness and helps to capture more leads (Wimberly, 2007:17). One of the newer ways exhibitors are using to promote attendees is through the use of mobile marketing (Brennan *et al.*, 2014:195). Exhibitors can, therefore, use a number of promotional activities – be they free entrance tickets, prospect lists, calls on prospects and key customers, placing the event dates online, and in the print media, and to provide salespeople with a qualified prospect list of potential attendees on which to call (McIntosh, 2008:19).

In this study, the pre-show promotional activities of exhibitors will be explored; since they have an impact on the sales process; and this can be viewed as being part of the prospecting. The Markex trade show, for example, makes use of the internet, direct mail, electronic mail, mobile marketing, trade magazines and billboards to do its promotions.

It must, however, be noted that that many of the pre-show promotions lack personalisation, target segmentation; or they focus on the unique value proposition for an attendee to come to the trade show (Huges, 2007:22). Once the exhibitor has attracted attendees to the trade show, the next step is to get the attendees to enter their stand by designing an attractive exhibit. Attendee's visits to exhibits' stands are frequently pre-planned; but a large number are visited; because the attendees thought an exhibit stand might look interesting (Milner, 2009:7). Therefore, the pre-show design of the exhibit stand is important to exhibitors, in order to attract as many attendees as possible to visit their exhibition.

#### **3.6.1.4 Design of exhibit stands**

Exhibit stand design deal with all aspects related to the layout and content of the stand (Whitfield & Webber, 2011:440, Søylen, 2013:97). Exhibit stands have three main functions: to display products, to facilitate professional interaction, and to promote socialisation (Rinallo, Borghini & Golfetto, 2010: 251). An exhibit stand must, therefore, be designed to facilitate the sales process and to assist in building the image of the exhibiting organisation (Summers, 1992:46).

Differences exist between the type of product exhibited and the space allocated to it at trade shows. With consumer products, the majority of space is allocated to the display of products; while with intermediated goods, a large part of the exhibition area is dedicated to professional interaction, with capital products delegated to social interaction and relaxation (Rinallo *et al.*, 2010:251). This study only focuses on intermediate and capital products; since the focus is on trade shows. Part of the design of the exhibit stand is to allow for enough space to do product demonstrations, as well as the space to discuss products further, to ensure that the attendees spend more time at the exhibit (Whitfield & Webber, 2011:440; Golpalakrishna, Roster & Sridhar, 2010:246).

In the creation of an exhibit stand, components, such as: colour, graphics, lighting, display counters, maintenance, photos, audio-visuals, demonstrations, transportability, carpet, signage, product displays, sales literature etc. must reflect the aims and characteristics of the attendees, in order to attract them to the stand

(Whitfield & Webber, 2011:440; Ling-Yee, 2008:35; Miller, 1999:44). A wide variety of interesting products would attract attendees to an exhibitor's exhibit stand as well (Golpalakrishna *et al.*, 2010:247; Borghini *et al.*, 2006:1156). In their research, at a travel trade show in the USA, Yuksel and Voola (2010:298) found that exhibitors see an efficient and effective display of products, as the most important element to success for the exhibitors.

According to Zimmerman and Blyth, (2013:264), in organising an exhibit stand, exhibitors should: ensure that the displays are accessible and informative; exhibiting staff have a clear brief; that they have objectives in place, with specific targets for exhibition staff; that they have an area, where the exhibition staff can take prospects for private conversations; have enough refreshments; set up a plan to provide staff with breaks; have a record-keeping system in place for leads and contacts; have a feedback system for attendees; and some activities for staff. The design of the exhibit stand focuses on creating a space, where there can be interaction between the staff and the attendees. Exhibit stands should have space for the sales representatives who man the stand; so that they can talk to the attendees – either individually or in groups (Johansson & Bengtsson, 2011:73). An exhibit stand must further provide space and events, such as demonstrations, to promote interaction between the exhibitors and the attendees (Lin, 2010:3932). At Afrimold, exhibitors have their moulding machinery at the exhibit stand, where they can be demonstrated, and salespeople can explain their uses.

Although space is important, exhibit stands must also be accessible and devoid of any psychological barriers that might discourage the attendees from visiting (Livera, 2003:4). Different exhibit stands design elements; and these, can therefore, be considered by exhibitors. Exhibit stand designs include: standard or inline exhibit stand, a perimeter-wall exhibit stand, a peninsula exhibit stand, an island exhibit stand, a cross-aisle exhibit stand, a double-decker exhibit stand, a demonstration area, and tower displays (Robb, 2000:72-73; O`Conner, 2001:117-120; Stevens, 2005: 89-90). The afore-mentioned stand designs will not be investigated in this study; a short discussion is, however, included in Annexure C for the completeness of the study.

The exhibit stand design must be comfortable for exhibit staff to work in as well; since they are the main contacts with the attendees and possible prospects (Robbe, 2000:73-74). Once the business has designed their exhibit stand, the next step is to make sure that it is manned by well-trained staff. Rinallo *et al.* (2010:254-255) point out that attendees appreciate those exhibitors that display their products and have competent exhibit staff. The training of exhibit staff will therefore be discussed next.

### **3.6.1.5 Training exhibit staff**

To make sure that the objectives set by the exhibitors are achieved; the exhibit staff who are appointed must have the appropriate interpersonal skills; knowledge and communication capabilities, to provide for positive trade show (Li *et al.*, 2011:442). From the afore-mentioned, it is clear that the behaviour and expertise of exhibit staff have a direct impact on the outcome of the interaction that take place at a trade show (Søilen, 2013:118, Seringhaus & Rosson, 2004:161). Therefore the training received and the quality of the exhibit staff would contribute to sales and follow-up after the trade show (Ling-Yee, 2008:42). For exhibitors to get the full benefits of a trade show, they should make their exhibit staff aware of their organisations long-term objectives for the show; train them to ask the right questions; how to help attendees quickly when entering the exhibit stand; schedule them into shifts to prevent fatigue; and be divided in such a manner that the exhibit stand is not overcrowded (Robbe, 2000:78).

Exhibit staff should furthermore know general data as well as hours, days, and set-up time of the exhibit; show objectives; and pre- and, at-show promotions (Pitta *et al.*, 2006:163). The exhibit staff should also be trained on: product or service solutions provided by the exhibiting business; how to demonstrate the product; to be able to make presentations; to perform competitive analysis; know how to generate leads; determine who is the attendee (decision-maker, buyer, influencer etc.); how to close a sale; and what to do if the purpose is to follow-up after the trade show (Pitta *et al.*, 2006:163; Hanlon, 1982:99).

In this study, it will be researched to discover whether the exhibit staff received any training; since this can have an impact on their success in selling to attendees. Johnston and Marshall (2013b:345-346) point out that for trade shows sales people need training since they deal with more and larger groups of customers.

After an organisation has done all their pre-show activities, the next step is to prepare all the at-show activities. That includes promotion at the show, communication, sales or preparation for sales, and stand activities.

### **3.6.2 At-show activities**

#### **3.6.2.1 At-show promotion**

Exhibitors at trade shows can apply different promotional tools, such as brochures; electronic communication; give-aways; information kits; sponsorships of events; or they can apply a combination of the different promotional tools to attract attendees to their exhibit stand. Other methods of promoting the exhibitor at a trade show include: creating moving billboards, making exhibits interactive, qualifying leads immediately, creating a presence on the exhibit floor, using ambush marketing, planning before-hand and making the organisation visible to to the attendees (Brewer, 1996:39). Summers (1992:46) pointed out that almost 75 per cent of exhibitors make use of promotional giveaways; and that all the promotional material given away at trade shows should be used with current IMC efforts, in order to be successful at the show.

Exhibitors are, however, moving away from handing out brochures; since most of these are thrown away by the attendees (Alessandra *et al.*, 2009:94). In research done by Pitta *et al.* (2006:158), it was established that 60%-85% of brochures handed out at trade shows are never looked at again, or are thrown away by the attendees. Therefore, exhibitors started using other methods to promote their exhibit stands at trade shows. One of the newest developments is where an internet kiosk is set up; so that the attendees can go on the internet, check e-mails, or download show information (Suh, Love & Bai, 2004: 28). Another method of promoting the exhibit stand is through press kits that contain information on new

products and technology of which the exhibitor would like to make the attendee aware (O'Hara *et al.*, 1993:234). Exhibitors should provide more product-specific information, rather than merely relying on promotional gifts (Milner, 2009:9).

At trade shows like Afrimold, for example, the exhibitors make small moulds at the exhibit stand; and they hand these out as their promotional gifts.

Another method that can be used by exhibitor's to make their exhibit stand visible is through sponsorships at the trade show (Suh *et al.*, 2004:32). Sponsorship at trade shows can include refreshment, meals, events, speeches, bags and badges. Yuksel and Voola (2010:298) point out through their research on travel trade shows that promotional items, such as pens and bag, as promotional tools, were not perceived as that important in achieving success. One of the reasons could be that, although free gifts and other attention-getters attract attendees to the exhibit stand; not all of them are interested in the products of the exhibitor (Dwyer & Tanner, 2009:331). The afore-mentioned method is confirmed by Suh (2003:47-49). This indicates that organisations that sponsor more entertainment types of events, such as speakers, massage stations, complementary ice cream, and suchlike would get more value for money than sponsoring items, such as tote bags, badge holders etc. Entertainment can also be a useful method of sponsorship; because not all contacts take place during trade show hours; but at other functions, such as dinners and seminars, where they can assist in the exchange of information (Bathelt & Schuldt, 2008:861).

The promotional methods discussed can be used in combination with each other; and they are not the only promotional tools to promote business at the trade show. In this study, the promotional methods applied at trade shows will be investigated. In Section 3.6.1.4, exhibit stand design that takes place as part of the pre-show activities was discussed. It must be noted that during the trade show – as part of the at-show activities – exhibitors should maintain the exhibit stand in such a way, as to attract attendees.

### **3.6.2.2 Exhibit stands at-show**

Exhibit stand design at trade shows must be done in such a manner that attendees find it attractive and are keen to visit. Through elements, such as products on display and staff appearance can assist in attracting attendees. According to Whitfield and Webber (2011:440), exhibitors create competitive attractiveness through the size of their exhibit stand and the number of personnel compared to that of the competitors. Another aspect that exhibitors must focus on is the message they convey through their exhibit stand. Elements, such as samples of products, models, demonstrations and printed material must be visible in the exhibit stand, in order to convey the message of the exhibitor (Brennan *et al.*, 2014:195).

Another method attract attendees to the exhibit stand is to increase the number of products available for immediate purchase (Whitfield & Webber, 2011:446). Miller (1999:61) identified six factors that influence attendees' willingness to visit an exhibit stand at a trade show, namely: interesting product demonstrations, exhibit location, exhibit presentation, exhibit size, advice from fellow attendees, and sales representatives' communicated recommendation.

### **3.6.2.3 Communication**

According to Kirchgeorg *et al.* (2010a:68), trade shows are excellent communication tools to develop and maintain customer loyalty, because of the live face-to-face interaction with customers. Since attendees are voluntarily at trade shows, they would be more likely to be interested and open to receive the exhibit staff message (Gosztanyi, 1997:13). Trade shows provide a number of advantages in the communication process, namely: one-on-one contact between buyers and sellers; they would take place in a neutral location that has less interruptions; where there is an opportunity to meet the right person from the buying centres; and where the attendees arrives at trade shows with a positive attitude – due to less sales pressure (Shoham, 1992:336).

For the afore-mentioned to be successful, capable exhibit staff should be at the trade show.

Exhibitors have to staff their exhibit stands with staff that have the ability to communicate on the technical nature of the products; and they should be able to demonstrate or display new products – to ensure repeat visits by the attendees (Whitfield & Webber, 2011:446). The type of trade show can have an impact on the exhibit staff that would be needed (Bathelt & Schuldt, 2008:859). At specific types of trade shows, a specialist might be needed to discuss the technical aspects of the products with the attendees (Whitfield & Webber, 2011:446). At trade shows, like Afrimold for example, expert exhibit staff is needed to explain the technical aspects of the moulding machines that are exhibited there.

In many industries, not only are specialised experts needed; but different exhibit staff is required to perform specific activities. Exhibit staff might include: general managers that can assist in image-building; production managers who can help with technical aspects; and salespeople that can generate sales and build relationships (Tafesse & Korneliussen, 2011:47). A number of exhibit stands at trade shows, like the IFSEC for example, include security personnel explaining the technical aspects, managers who can socialise with the attendees, and salespeople who can inform the attendees on how the product may be purchased.

Both exhibitors and attendees should be in a collaborative commitment for sharing information at trade shows, so as to increase the knowledge of both parties (Ling-Yee, 2006:173). Furthermore, trade shows are an excellent place for feedback on products from customers; and this flow of information could then be used to guide other marketing activities (Shimp, 2003:514). Attendees view the information obtained at trade shows as useful in decision-making, when purchasing products (Bettis-Outland *et al.*, 2012:389).

The view of Bettis-Outland *et al.* (2012:389) is supported by Reychav (2011:238). These authors point out that not only are attendees collecting information, or making contacts for sales; but they are also sharing knowledge.

According to Bathelt and Schuldt (2008:860), trade show exhibitor's communication interaction with potential and current customers differs. In the case of potential customers; they pass by the exhibit and gather general information about product offerings, or specific information, or solutions to a current or future problem that occurs – due to changes in production. With existing customers, discussion takes the form of negotiations; and it takes place in separate facilities; or common information about markets and industrial innovations within the trade can be exchanged. The afore-mentioned can assist in the buying and selling activities that take place.

#### **3.6.2.4 Sales activities**

According to Alessandra *et al.* (2009:69), trade shows promote communication between organisations and possible prospects; since they move the sales process further. Trade shows can be seen as one of the most cost-effective ways to achieve sales; since people entering the exhibit stand are more likely to purchase than a prospect who is encountered in industry (Goldblatt, 2005:11). Purchasing professionals, for example, prefer trade shows to seeing many vendors; since they do not have time for sales calls in their office (Tanner, 2002:229). With the afore-mentioned in mind, it may be assumed that in exhibitors' logical choice of trade shows, the stand personnel must then be sales-people (Brennan *et al.*, 2014:195). Dwyer and Tanner (2009:332) agree with the afore-mentioned statement; and these authors postulate that salespeople must be involved with trade shows; since it is personal; and it results in sales leads.

In this study, the researcher will look at the difference between salespeople and non-sales people that man the exhibit stand, and their application of the sales process.

Trade shows shorten the sales process, or the selling cycle; and they can assist in exhibiting organisations to reach unknown buyers (Saget, 2006:113-114). The sales cycle at a trade shows is shorter; since the attendees who attend are interested in the products and services exhibited. Salespeople who therefore man the exhibit stand must know their organisation and product to help the attendees in

their decision-making (O'Connor, 2001:152-154). Miller (1999:89-91) contends that when it comes to products, the exhibitor has control over the four main elements relating to the product, namely: product knowledge; product demonstrations; comparison of your product to that of the competitions; and product enthusiasm.

The lack of product knowledge is one of the main complaints that attendees have about exhibit staff. Therefore, it may be assumed that sales personnel would be the best people to staff an exhibit stand – due to their knowledge of the products. Salespeople would most probably be more capable of demonstrating and showing enthusiasm towards their own products (Miller, 1999:89-91).

Although sales people might be the best to man the exhibit stand; in a study done by Liu *et al.* (2011:449) on Chinese trade shows, it was established that most exhibitors were at the show as public relations officers, and not for selling or signing contracts. This could raise the question regarding the impact of salespeople in the sales process at trade shows; since selling is not the main focus of the exhibitors. However, Chonko and Ponzurick (2001:4) disagree with Liu *et al.* (2011:449); and they point out that 26 per cent of attendees sign a purchase order at a trade show; and 50 per cent buy, as a result of the show. Trade shows are, therefore, an important element in the sales process – to sell or generate leads for the organisation (Pitta *et al.*, 2006:159).

According to Blyth and Rayner (1996:21), trade shows provide the opportunity to create a large number of sales leads. The effectiveness of the exhibit staff is an important factor in the efficiency of lead generation; and this shortens the lead conversion after a trade show that carries over into cost savings for exhibitors (Seringhaus & Rosson, 2004:161; Gopalakrishna & Williams, 1992:220). Exhibitors must, therefore, focus on attendees, and not on volume; since excellent trade-show leads can complement the selling effort that reduces the cost of closing the sale (Gopalakrishna *et al.*, 2010:245).

As Munuera and Ruiz (1999:22-23) point out, most of the purchases take place after the trade show, once the attendees have evaluated the market information

obtained at the show. The salesperson's role at the exhibit stand is to engage the attention of the attendee, and to gather information on attendees; so that follow-up can occur after the trade show (Dwyer & Tanner, 2009:332). Exhibitors do not only use trade shows to disseminate information to possible prospects through their sales representatives; but they also use them to obtain information as well (Tafesse & Korneliussen, 2011:47).

### **3.6.2.5 Information-gathering**

Trade shows have become one of the most important ways in which knowledge is acquired by both sellers and buyers – due to their unique nature (Reychav, 2011:238). According to Bathelt and Schuldt (2008:862), exhibitors use trade shows to gather information on competitors – through making observations and comparisons with the product offerings on display. Trade shows should be viewed as a strategic marketing tool, where information about the market and competitors can be gathered (Tafesse & Korneliussen, 2011:47); and more specifically, information on new competitive products and programmes can be obtained (Dwyer & Tanner, 2009:333).

The information gathered at the trade show can be used to develop sales and marketing plans for the organisation.

With the at-show activities, the exhibitor did promotions, communicated with attendees, generated leads or sales, and gathered information. Once the trade shows are over, the post-show activities will take place. Be they to measure the success of the trade show, or to follow up on leads that were obtained at the show.

### **3.6.3 Post-show**

#### **3.6.3.1 Measurement of performance**

According to Bettis-Outland *et al.* (2012:389), exhibiting organisations must measure their performance after a trade show, in order to determine their success; and so that all possible elements can be assessed. Exhibitors need to provide

feedback to management to see whether the objectives set were met, and to evaluate their future involvement with the trade show (Pitta *et al.*, 2006:164). Since trade shows are part of the IMC mix, they must be measured just like advertising or other marketing efforts (Summers, 1992:46). About a third of exhibitors at trade shows do not measure their return on investments (Wills, 2005:9). This could be due to many organisations marketing departments using outdated marketing tools, which make it difficult to quantify the results of a trade show (Podmolik, 2007:29). The sales from the trade show are a good measure; however, qualitative post-show sales force feedback must also be evaluated (Herbig *et al.*, 1997:377).

Trade shows must be analysed on the impact they have on the creation and development of relationships, and not only on selling (Geigenmüller, 2010:289). It is, therefore, clear that it is not easy to measure Return-On-Investment (ROI) at trade shows – due to the diverse objectives that are both quantitative and qualitative in nature (Sanders, 2006:15).

ROI for trade shows can be done in two ways: either on outcome-based or behaviour-based dimensions (Sanders, 2006:15). Outcome-based dimensions include sales-related activities and all immediate post-show sales. Behaviour-based dimensions consist of information-gathering, image-building, motivation and relationship activities. Customer satisfaction that is behaviour-based on the attendees' experience with exhibit staff, can be an indication of success at a trade show (Genoist, 2005:4). Another way of looking at what exhibitors get out of a trade show could be that of the benefits obtained, as stated by Bettis-Outland *et al.* (2012:386). The benefits from exhibiting at the trade show can either be tangible or intangible. Tangible benefits include: new customers; more sales from current customers and/or the buying of new products; technical training and updates to improve the customer support.

Intangible benefits, on the other hand, include the enhancement in strategic planning; enhancement in policy development; new product development ideas, and a better corporate image. At a trade show, the tangible benefits could include getting a list of new customers; and the intangible benefits could be the identification of new markets for products.

Exhibitors can take three steps to maximize ROI at trade shows: firstly, the marketing team must have the skills to motivate prospects to begin the sales process; secondly, an inside sales team must be in place to deal with any follow-up; and lastly, lead-qualification specialists should be partnered with, to improve the quality of the leads obtained (Drohan, 2007:32). Although exhibitors obtain leads at trade shows; frequently, the attendees do not want to provide specific information; or, they close the sales at the trade show; so that the exhibitors need to follow-up after the show (Bettis-Outland *et al.*, 2012:389).

### **3.6.3.2 Follow-up**

According to Pitta *et al.* (2006:163), the trade show is not finished until the follow-up is done. Many exhibitors' main challenge is the following up after the trade show (Yuksel & Voola, 2010:298); and it has been established through trade show experts that an estimated 80 to 85 per cent of the attendees never have a salesperson call on them after a show (Cateora & Graham, 1999:394). It is, therefore, necessary for exhibitors to do post-show planning, in order to give them a strategic means to deal with leads generated during the trade show (Woolard, 2007:34). This can assist in the buyer-seller relationships started to improve and add to an ongoing business relationship after the trade show (Reychav, 2009:154). To do the afore-mentioned, exhibitors must have systems in place to deal with the follow-up.

According to Dwyer and Tanner (2009:332-333) and Alessandra *et al.* (2009:199-120), exhibitors must either have customer-relationship management (CRM) skills, or lead-management systems in place to facilitate the follow-up process after a trade show. Experienced exhibitors create customised lead forms and train staff on using them, before the show, in order to assist in making these systems work (Pitta *et al.*, 2006:163). Once the information has been captured, the exhibitor must selectively provide the list of leads to the salespeople; since a large number of prospects might need more attention before they are ready to purchase (Alessandra *et al.*, 2009:69).

Exhibitors can also send attendees emails with the requested information from the trade show, and follow that up with a sales call or a follow-up email (Herbig *et al.*, 1997:377). In this study, the follow-up activities of exhibitors will not be researched; since the data-gathering will be done at the trade shows themselves.

In this chapter, trade shows have been discussed that make part of B2B marketing, and more specifically, the B2B IMC mix (vide Chapter 2). Trade shows are still one of the most important one-on-one B2B marketing communication tools; and they will still be in South Africa in the future (Viviers, 2013:210). A discussion was presented on the three stages of a trade show that enable businesses to integrate with their B2B IMC mix (vide Chapter 2), and to enable them to align their sales processes (vide Chapter 4).

### **3.7 SUMMARY**

The chapter started off by providing a short historical overview of trade shows. Thereafter, the different definitions of trade shows were examined; and a definition for the purpose of this study was compiled. Due to the nature of trade shows, the different types that are categorised that are applicable to this study were also looked at.

Secondly, the three role-players in trade shows, namely: the exhibitors, the attendees and the trade-show organisers were described. Exhibitors' and attendees' strategies and tactics were discussed at the hand of Figure 3.2 firstly. Thereafter, the exhibitors were briefly discussed, followed by the attendees. Various aspects, such as attendees' reasons for attending, and the different types of attendees at trade shows were looked at. Thirdly, in this chapter, trade-show organisers and their interaction with the attendees and the exhibitors were discussed.

Lastly, the various stages of trade shows were highlighted. The activities at each of the stages were defined. The stages and activities at each stage were represented in Figure 3.3, and then discussed further. The pre-show stage consists of setting objectives, budget, pre-show promotions, stand design and

training exhibit staff. In the at-show stage, the activities include at-show promotion, stand at-show, communication, sales activities and information gathering. The last stage is post-show, where the exhibitors follow up and measure their trade show's ROI.

The role of personal selling in trade shows cannot be denied before, during and after the show. Trade shows in many cases prepare prospects to buy products. Exhibit Surveys Inc., as quoted by Dwyer and Tanner (2009:333) found that up to 80 per cent of trade show attendees purchase soon after a trade show; and in most cases, it is first-time buyers from the exhibiting organisation. In Chapter 4, personal selling and the sales process will be discussed in more detail.

## CHAPTER 4

### THE NATURE OF PERSONAL SELLING

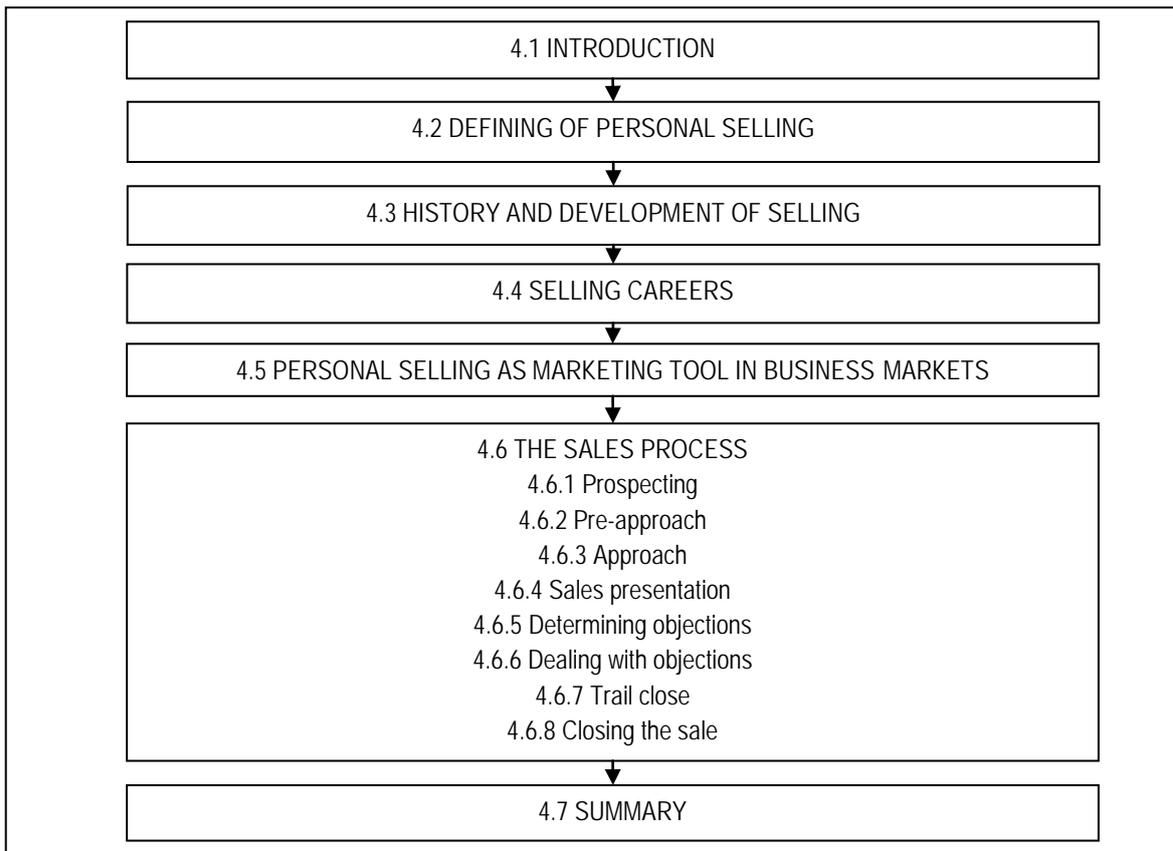
#### 4.1 INTRODUCTION

Personal selling forms an integral part of any organisational marketing communication strategy, and also in any trade show. The role of the salesperson is especially important in B2B markets; where organisations rely on direct communication with their customers, due to the unique characteristics found in these markets, as was indicated in Chapter 2 of this study. The salesperson has numerous functions within a B2B organisation. These include prospecting for new customers, building long-term relationships with current or potential customers, helping implement marketing programmes, and to gather information for the organisation.

As indicated in Chapter 2, personal selling is an element of the B2B integrated marketing communication mix and trade shows, which is seen as an element in the IMC mix (Ling-Yee, 2008:35). It is, therefore, necessary to study the nature of personal selling and the selling process, in order to understand its interaction with trade shows. As indicated in Chapter 3, there are three stages during a trade show; and at each of these, a different step in the sales process occurs. For the purpose of this study, the word steps and stages for the sales process will be used interchangeably.

In this chapter, personal selling and the sales process will be discussed. As illustrated in Figure 4.1, personal selling will firstly be defined. Secondly, the history and development of personal selling will be discussed. Thirdly, selling careers will be looked at; and thereafter, personal selling as a IMC element will be described. Lastly, the stages of the selling process will also be discussed.

**FIGURE 4.1 Layout of Chapter 4**



Source: Own compilation

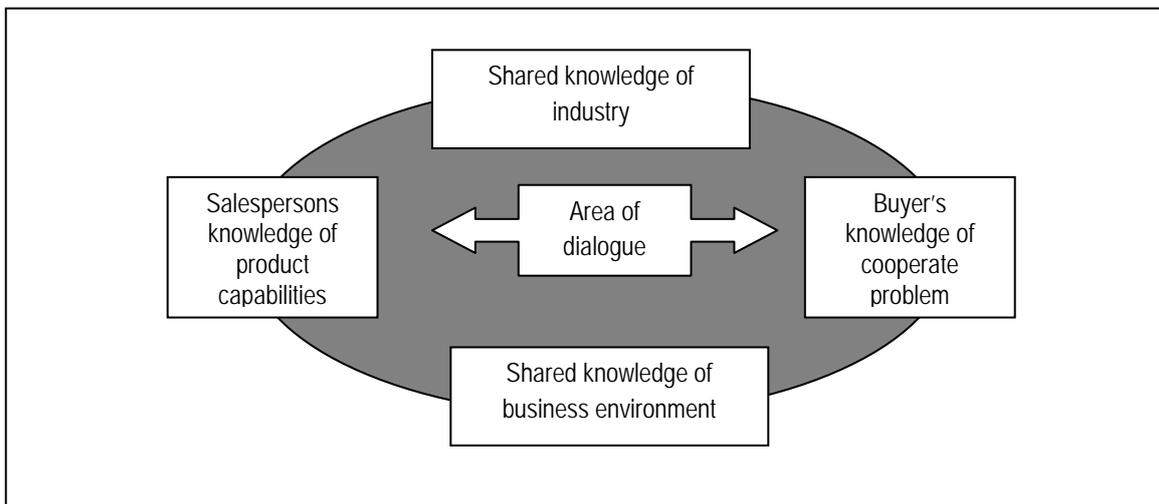
## 4.2 DEFINING PERSONAL SELLING

According to Ingram, LaForge, Avila, Schwegker and Williams (2006:2), selling has changed over the last few decades, becoming more sophisticated, due to lengthy and complex sales processes that are followed in business selling. To achieve success in the competitive business markets, a consultative model of selling should be used by salespeople (Manning, Ahearne & Reece, 2014:20; Rix, 2006:7). The consultative selling model focuses on the position, the dilemmas and the desires of the customer, rather than those of the salesperson or business for whom they work. One of the key distinctions of personal selling in the current era of professionalism is that the emphasis is placed on customer-orientation in the sales process (Ingram *et al.*, 2006:3) with the focus on building long-term relationships that are beneficial to both sellers and buyers (Johnston & Marshall, 2010:5). Futrell (2011:9) include in the definition that sales persons must unselfish

persuade the customer that places the focus on the customer and not the sales person.

Personal selling, therefore, has become customer-centric, in which the buyer has become the centre of the sales process (Johnston & Marshall, 2013a:5; Castleberry & Tanner, 2011:5; Weitz, Castleberry & Tanner, 2007:4). As pointed out in Chapter 3, this customer orientation at trade shows is achieved by salespeople through the sharing of knowledge, in order to provide solutions to the problems experienced by customers. Selling has different functions in regard to the sharing of knowledge, as illustrated in Figure 4.2.

**Figure 4.2 The function of selling**



Source: Adapted from Zimmerman & Blyth (2013:228)

As indicated in Figure 4.2, personal selling's main function is the creation of dialogue between the salesperson and the buyer. Buyers have knowledge about their business problems; while, on the other hand, salespeople understand their products' capabilities. The function of selling is that of creating dialogue, where salespeople can solve the problems of customers through the product that they sell. Knowledge is also shared about the environment and the industry in which the business and salespeople operate. At trade shows, this sales function is facilitated at the exhibit stand; where there is a dialogue between the exhibitors and the attendees, as described in Chapter 3. An attendee attending a trade show, for example such as IFSEC, might have theft problems in their business through

dialogue with one of the exhibiting staff' however, while explaining their products they might find a solution. Sales people at trade shows are involved in a number of activities – not just explaining products.

Salespersons in B2B markets generate more than just sales (Ellis, 2011:318); and they do more in identifying the customer's needs, and providing solutions that add value; since the nature of the products in B2B markets is unique (Dwyer & Tanner, 2009:366). Because of this uniqueness of B2B markets salespeople need intensive product knowledge (Blem, 2007:224); and they are regularly exposed to new, and often complex problems that require fast responses to provide solutions for their customers (Lopez & McMillan-Capehart, 2009:98).

Selling is, therefore, an interpersonal communication process in which the sales person not only discovers the customer's needs and wants; but satisfies it – to the long-term benefit of both parties, as pointed out (Jones, Stevens & Chonko, 2005: 5). The task of the salesperson is to get commitment from the customer; while they are moving through the different stages in the sales process (Rix, 2006:10). This happens at trade shows; where salespeople go through a multistage sales process to share knowledge and build long-term relationships with their customers (Ling-Yee, 2008:35).

As indicated, there are different viewpoints regarding personal selling. To construct a definition that could be used for the purpose of this study, different definitions will be discussed. Futrell (2011:7), for example, defines personal selling as... "The personal communication of information to unselfishly persuade a prospective customer to buy something – a good, a service, an idea, or something else – that satisfies that individual's needs". Another definition is that of Weitz *et al.* (2007:4). They define personal selling as a person-to-person business activity, in which a salesperson discovers and satisfies the needs of a buyer to the mutual, long-term benefit of both parties.

Rix (2006:10), on the other hand, defines personal selling as a process, whereby a salesperson examines a customer's situation and needs, provides information and

advice, and seeks to gain a commitment from the customer that would be of continuous benefit to both the customer and the salesperson.

From the definitions of personal selling, it is clear that personal selling is a process or activity where one-on-one persuasive communication takes place between a buyer and salesperson, with the aim of building a long-term relationship by selling products or services that would satisfy their needs and is beneficial to both parties. For the purpose of this study, personal selling at trade shows is defined as a process where person-to-person communication takes place; and where salespeople persuade and add value to the interaction with attendees at a trade show – with the intention to prospect, sell or/and inform them; and in doing so, to build long-term relationships to the benefit of both parties.

According to Manning, *et al.* (2014:62-64) personal selling has been an important IMC mix elements for the last fifty years; and therefore, a brief history of the development of selling will be provided next.

### **4.3 HISTORY AND DEVELOPMENT OF PERSONAL SELLING**

Early salespeople were peddlers, hawkers, traders, itinerants that sold out of caravans, where products were pushed and peddled to consumers and sales people, who were seen as flamboyant product “pitchmen”, without any emphasis on partnering (Lambert & Kerkhoff, 2005:23). Since then, sales have evolved to where salespeople today build long-term partnerships with their customers.

In the beginning, only four eras in the origin of personal selling could be identified, namely: the industrial revolution, post-industrial revolution, war and depression, and professionalism or the modern era (Ingram *et al.*, 2006:20-22); thereafter four more eras were added, namely: marketing, consultative selling, strategic selling and the partnering era (Manning & Reece, 2007:9). Yet another view is that sales have moved through the four businesses-orientation cycles, namely: production orientation, sales orientation, marketing orientation and relationship orientation (Spiro, Stanton & Rich, 2007: 39).

Manning and Reece (2007:9), Blem (2007:2-3) and Futrell (2011:45-47) link the evolution of personal selling to the evolution of marketing; while Ingram et al. (2006:21-23) discuss it from the perspective of personal selling and evolution, as the viewpoint. Taking all the mentioned authors' viewpoints into consideration; there are minor differences between the development of personal selling and the evolution of marketing; because marketing and selling developed simultaneously.

From each of the named eras different sales careers evolved. An example of this is the medical trade shows, where the focus is more on informing attendees than the selling of products. Next, a brief definition of the different types of sales careers will be given.

#### **4.4 SELLING CAREERS**

Selling careers can be classified in several ways. As with trade shows, selling careers can be classified, according to industry types, such as consumer markets, business markets and service markets (Rix, 2006:20-22). Another classification of selling divides sales careers, according to channel members who sold to service selling, retail selling, wholesale selling, and selling for a manufacturer (Blem, 2007:15; Futrell, 2011:10-14; Manning & Reece 2007:38-43). In this study, it will be determined from which industry the exhibit staff are coming; therefore, the different types of sales careers are discussed in more detail next.

**Service market selling** entails any business that sells any type of services. The selling of services can include: financial services, radio, TV and Internet advertising, newspapers and magazines, hotel, motel and convention centre services, real estate, insurance, banking or business services (Manning & Reece, 2007:38 -39). A number of trade shows focus on the service industry. Trade shows, such as Conversations on Architecture, or the Facilities Show Africa, for example, focus on the selling of services, such as design programming and facility services to attendees.

In **manufacturing selling**, different types of salespeople can be identified, namely: outside and inside sales staff (Manning & Reece; 2007:42). Outside sales

people include: field-sales people; sales engineers; and detail-sales people. Field sales people sell to both new and existing customers that identify their needs and prescribe the best products to satisfy or solve their problems (Manning & Reece, 2007:42). Sales engineers are sales people, who are trained engineers that are experts on the know-how and have the ability to discuss, and assist customers in solving technical problems (Blem, 2007:15; Wilson & Hunt, 2011:131); while detail sales people primarily concentrate on promoting products, and not selling as such (Futrell, 2011:13 & Blem, 2007:16). They are found in the pharmaceutical industry; and their task is to specify a pharmaceutical company brand, and to persuade the doctor to prescribe it to patients.

The second type of salespeople in manufacturing sales include inside salespeople who make calls to smaller customers, to take orders and to support the field salespeople. In sales at trade shows, all of the types of manufacturing salespeople are to be found due to the nature of selling in B2B markets (vide. Section 3.4.2 & 3.4.3).

According to Manning and Reece (2007:40-41), and Futrell (2011:10) and Blem (2007:15), **retail salespeople** sell goods and services to consumers for personal use. There are three types of sellers in retailing, namely: inside or in-store salespeople, direct seller to home or door-to-door salespeople and telephone salespeople or telesales persons, as they are called. Inside or in-store salespeople are employed in hardware, clothing, gifts and many other businesses selling automobiles, recreational vehicles, musical instruments, photographic equipment, fashion apparel, furniture, TV's and radios, computers and related accessories. Direct to home, or door-to-door salespeople sell face-to-face to consumers in their homes (Futrell; 2011:11); while telephone salespeople or telesales persons contact buyers by telephone; and the calls can be either inbound or outbound. Inbound calls are responding to customer queries or enquiries generated by advertising or trade shows (Rix; 2006:23). Retail salespeople are not found at trade shows; since the focus there is on B2B markets.

**Wholesaler's** salespeople are also known as distributors or wholesaling middlemen, who sell goods to other members in the supply chain (Jones, *et al.*,

2005:23). They sell goods for resale; use in other production processes, and for operational purposes (e.g. University buying supplies). A number of wholesalers sell at trade shows, such as Markex, IFSEC, OSH or Africa Health; where the wholesalers are the link between the manufacturers or the distributors from overseas companies.

Personal selling is playing an increasingly important role in B2B markets. In many business- marketing situations, trade shows in combination with personal selling are used to sell and communicate on a number of different products and services (Manning, *et al.*, 2014:46). Therefore, personal selling as an IMC element in business markets will be discussed.

#### **4.5 PERSONAL SELLING AS A MARKETING TOOL IN BUSINESS MARKETS**

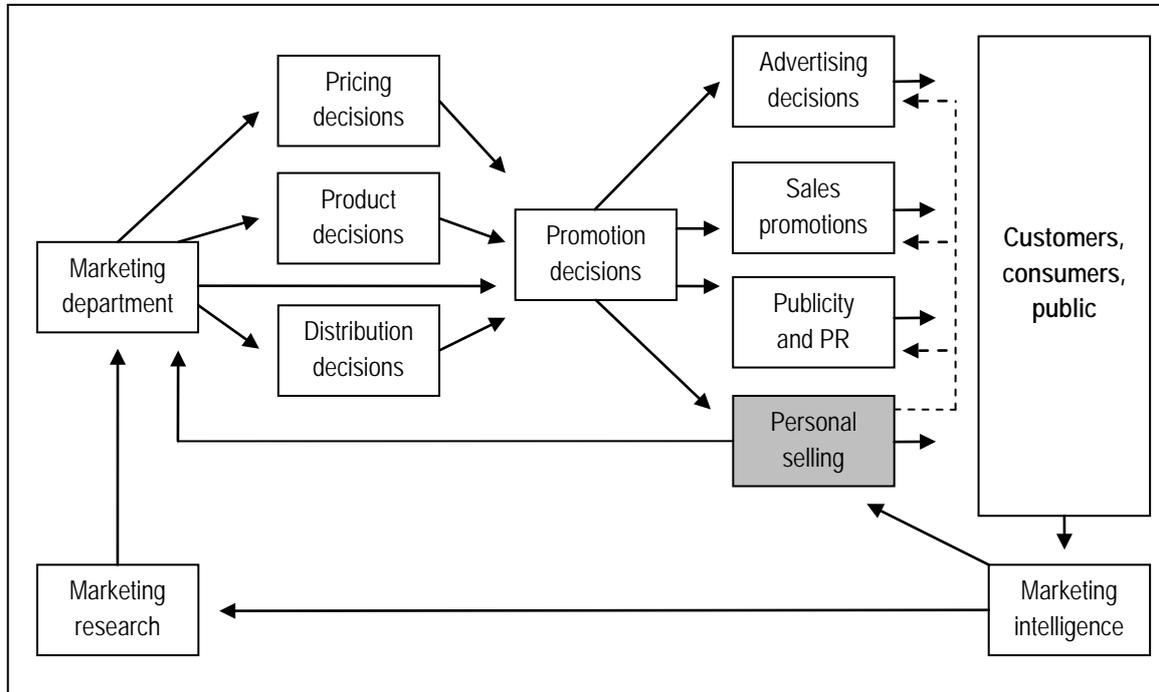
Personal selling is now playing a far bigger role in the marketing mix of businesses, with the spending of resources on selling activities increasing, and the number of sales people employed (Manning, *et al.*, 2014:42, Donaldson, 2007:4-5). The reason for the afore-mentioned is that business markets are now operating in more complex and competitive markets than in the past. And this has led to a cross-functional relationship between sales and marketing (Dawes & Massey, 2006:346). As indicated in Figure 4.3, personal selling not only forms part of the IMC mix of the organisation that communicates with customers; but it relates directly back to the marketing department. Personal selling not only plays a role as an element in the IMC mix of a business; but it provide a valuable tool for marketing intelligence in the marketing department.

As indicated in Chapter, 3 salespeople obtain marketing intelligence at trade shows by observing other exhibitors and in their own interactions with the attendees.

From Figure 4.3, it is clear that personal selling is combined with other promotional elements in communicating with customers; and it also influences other IMC elements, in order to achieve successful results (Rix, 2006:14). Both personal

selling and trade shows make up elements in the IMC mix of a business, as indicated in Chapter 2 (Pitta, *et al.*, 2006:156-157).

**Figure 4.3 Marketers' view of the role of personal selling**



Source: Adapted from Rix (2006:14) & Zimmerman & Blyth (2013:239)

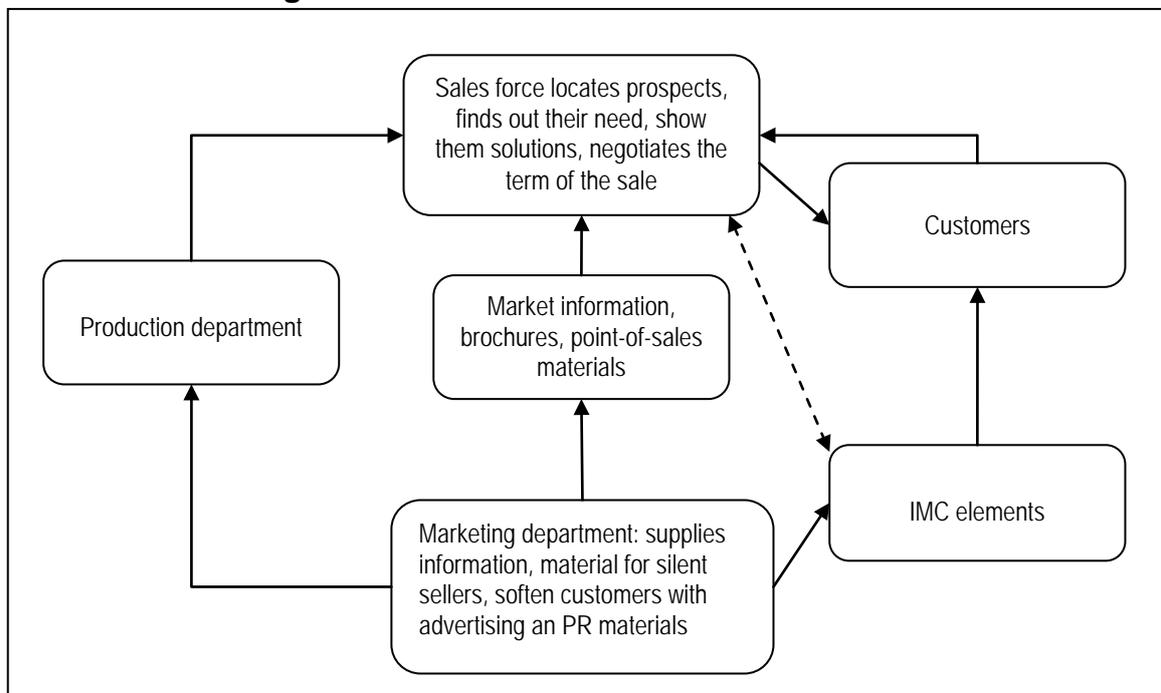
According to Piercy (2010:351), sales in business markets are influenced by four driving forces, namely: escalating customer demand, competition from direct channels, stringent productivity initiatives, and new marketing activities linked with sales. As pointed out, the interaction between sales and marketing is an important determinant of how effectively a business creates, delivers and communicates its value proposition (Malshe, 2011:45).

Businesses, however, struggle to link sales and marketing – due to the two different functions not understanding each other, or failing to use integrated processes that are the same (Olivia, 2006:396). There are different ways to integrate sales and marketing in B2B organisations; and in doing so, a business should be able to better meet its promotional objectives in communicating with customers (Biemans, Brenčič, & Malshe, 2010:192).

As indicated in Section 3.1 of this study, this also holds true for trade shows, where the marketing departments within a business do not clearly understand the role of trade shows. In this study, the researcher will attempt to indicate the role of the sales process in trade shows, in order to provide marketing with a better understanding of its functions to improve sales and customer service. In Figure 4.4, a model is provided of the relationship between marketing and selling.

As indicated in Figure 4.4, the salesperson collects information directly from individual customers, and market information from the marketing department's research. This information can come from market information and marketing departments. The information is then used by salespeople in to locate prospects, find out their needs, shows them solutions and for negotiations – to provide a win-win situation for both the seller and the buyer. The marketing department provides information through the IMC mix to customers, as indicated in Figure 4.4, that informs and makes customers aware of the products and business.

**Figure 4.4 Sales person model of relationship between marketing and selling**



Source: Adapted from Blyth (2005:12)

From the viewpoint of Figure 4.4, the marketing department's role is that of a support function, providing product offerings for customers from which to choose, a pricing platform for salespeople from which to negotiate, and a distribution system, as well as a way to generate promotions through advertising and publicity.

Trade shows, as indicated in Chapter 2, are one of the IMC elements in the B2B marketing mix. For the purpose of this study, it is important to note that trade shows can be arranged by either the sales or marketing department within an organisation. The marketing or the sales department, therefore, provides the salesperson all the support functions, as discussed in Figure 4.4.

As indicated in Chapter 3, promotional materials, social functions, the planning of the exhibit stand, as well as the training of exhibit staff need to be done. In this study, the researcher will determine whether the exhibit stand is manned by sales, or marketing, or by other personnel from the exhibiting business – in order to establish whether there are differences in how they use the sales process at trade shows.

Although the integration of marketing and selling is important to an organisation, it is personal selling that provides several advantages over other marketing communication elements. Personal selling brings the human element into marketing; it provides instant feedback to the customers; and it only sells to qualified customers, thereby increasing sales (Van Heerden & Drotsky, 2011:31-32).

As indicated in Table 4.1, salespeople in business markets have unique characteristics. In Table 4.1, different authors' views on the characteristics of salespeople are indicated.

**Table 4.1 Characteristics of a salespersons**

Author	Characteristics of professional sales person
Leonidou (2004:740)	Capable, specialised and active salespeople with an excellent knowledge of the products and services on offer.
Johnson & Marshal (2005:46-50)	Listening skills, follow-up skills, ability to adapt to sales style from situation to situation, tenacity, well organised, verbal communication skills, proficiency to integrate with people of different levels of the customers' organisation, demonstrate ability to overcome objections, closing skills and personal planning and time-management skills
Spiro <i>et al.</i> , (2007:15)	A salesperson is a marketing consultant that engages in a total consultative, non-manipulative selling work
Donaldson (2007:61-68)	Enthusiasm, confidence, intelligence, knowledge on their products, competitors, the market, customers, territory and their company and, inter-personal skills
Malik & Naeem (2010:25)	The interpersonal skills of the salesperson are the most important skills that they can have, and being able to speak, and listen.
Ellis (2010:319)	Salespersons develop inter-organisational relationships that are part of customer-relations management (CRM); and therefore, they must be able to develop inter-business relationships.
O' Guinn, Allen & Semenik (2011:285-286)	A salesperson's responsibilities include; market analysis, sales forecasting, new product ideas, buyer behaviour analysis, communication, sales coordination and customer service
Manning, <i>et al.</i> (2014:37)	A professional salesperson is a knowledge worker that creates, uses, shares and applies knowledge

Although professional selling has specific characteristics; in a study conducted by Lopez and McMillan-Capehart (2009:99-100), the four elements that make B2B relationship selling unique are identified. Firstly, B2B salespeople work without the immediate supervision of their managers. Secondly, B2B salespeople's work is not routine; since creativity and innovation are often required. Thirdly, B2B salespeople have different responsibilities that make it difficult to monitor tasks performed; and lastly, the impact of sales efforts and the payment of rewards for performance are inevitably delayed. Trade-show performance depends on the appointment of exhibit representatives with interpersonal skills, communication abilities, and product knowledge (Li, Evans, Chen & Wood, 2011:442).

Although the different characteristics of salespeople are important, they need to apply these in the sales process. Next, the sales process will be discussed.

#### 4.6 THE SALES PROCESS

The task of the professional salesperson at trade shows can be divided into sales and non-sales activities, with salespeople not only trying to sell products, but also to inform, to gain market information, to get new prospects, and additionally,

demonstrating goods to customers (Smith, Goplakrishna & Smith, 2004:61-75). Selling is, therefore, a process in which to develop relationships, discovering prospects' needs, matching the organisation's products with these needs, and communicating benefits through informing, reminding, or persuading (Manning *et al.*, 2010:4-5). The sales process, however, is a complex phenomenon in B2B markets; since that more than one individual is involved in negotiations; and the extra dimension of complexity caused by the service element added to traditional B2B selling, and the fact that collaborative relationships have increased between the buyer and the seller (Åge, 2011:3).

Salespeople in business markets, therefore, have a number of activities that they need to perform at trade shows. In this study, these activities will be researched.

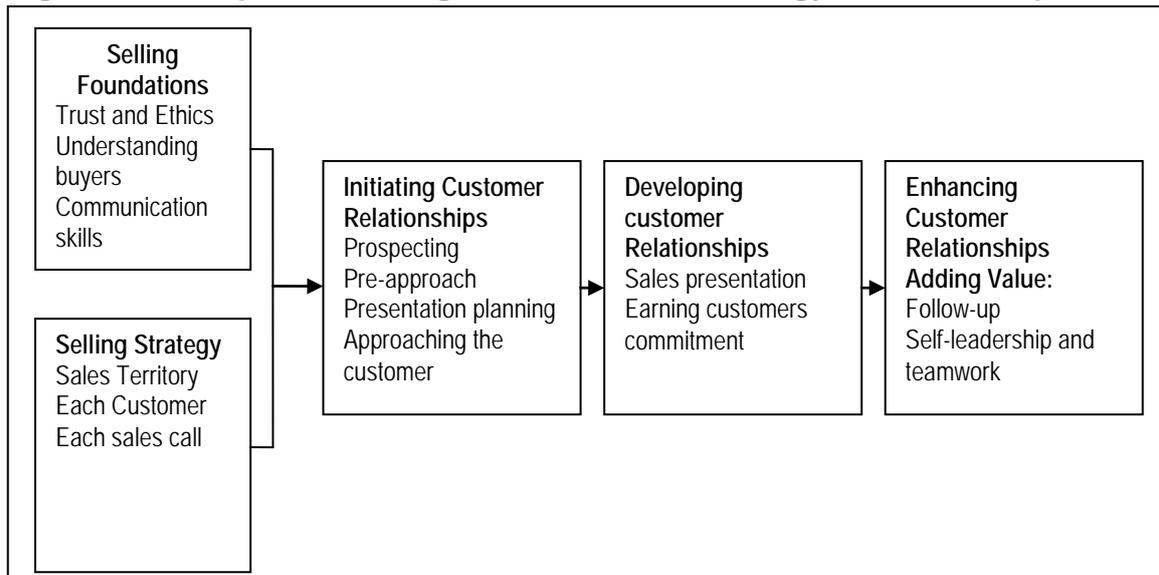
According to Ellis (2010:319:-320), a number of activities makes up the role of a B2B salesperson at trade shows, namely: selling, prospecting, pre-sale service, post-sale service, CRM, inbound-information handling, outbound-information handling, market research, and sales teamwork. Zimmerman and Blyth, (2013:228-229) provide a similar list of a B2B salesperson's activities at trade shows that include: identifying possible customers; identifying the problems of the customers; establishing dialogue with prospects, refining the view of the problem by taking dialogue into account, identifying solutions in the supply of business capabilities, explaining solutions, representing the customers' views of supplying the company, ensuring a smooth process of supply that meets the customers' needs and solving any after-sales problems, which might arise. All of these aforementioned activities take place during the sales process.

It is suggested by Ingram *et al.* (2006:31), as indicated in Figure 4.5, that the selling foundation and selling strategy would influence the sales process; and this links up with the above, by pointing out the characteristics needed by a salesperson. Figure 4.5 points out that the sales process falls into three broad categories, namely: initiating customer relationships, developing customer relationships, and enhancing customer relationships. The aforementioned categories are the result of the salesperson's non-selling activities; and the role that customer relationships play in the selling process. Shannahan, Bush, Moncrief

and Shannanahan (2013:272) confirms the before mentioned and states the sales process should not be only viewed from the sales person perspective but must include the customer.

As indicated in Figure 4.5 below, at each of the categories, specific sales-process activities take place; and this happens via a number of different stages.

**Figure 4.5 Impact of selling foundation and strategy on the sales process**



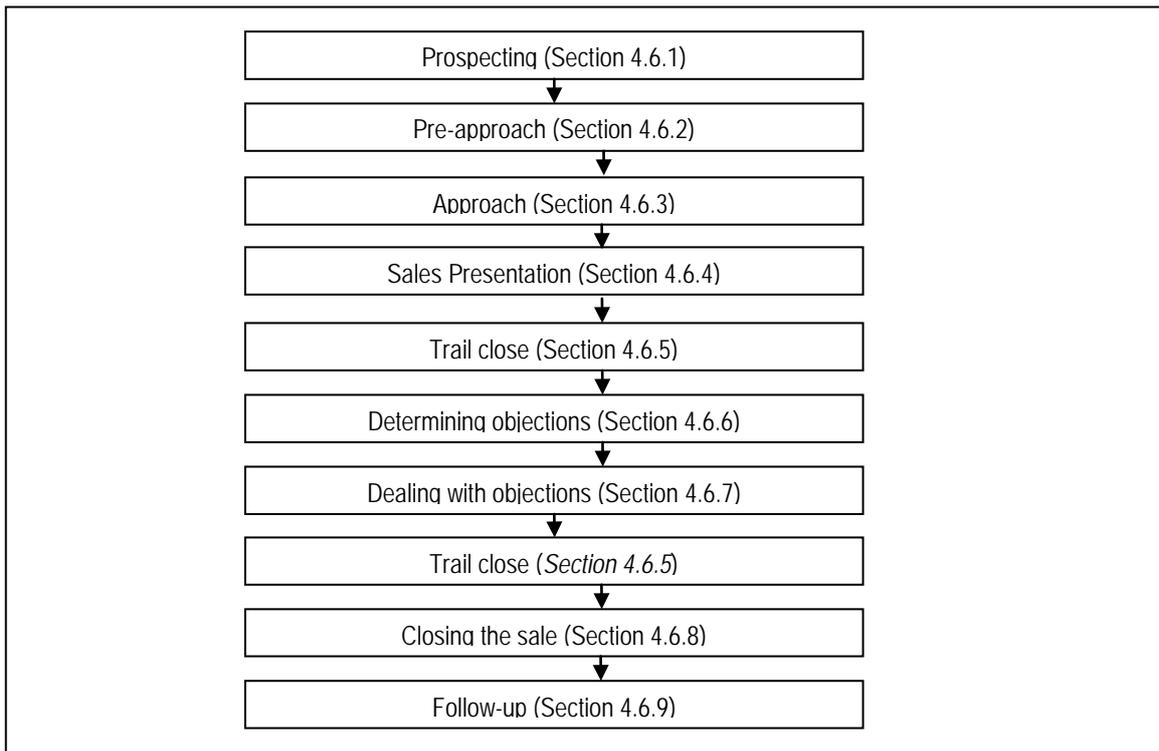
Adapted from Ingram *et al.* (2006:31)

According to Donaldson (2007:68-71), the selling process has a number of stages, namely: generating leads and identifying prospects, pre-call planning, the approach, presentation, overcoming of objections, closing and follow-up. This traditional seven-stage selling process is changing (Sheth & Sharma, 2008:7). Due to the value added by the sales process, in which a salesperson develops a deep understanding of the customer's needs; since this process continues throughout the sequence of buying, receiving, using and disposing of the product (Reilly, 2010:40).

The sales process is, therefore, expanded to ten stages, as indicated in Figure 4.6 (Futrell, 2011:228). Another reason for the increase in the number of stages in the sales process to ten is because of the stronger focus on relationship selling and the integration of technology into each (Long, Tellefsen & Lichtenthal, 2007:677). According to Autry, Williams and Moncrief (2013:178-179) although the sales

process have been expanded that there must be buyer and seller alignment in the exchanges process. The advent of adaptive selling where sales people focus has changed to building long term relationships with customers have also influenced the sales process (Plouffe, Nelson & Beuk, 2013:155). Therefore, for the purpose of this study, the ten-stage selling process will be used.

**Figure 4.6 The selling process**



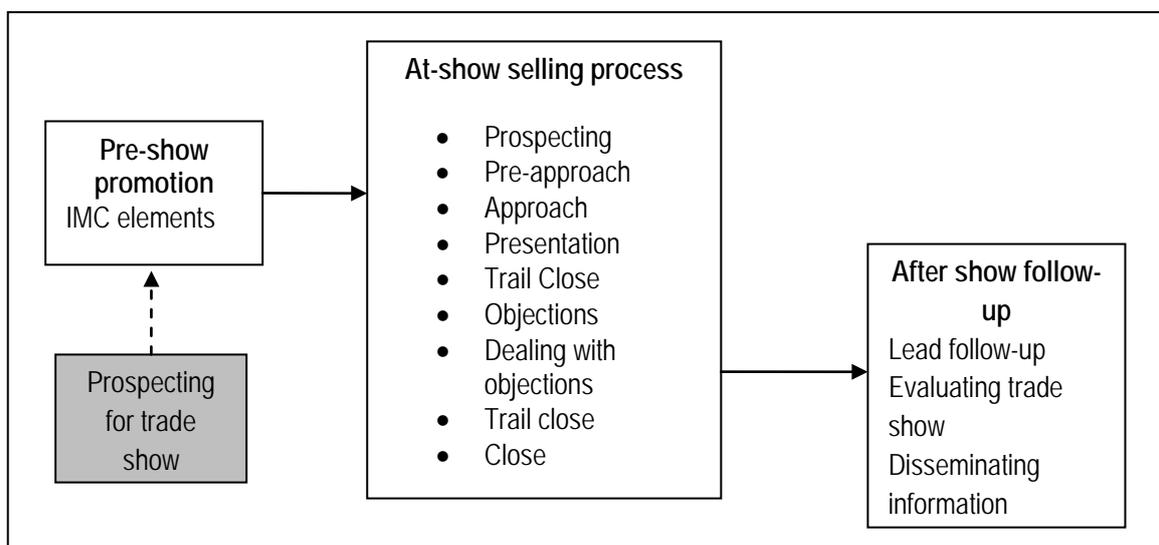
Source: Adapted from Futrell (2011:228)

According to Ling-Yee (2008:35) and Rosson and Seringhaus (1995:82), trade shows can be viewed as a buying process for attendees, where the exhibitors are involved in a multi-stage selling process, as illustrated in Figure 4.7, which includes the pre-show promotion, the at-show selling, and the after-show follow-up. The salesperson plays an important role in the afore-mentioned multi-stage selling process (Tanner, 2002:236-237). For the completeness of this study, the pre-promotion and after-show follow-up will be briefly discussed; while the at-show selling process will be discussed in considerable detail.

In this study, the prospecting methods used to do the prospecting in the pre-show stage and in the at-show stage, will be investigated.

The customer, the prospect, or the attendee at the trade show must be the starting point for the pre-show promotion (Willis, 2004:12). Pre-show promotion is where exhibitors invite customers to visit their exhibit stand by phone, direct mail and advertising in trade magazines (Ling-Yee, 2008:36). Exhibitors can make use of the so-called “traditional-acquisition instruments” to attract the customers to a trade show that is made up of the elements of the IMC mix, such as posters, flyers, telephone, special marketing campaigns, television, direct mail and radio, etc. (Kirchgeorg, *et al.*, 2010b:683).

**Figure 4.7 Possible trade-show selling process**



Source: Own compilation.

Electronic communication, such as the internet and electronic mail, are also being used more by exhibitors to attract customers to trade shows; since this is more cost-effective (Kirchgeorg *et al.*, 2010b:683). New IMC mix elements, such as virtual pre-show internet websites are also used, where the invited attendees can look at video clips of salespeople from different companies that would be at a trade show, and so gain pre-show information (Wimberly, 2007:4).

Salespeople are, however, still the most important pre-show promotional IMC mix element; since the attendees invited by salespeople are more likely to attend a trade show (Tanner, 2002:236; Kirchgeorg *et al.*, 2010b:683-684). As indicated in Figure 4.7, prospecting is done before the trade show by the salespeople to promote the trade shows to possible attendees, and at the show also. As pointed

out, in this study, both prospecting before and at a trade show will be researched. Due to the nature of this study, the researcher will not look at the after-show follow-up. The after-show follow-up includes: following-up on leads obtained at trade shows, and the information gathered being disseminated (Dwyer & Tanner, 2009:332-333).

The focus of this study is on the sales process at trade shows; therefore, the stages of the sales process will be discussed.

#### 4.6.1 Prospecting

According to Rix (2006:183), three concepts, namely: lead; prospect and qualifying, must first be understood before prospecting can be defined. A **lead** is a person or business, whose contact details are available; but who may, or may not have a need for a salesperson's product or service (Blem, 2007:65). A qualified individual or business that has the potential to purchase sellers' products or services is a **prospect** (Futrell, 2011:229); and **qualifying** is the process of evaluating a lead to see whether they meet the criteria to become a prospect (Johnston & Marshall, 2010:137).

To qualify a lead as a prospect, it must have the following: money, authority, and the desire to buy (Futrell, 2011:229). Another aspect is whether the prospect can obtain extra value from the business offering, in the way the seller delivers (Johnston & Marshall, 2010:137-138). For a lead to qualify as a prospect at a trade show, it must have the following: budget or money, authority, need, timeframe, or readiness to purchase, the potential sales volume, and account characteristics that include: the type of business, the number of employees, turn-over per year; the size of business, and who is the parent company (Stevens, 2005:134-135).

Prospecting is, therefore, the entire process of generating and qualifying leads (Rix, 2006:183) until they become a qualified prospect (Johnston & Marshall, 2010:137; Blem, 2007:65). The process of prospecting is not just the identification of prospects; but it includes the development of possible customers (Taloo,

2007:202). Different methods can be used in prospecting; and the method used is determined by the industry in which it operates (Weitz *et al.*, 2007:174).

One method is to make use of trade shows, of which many are industry-related, as pointed out in Section 3.4. Trade shows, such as IFSEC only focus on the safety industry. So, it is easier for sales people to identify good prospects and close sales at trade shows (Manning *et al.*, 2010:186; Stevens, 2005:37).

According to Weitz *et al.* (2007:180), trade-show generated leads are three times faster than other methods. At a trade show, the salespeople can make contact with the same number of prospects in one day than are normally seen in one week in the field – due to the number of prospects that visit an exhibition (Blem, 2007:299). Trade shows allow for salespeople to reach possible leads that would have never been identified as prospects – due to the geographical or financial constraints (Zimmerman & Blyth, 2013:256). It is important to note, however, that due to the nature of trade shows, as discussed in Section 3.3, salespeople only have a short period of time at the exhibit stand with attendees; and they must recognise any possible prospects as quickly as possible (Lee & Kim, 2008:787; Rix, 2006: 195).

As pointed out, and in Section 3.6.2.5 , salespeople gather intelligence at a trade show of those attendees showing interest and follow-up after the show (Jones *et al.*, 2005:186). Trade shows can provide leads in several ways, namely: a list of the attendees could be a source of prospects; networks can be developed or improved; and sales can be made to customers visiting the exhibit stand (Johnston & Marshall, 2010:146). Attendees at trade shows are evaluated on the basis of their degree of interest; and if the salesperson does not have time to assist them, another appointment later at the exhibit stand, or somewhere else should be made (Blem, 2007:299). This can be done by lead generation, where qualified attendees' contact details are captured; and a follow-up plan is developed for after the trade show (Rix, 2006:195).

To assist in the follow-up and the information-gathering, salespeople must keep a record of their prospects.

According to Manning *et al.* (2010:186), the information of a trade-show attendee must be carefully recorded, once a visitor has been identified as a qualified prospect. New technology is used in many trade shows, in which the attendee's information is electronically captured; as the attendee visits the exhibit booth by means of a visitor's card (Rix, 2006:195). At trade shows, such as Markex for example, each attendee's visitor card has a bar code on it. This is scanned at the exhibit stands that are visited. Many organisations still make use of the business card-in-a-bowl method to obtain leads.

At trade shows, such as Afrimold, card-in-a-bowl is still used; since the number of attendees and exhibitors is limited. The business cards-in-a-bowl method, is however, viewed as being outdated; and that only qualified prospects' information must be captured electronically at the show, directly after interacting with the attendees at the exhibit stand (Woolard, 2007:34). Another method is to make use of lead forms. This can be used to get information from the attendees, and to determine whether they qualify as prospects, and where they are in the buying cycle (Alessandra *et al.*, 2009:95).

Lead forms are forms created by exhibitors, on which information of the attendees who visit the exhibit stand is captured. To start the process of interaction in the sales process, the salesperson needs to plan; and this takes place in the pre-approach stage.

#### **4.6.2 Pre-approach**

According to Donaldson (2007:69), preparation for a sales call is in direct correlation with the success of the salesperson. It is, therefore, necessary for the salesperson to learn everything they can about the prospects' business and relate that back to their benefit (Lodato, 2006:60). The pre-approach, however, also includes a number of other activities, such as: planning the sales call; determining the sales' call objectives, developing a customer profile, developing customer benefits, and developing a sales presentation (Futrell, 2011:264; Weitz *et al.*, 2007:198). In the planning for trade shows, however, many exhibitors make the

mistake of not communicating with the exhibit personnel what their plan is for the show (Blythe & Rayner, 1996:21-22).

According to Dwyer and Tanner (2009:328), objectives at trade shows must not only include the acquisition of new customers, but also the planning for current customers who might attend the trade show as well. Selling objectives for sales people at trade shows are more than just the selling of products (Kirchgeorg, Springer and Kästner, 2010a:66-68); and they can include: learning the attendees' needs, product line, which are the important competitors, and key contacts (Pitta *et al.*, 2006:161). Salespeople can also establish information from prospects on their buying process, current suppliers and future plans in the initial stages of the sales interview (Donaldson, 2007:69).

It must also be established who would be the main decision-maker within an organisation, and how long the decision would take (Ladato, 2006:61). Once information has been gathered on the attendees, the salesperson needs to set up a customer-benefit plan, where exhibitors can sell to the wholesalers and the retailers.

Trade shows, such as Interbuild Africa focus on the retailers and wholesalers (EXSA, 2012:35). Businesses that sell to retailers or wholesalers need to develop customer-benefit plans, as part of their selling activities. According to Futrell (2044:264-266), a customer-benefit plan is a four-step process. Firstly, the features, advantages and benefits that the salesperson's business will provide the prospect are selected. Secondly, a marketing plan is developed. Thirdly, a business proposition is developed beforehand that would include pricing, discounts and mark-up; and lastly, a suggested purchase order is planned.

In the case of trade shows this would probably be done in the follow-up after the show.

The final step in the sales-planning process is the development of the presentation that will be used at the exhibit stand. In developing the presentation, salespeople decide on the type of presentation; and they must decide on how much technology

should be used, how formal the presentation should be, how long the presentation must be, what material should be sent to the prospects; and these facts are used as part of the presentation (Johnston & Marshall, 2010:153-154). The aforementioned issues are of importance in a sales presentation at a trade show, as indicated in Section 3.6.

Exhibitors need to decide what technology will be used at the exhibit stand, how long the presentation would be – due to the time constraints faced at a trade show; and what type of promotional material will be handed out at the trade show. Once the sales call has been planned, the next step is the actual contact with the prospect (Taloo, 2007:202).

In this study, the researcher will determine whether exhibitors have set up objectives and plans before the trade show, and whether the exhibit staff is aware of the objectives.

#### **4.6.3 Approach**

According to Havaladar and Cavale (2007:2.12), the first impression that the salesperson makes is based on their appearance, attitude and opening line; since a prospect will form an opinion within a few seconds of meeting the salesperson; and they will decide whether they want to do business with the salesperson or not (Koekemoer, 2005:250). A salesperson must introduce himself and attract the attention of the prospect, in order to create interest (Jain, 2010:403). This must be done with body language that is polite and casual; since this is the first element whereby the attendees evaluate exhibit stand staff (Johansson & Bengtsson, 2011:73).

At this first stage, the salesperson either engages or disengages from the sales process (Stevens, 2005:131-137). If the attendee qualifies as a prospect, the salesperson will engage and then discuss or demonstrate the product. If the attendee does not qualify as a prospect, the salesperson disengages. If the salesperson identifies the attendee as a qualified prospect, a process would need to be followed, in order to get the customer to take action.

To get the attendee to take action, the salesperson can follow the AIDA model (Rix, 2006:212-213). The salesperson must, firstly, get the attention of the prospect; thereafter s/he must generate an interest in the sales message, and then stimulate a desire for the product; and lastly, get the prospect to move into action. The first two elements of the AIDA model are to get attention and create interest. In order to do this, the prospect must be approached in a manner that would facilitate the afore-mentioned. Manning *et al.* (2010:223-226), Johnston and Marshall (2010:173-174), Jain (2010:403), Havaladar and Cavale (2007:2.12), Weitz *et al.* (2007:226), Rix (2006:200) and Koekemoer (2005:251) identify different methods of approaching the prospect; each of which can be used at trade shows; so, all of these methods would need to be discussed in detail:

- **The introductory approach** – is used when meeting a prospect for the first time. In this approach, the salesperson states his/her name, the company's, name, and the reasons for the approach. This approach is used at trade shows extensively; since most attendees are interacted with, for the first time at the trade show.
- **The referral opener** – in this approach, the salesperson tells the prospect who referred them to the purchaser. This approach would most probably not be used at a trade show; since the salesperson would most probably not know the attendee who is visiting the exhibit stand.
- **Benefit approach** – with this approach, the salesperson opens the presentation with the benefit that their product could provide to the prospect. In starting with solving at least one of the prospect's problems, immediate mutual trust is built by the salesperson. The salespersons at a trade show would start with a demonstration of their product, what it can do; and then, they would start with their presentation.
- **Product approach** – is used when the salesperson has the product available to show to the customer. This approach is useful if the product is new, different or colourful. The product approach is used at trade shows extensively; where products are usually displayed and then used to move into a demonstration in the sales presentation. At trade shows, such as Afrimold, for example, the exhibitors would demonstrate their machinery by making promotional moulds at the exhibit stand to attract the attendees.

- **Complimentary approach** – the salesperson compliments the prospect on their business or work ethic. In using this approach, the salesperson must ensure that they are sincere, so as not to offend the prospect. At trade shows this approach might be difficult; since the staff manning the exhibit stand do not know the attendee – until they start talking to them.
- **Premium approach** – involves giving the prospect a free sample or promotional material. The premium approach is very useful to get the customer’s attention; and it is used at trade shows; where the attendees are given materials, such as brochures and catalogues. Free gifts are frequently used at trade shows, on which the name of the exhibiting company appears. This should help to attract prospects to the exhibit stand (Dwyer & Tanner 2009:331). At the Markex trade show, this approach is used by many exhibitors; who give away samples of the product they produce.
- **Shock approach** – is used by making the prospect think seriously about a certain reality related to the product sold by the salesperson; and they can then play on the emotions of the attendees at the trade show. At trade shows, such as IFSEC and OSH, many of the exhibitors make use of graphic displays of disease, or work-related injuries, for example, in order to attract attendees to their exhibit stand.
- **Question approach** – in this approach, the salesperson asks the prospect a question with aim of getting a reply that would then lead into the sales presentation. This approach allows the prospect to think about how the salesperson can solve their problem and get the prospect interested in the sales presentation. The question approach is used at trade shows by salespersons to get the prospect involved, to determine the attendees’ buying role, and what type of business the prospect is involved in.

In this study, the researcher will investigate which of the introductory methods salespeople use at trade shows – to open their sales presentation.

According to O`Guinn *et al.* (2011:293), the initial contact with the prospect must be professional, well-planned; and the sales person must have clear-set goals to establish themselves as an important source of information. In the study of

Jaramillo and Marshall (2004:22), critical success factors were identified in selling that relate to the presentation, namely: the salesperson must approach the customer with an opening statement about themselves, use non-technical words, clarify benefits via demonstrations, use comparisons and testimonials, and follow up after the sale. Once the salesperson has approached the attendee at the exhibition exhibit stand; the next step is to sell the product; and this is done in the sales presentation.

#### **4.6.4 Sales presentation**

According to Blem (2007:82), the sales presentation is the method used by the salesperson to convey the message to the client through words; or it can appeal to the other senses of the prospect. A salesperson can use different sales presentation methods, depending on the situation or the type of product that is sold (Havaldar & Cavale, 2007:2.13), and the amount of talking that is done (Futrell, 2011:280). Geiger and Kelly (2014:229) indicate that although sales presentations are using more technology than in the past personal interaction still important in building relationships. Sales presentations that can be used include structured or semi-structured presentations; where the salesperson does the majority of the talking. For a structured presentation, the salesperson uses memorised or canned selling; and this is also done with semi-structured formula selling.

In unstructured or customised presentations, there is greater degree of interaction between the buyer and seller – who does the same amount of talking. Unstructured presentations make use of need-satisfaction selling and customised presentations incorporating problem-solution selling (Futrell, 201:280). At trade shows selling is more unstructured and will be adapted to each customer (Søilen, 2013:125). In unstructured sales presentation the sales person follow a scripted outlay of what have to be said, while in customized the presentation is done by asking questions. Next, each of the selling methods will be discussed, including the group presentation. In this study, the research will investigate what type of sales presentation is employed by the salespeople who man the exhibit stand.

## **The memorised-sales presentation**

With the memorised sales presentation, the salesperson presents all the product features, and then asks the prospect to buy (Havaladar & Cavale, 2007:2.14). This means the salesperson is given a prepared speech about the company's products; and that this is then repeated in the same format to all the customers (Koekemoer, 2005:252). The memorised sales presentations are very effective; where there are not a lot of differences between the customers' needs, and the product is straightforward (Dwyer & Tanner, 2009:331). The advantages of the memorised sales presentation include: that the salesperson can be trained quickly; all the customers are receiving the same sales message; and the sales presentation can be written to closely resemble other marketing communication (Zimmerman & Blyth, 2013:237).

For example, at trade shows, such as OSH; where a number of products are standardised, such as safety gloves or glasses, exhibitors can train their exhibit staff to make use of the memorised-sales presentation. By doing this, they save time, and provide all the attendees with the same information on the products that are being sold.

As indicated in Chapter 3, at trade shows the salespeople have limited time to sell or build relationships with the attendees (Lee & Kim, 2008:787). The memorised sales presentation can be used; since it is an effective sales method, especially when the available selling time is short (Futrell, 2011:280). However, Lambert and Kerkhoff (2005:29) contend that the buying process in B2B is more complex; and the salesperson must establish the key buying role of the buyers. To establish the key buying role and the needs of the prospect, the salesperson might need to ask more questions; and a less-structured presentation would have to be used (Zimmerman & Blyth, 2013:227). In cases where some information is needed from the attendees, the salesperson can make use of the formula-sales presentation.

## **The formula-sales presentation**

According to Havaladar and Cavale (2007:2.14) and Blem (2007:84), the formula or semi-structured sales presentation is structured on the AIDA model, as discussed in Section 4.6.3. A simpler view of the formula-sales presentation is that the salesperson gets the prospect's attention, talks about the product's features, its advantages and benefits; and then starts asking questions (Futrell, 2011:284-285). The formula-presentation method is less structured and allows for the salesperson to adapt the sales call once the prospect's needs have been identified. The formula-presentation method would be the most useful for salespeople at trade shows; since they can follow a semi-structured presentation; but, if necessary adapt it to the customer's needs.

Successful salespeople use semi-structured presentations when selling (Weitz *et al.*, 2007:180); and one of the skills that salespeople must be re-trained on is how to close a sale (Johlke, 2006:315). At trade shows, such as the Cape Town International Industrial show, companies that sell small hand-held tools make use of formula selling. Each attendee is given a similar presentation; and the presentation is only slightly adapted, depending on what the hand-held tool will be used for. Although the formula selling works for many exhibitors with certain types of products and services; salespeople need more information, before doing a presentation; and they must be able to use a need-satisfaction presentation.

## **The need-satisfaction presentation**

With the need-satisfaction presentation method the salesperson firstly determines the customer's needs by asking questions (Havaladar & Cavale, 2007:2.15); and this is, therefore, seen as the most difficult and creative form of selling (Futrell, 2011:287). Dwyer and Tanner (2009:371) states that in need-satisfaction, presentation is a twofold process: firstly, determining the prospect's needs, and then making the sales presentation. Futrell (2011:284) disagrees with Dwyer and Tanner (2009:371); and s/he asserts that the need-satisfaction presentation consists of three stages, namely: need development; need awareness; and need satisfaction. In the need-development stage, the customer does the majority of

talking; and the discussions focus on the prospect's needs. The need-awareness stage occurs when the salesperson takes over the situation by re-stating the customer's need, in order to shed light on the situation. Lastly, in the need satisfaction stage, the salesperson provides the prospect with solutions to the needs that could be beneficial for both parties.

An example of this is at IFSEC trade show; where the exhibitors selling security fencing would first ask the attendee what they would be using the fence for; then they re-state the purpose or use; and lastly, they provide the attendee with a solution by acquiring one of the fences that they sell. In many B2B markets, the salesperson first needs to do an analysis of the customer's specific problems, and then make use of the problem-solution prescribed by the presentation.

### **The problem-solution presentation**

The problem-solution presentation is best suited for highly technical or complex products; where the possible solutions need to be adapted to the specific customer requirements (Van Heerden & Drotsky, 2010:183). In the problem-solution presentation, the salesperson's first task is to get permission from the customer to do an analysis of the business needs (Koekemoer, 2005:254). According to Futrell (2011:287) and Blem (2007:86), the analysis that is done for the problem-solution presentation comprises six steps:

- 1) The prospect must be persuaded to allow the salesperson to do the analysis.
- 2) The actual analysis is implemented.
- 3) Agreement is reached between the prospect and the salesperson on the problem; and the prospect wants to solve it.
- 4) A proposal is prepared for the solution of the prospect's problem.
- 5) The sales presentation is prepared by using the analysis and the proposal.
- 6) The salesperson does the sales presentation.

The problem-solution presentation would most probably not be done at trade shows, due to time constraints and the nature of trade shows, as discussed. However, at trade shows, like Afrimold for example, the exhibit staff of many

exhibitors makes follow-up appointments with the attendees, in order to do an analysis of their specific business.

At many trade shows, the exhibitors do group presentations. These are done to save time and communicate with as many attendees as possible.

### **The group presentation**

In group presentations, a number of different people can be present; the salesperson must determine the needs of each individual, who will attend, in order to prepare for the presentation (Manning *et al.*, 2010:273; Weitz *et al.*, 2007:241). At trade shows, the salesperson must determine whether the prospect is part of a buying team; and if so, set up a private demonstration at the show for the whole group (Stevens, 2005:135). This is done because buying professionals play different roles within an organisation's decision-making forum (Lambert & Kerkhoff, 2005:29).

According to Halvadar (2014:260-261) and Futrell (2011:289), six guidelines must be followed when selling to groups. Firstly, the salesperson starts with an introduction, stating his/her name, the company's name, and the purpose of the presentation. Secondly, the salesperson must establish credibility by giving a background to the business, and to whom they have sold in the past. Thirdly, they must hand out a list of the businesses to which they have sold in the past, and how their problems were solved. Fourthly, state a benefit or advantage of the business; and how this is better than their competitors. Fifthly, provide the seller with a quality assurance, such as what guarantees are given and the qualifications of the business in the specific field.

Lastly, the sales presentation must be adapted to fit all types of buying-behavioural styles. Many of the guidelines can be applied in trade shows. This is one way that an exhibitor can show the attendees how they can solve their problems – through demonstrations.

Trade shows provide an opportunity for businesses to demonstrate their products (Kirchgeorg *et al.*, 2005:863); and this can be done for groups at trade shows; but this can apply to individual prospects as well (Stevens, 2005:135-136). Demonstrations build credibility with the prospects; they establish a better connection between the prospect and the product; and they enhance the effectiveness of communication (Johnston & Marshall, 2010:184). Salespeople can make use of different tools in demonstrations at trade shows. These would include: proposals, product and plant tours, models, photos, illustrations, brochures, portfolio, reprints, catalogues, graphs, charts, test results, paper-based presentations, computers and software demonstrations (Manning *et al.*, 2010:262).

In demonstrating products, salespeople can use software packages that use sound effects, graphics and full-motion videos – to improve their presentations (Spiro *et al.*, 2007:66). Although salespeople have a number of methods, which can be used; they must still apply the ethical guidelines when doing so.

According to Stevens (2005:136), there are guidelines for demonstrating products at trade shows that include: not to demonstrate the product too early in presentation, practise the demonstration, keep it short, use repetition to assist memory; if the prospect shows an interest, suggest moving to another location for further discussions, and focus on the benefits – not just the features. Exhibitors make the mistake of selling the features of the product, and not focusing enough on the benefits (Naudi, 2006:11).

It is clear that at trade shows, group presentations play an important role. At trade shows, such as Occupational Safety and Health Exhibition (OSH) for example, the exhibitors are provided with small seminar areas; where they can do presentations on their products and the services that they sell. Businesses, such as NEC, for example at the IFSEC trade show, incorporate a part of their exhibit stand for group presentation; where they have big screen televisions to do the demonstrations.

In this study, the researcher will determine the types of sales presentation that the exhibit staff would make use of when selling to attendees.

At any time during any of the presentation methods, the attendees can show buying signals (Johnston & Marshall, 2010:232). Once the salesperson notes that the attendee is ready to buy, they must do a trial close (Jones *et al.*, 2005:279). A trial close is used to see what the prospect's attitude is towards the sales presentation; and whether there is any indication that the attendee is not ready to buy the salesperson needs, to determine if there are any objections (Futrell, 2011:385).

Since different objections can be raised in this study; it will be investigated what types of objections are being experienced by the exhibit staff.

#### 4.6.5 Determining objections

According to Zimmerman and Blyth (2013:228), objections are a question or negative statement made by prospects during the sales presentation. Not all objections are real; and frequently prospects just do not want to commit at the current moment (Jones *et al.*, 2005:297); and they should not be seen as being negative, but rather that the prospects still have some unanswered questions (Rix, 2006:242; Futrell, 2011:369). Preparation for objections is therefore important; and salespeople should plan, anticipate, forestall, acknowledge, be positive, listen, understand; and they should handle objections. As, and when, they arise (Van Heerden & Drotsky, 2010:194-195).

Manning *et al.* (2010:287-289), Van Heerden and Drotsky (2010:197-203), Johnston and Marshall (2010:204-208), Weitz *et al.* (2007:280-284) and Rix (2006:243-247), all identify different types of objections that prospects can use in a sales presentation:

- **Product objection** – is raised if the product does not have the necessary features that the prospect might require. This type of objection is not always the real objection; it could be a cover-up objection; if the prospect do not have the necessary funds, or does not understand the product.
- **Company or Source objection** – deals with any aspect related to the sales-person's company. Source or company objections occur if the prospect is loyal to his/her current suppliers, has had a bad experience with

the salesperson's company in the past; or the prospect is concerned about the company's ability to deliver.

- **No-need objection** – This occurs, when the prospect feels that s/he does not need the sales-person's product; this could be due to not wanting to change or a way to get rid of the salesperson. In certain cases, it could be caused by the salespeople not doing their homework, or giving poor sales presentations.
- **The stalling objection** – is raised by the prospect if s/he wants to postpone or decides not to make an immediate decision. This objection can, in many cases, be a smokescreen objection if the customer does not see the benefits of buying the salesperson's product.
- **Hidden objection** – in this objection, the prospect uses small and unimportant objections to hide the real reason why they are objecting.
- **Financial or price objection** – this is the most common objection in sales. There are different reasons for the price objection. Firstly, the prospect might not have the money to buy; s/he might want to get a better price; s/he can get the product more cheaply somewhere else; or s/he does not see the product as being value for money.

As pointed out in this study, the objections will be investigated to determine which objections occur at trade shows. Once an objection has been raised; the next step is for the salesperson to deal with the objections.

#### 4.6.6 Dealing with objections

According to Manning *et al.* (2010:290), after the prospect's objections have been disclosed, the salesperson must deal with the objections. Salespeople must clearly determine the prospect's objection by asking questions, and then overcome or deal with it in an effective manner (Taloo, 2007:203) by handling objections with confidence, intelligence, enthusiasm and patience (Jain, 2010:404). In dealing with objections, salespeople can use a number of different methods. In this study, the different methods that salespeople use when manning the exhibit stand will be researched; therefore, next the different methods will be discussed.

Manning *et al.* (2010:290-294), Johnston and Marshall (2010:173-174), Blem (2007:131-136), Havaladar and Cavale (2007:2.12), Weitz *et al.* (2007:288-296), Rix (2006:251-253) and Koekemoer (2005:256-258) identify the following methods to overcome objections:

- **Direct denial:** This type of technique is used when the prospect makes an incomplete or incorrect objection; then, the salesperson denies it directly. In using direct denial, the salesperson must take care not to offend; since the prospect that might see the denial as an attack.
- **Indirect denial:** The salesperson agrees with the prospect in the beginning; and the salesperson makes the objection seem to be important; but and then denies the objection. This technique is more courteous and tactful than a direct denial.
- **Pass it by:** If the prospect makes an objection that does not need to be answered; the salesperson just lets it go. The objection might be due to frustration, anger or fear; and, as such, it does not need to be answered.
- **Compensation:** Certain objections can be valid ones. The salesperson then points to a feature of their product that offsets the stated defect in the product.
- **Boomerang:** In this technique, an objection given by the prospect, and the decision not to buy – can be turned into a reason to buy.
- **Third party:** The prospect's objection is answered by someone else – be it an expert, past customers, a proven statement, or a reliable source. This technique must only be used if the source of the information is correct and can be validated. As indicated in **Chapter 3**, many exhibitors at trade shows place engineers at their exhibit stand; because they might be able to help answer technical questions in regard to the products or services.
- **Postponing:** Many objections are made before the salesperson has finished the sales presentation; and the prospect would still provide an answer for the objection. In such cases, the salesperson should hesitate in answering the objection.

In this study, the different methods applied to deal with objections by exhibit staff will be investigated. Once the objections have been dealt with, the salesperson

must do a trial close to determine whether all the objections of the customer have been answered.

#### **4.6.7 Trial close**

The trial close is used to establish how ready the prospect is to buy; or to determine whether all the objections have been dealt with (Blem, 2007:117). A trial close can, however, be done – once the salesperson detects buying signals from the prospect; and it can be done at any time during the sales presentation (Rix, 2006:269). The trial close can be done after a strong selling point; after an objection has been answered, at the end of the presentation, or before the close of the sale (Van Heerden & Drotsky, 2010: 207; Futrell, 2011:118). A trial close is a powerful method at exhibits to obtain two-way communication with attendees; and to establish whether all the questions or objections have been answered (Blem, 2007:303). If the salesperson sees that the attendee is ready to buy; then they can close the sale.

#### **4.6.8 Closing the sale**

According to Halvadar (2014:265), the salesperson must close the sale as soon as the prospect shows buying signals that indicate a readiness to buy. Salespeople need to look for both verbal and non-verbal clues from the customers in the selling presentation that indicates their readiness to close the deal (Manning *et al.*, 2010:307-309; Johnston & Marshall, 2010:232-233). Buying signals can include the prospect asking questions, the prospect asking someone else's opinion, the prospect relaxing and becoming friendly, taking out a purchase form, or carefully examining the product (Futrell, 2011:414-415).

Weitz *et al.* (2007:311-312) furthermore indicate that if the prospect wants to know the requirements for getting the product, the salesperson should make a benefit statement or respond positively to the trial close. Then, the salesperson must close the sale. In this study, the different methods that exhibit staff can use to close a sale will be researched; and therefore, the different closing methods will be discussed.

According to Manning *et al.* (2010:290-294), Johnston and Marshall (2010:227-229), Blem (2007:131-136), Havaladar and Cavale (2007:2.12), Weitz *et al.* (2007:288-296), Rix (2006:251-253) and Koekemoer (2005:259-260), it is important to identify the different types of closing techniques that can be used by salespeople:

- **Direct close:** This closing technique is the most straightforward – with the salesperson asking the prospect to buy. For example, the salesperson can ask the attendee at the exhibit stand whether they are ready to purchase or not.
- **Assumptive close:** After the salesperson has asked a number of questions and established that the prospect wants, to buy and closes the sale; then this is done by taking action that is directed at closing the sale. For example, at the trade show table, the salesperson can start filling in a purchase form for the attendee to sign, in order to close the sale.
- **Alternative choice close:** In this closing technique, the salesperson does not give the prospect an option to buy, or not to buy. The prospect is provided with two options – such as colour or model – and then has to choose one. At a trade show, the salesperson might point two of their products that are on display, and ask the attendee if that is the one that they are going to buy.
- **Compliment close:** When a prospect is a self-styled expert, or in a bad frame of mind, this technique is very useful. The salesperson gives the prospect a compliment to boost his/her ego. For example, the salesperson says to a buying manager at the exhibit stand that they can see that they know their products – and then close the sale.
- **Summary of Benefit close:** The benefits to which the prospect reacted positively in the sales presentation are then re-stated; and the prospect's confirmation established on each of these. After the prospect's acknowledgment has been received on each benefit, the sale is closed. At the exhibit stand, the salesperson can point out to the attendee the benefits of each of the products and get their confirmation; once this has been done, they can close the sale.

- **Continuous yes close:** The salesperson asks questions to which the answer by the prospect is “yes”. After the prospect has given the yes answer, and is accustomed to saying yes, the salesperson closes the sale. The salesperson can ask questions on all the advantages that the attendee would get when buying the product. Once they get a number of yes answers, they can then close the sale.
- **Minor-points close:** This closing technique is similar to the assumptive close; but instead of closing on a main feature of the product, a small aspect chosen by the salesperson can be used to close the sale. The salesperson might, for example, refer to something small in regard to the product, such as, ‘it can print in different sizes’, and then close the sale.
- **T-account:** With this closing, the salesperson draws up a t-account on a piece of paper, or on a computer screen; and on one side, indicates the benefits of buying the product; and on the other side the disadvantages of not buying. The salesperson might have a list at the exhibit stand, and point out that the advantages in buying the product outweigh those of not buying it; and then close the sale.
- **The standing room close:** In this closing technique, the salesperson indicates to the prospect that if they do not buy at this current moment, then the product will not be available; or the price will go up. The salesperson can point out to the attendee that the price of the product will increase once the trade show is over; and that they need to buy, while they’re still at the show.

According to Blem (2007:305), in an exhibition; there are certain types of closes that are used more frequently, namely: the assumptive close, the direct close, the minor-point close, the standing-room close and the alternative close. Once the sale has or has not been closed at the trade show, the salesperson still needs to follow up afterwards, as pointed out in Chapter 3. For the purpose of this study, as illustrated in Figure 4.7, the follow-up is not part of the trade show-selling process; but it is done after the trade show. Therefore, it will only be discussed briefly in the next section to follow.

#### **4.6.9 Follow-up**

In Chapter 3, the follow-up after a trade show was discussed. According to Drohan (2007:32), the follow-up is one of the most important stage in the process of generating sales for all the trade-show exhibitors. Due to inefficient follow-up sales, opportunities are missed; and the return-on-investment dramatically decreases, as pointed out in Chapter 3. After the show, all sales leads must be followed up: either by telephone, email, or in person. Trade shows provide exhibitors with a database for future leads to follow up (Blem, 2007:305-306).

As indicated in this study, the follow-up will not be investigated; since the data gathering would take place at the trade shows.

#### **4.7 SUMMARY**

In this chapter, personal selling was defined by indicating that selling has changed over the last few decades, becoming more sophisticated – due to lengthy and complex sales processes. It was stated that the main function in selling is the creation of dialogue between the salesperson and the buyer. This was defined as person-to-person communication, in which professional sales people apply a set of skills, strategies, and processes to unselfishly persuade and add value to the interaction with the attendees at the trade show – with the intention to propose, sell and/or inform; and in doing so, to build long-term relationships – to the benefit of both parties.

Secondly, a historical background was provided. In the historical background, selling was discussed, according to the different eras, including the industrial revolution era, the post-industrial era, or the production era, war and depression eras, and the sales-orientation era, professionalism, the modern era or marketing, the consultative selling era, the strategic selling era, and the partnering era.

Thirdly, the different types of selling careers were classified, namely: selling a service, selling in retail, wholesale and manufacturing. Service selling comprises selling financial services, radio, TV and Internet advertising, newspaper and

Magazine page space, hotel, motel and convention-centre services, real estate, insurance, banking and business services. Retail selling, which has inside or in-store salespeople, direct seller to home, or door-to-door salespeople, and telephone-sales people, or telesales persons. Wholesale can be very similar to retailing and manufacturing. This can then be broadly classified into outside-salespeople and inside-salespeople.

Fourthly, the role of personal selling in the marketing mix of B2B organisations was discussed. There were reasons for this, namely: that business markets are operating in more complex and competitive markets than they did in the past, which leads to cross-functional relationships between sales and marketing. It was indicated that personal selling plays a role as a valuable tool for marketing intelligence in the marketing department. The advantage that personal selling provides over other marketing communication elements was also emphasised.

Fifthly, the characteristics of a professional salesperson were given. It was indicated that professional salespersons are seen as marketing consultants that engage in a total consultative, non-manipulative selling work. The responsibilities include: market analysis, sales forecasting, new product ideas, buyer behaviour analysis, communication, sales co-ordination and customer service. The ten characteristics of a professional salesperson are, namely: listening skills, follow-up skills, the ability to adapt to different sales styles from one situation to another situation, tenacity, well-organised, verbal-communication skills, proficiency to integrate with people of different levels in the customer's organisation, demonstrate the ability to overcome objections, closing skills, and personal planning, in addition to time-management skills.

Lastly, the task of the professional salesperson at trade shows was discussed. Three different viewpoints of the sales process were discussed, followed by the construction of Figure 4.7 for the purpose of this study. The pre-show, at-show and follow-up were discussed from Figure 4.7. Thereafter, the sales process for trade shows was discussed in more detail. The elements of importance to this study, namely: prospecting, pre-approach, approach, presentation, trial close, objections and close were discussed in considerable detail.

In Chapter 5, the research methodology that was scientific as to achieve the objectives of the study will be discussed.

## CHAPTER 5

### THE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

#### 5.1 INTRODUCTION

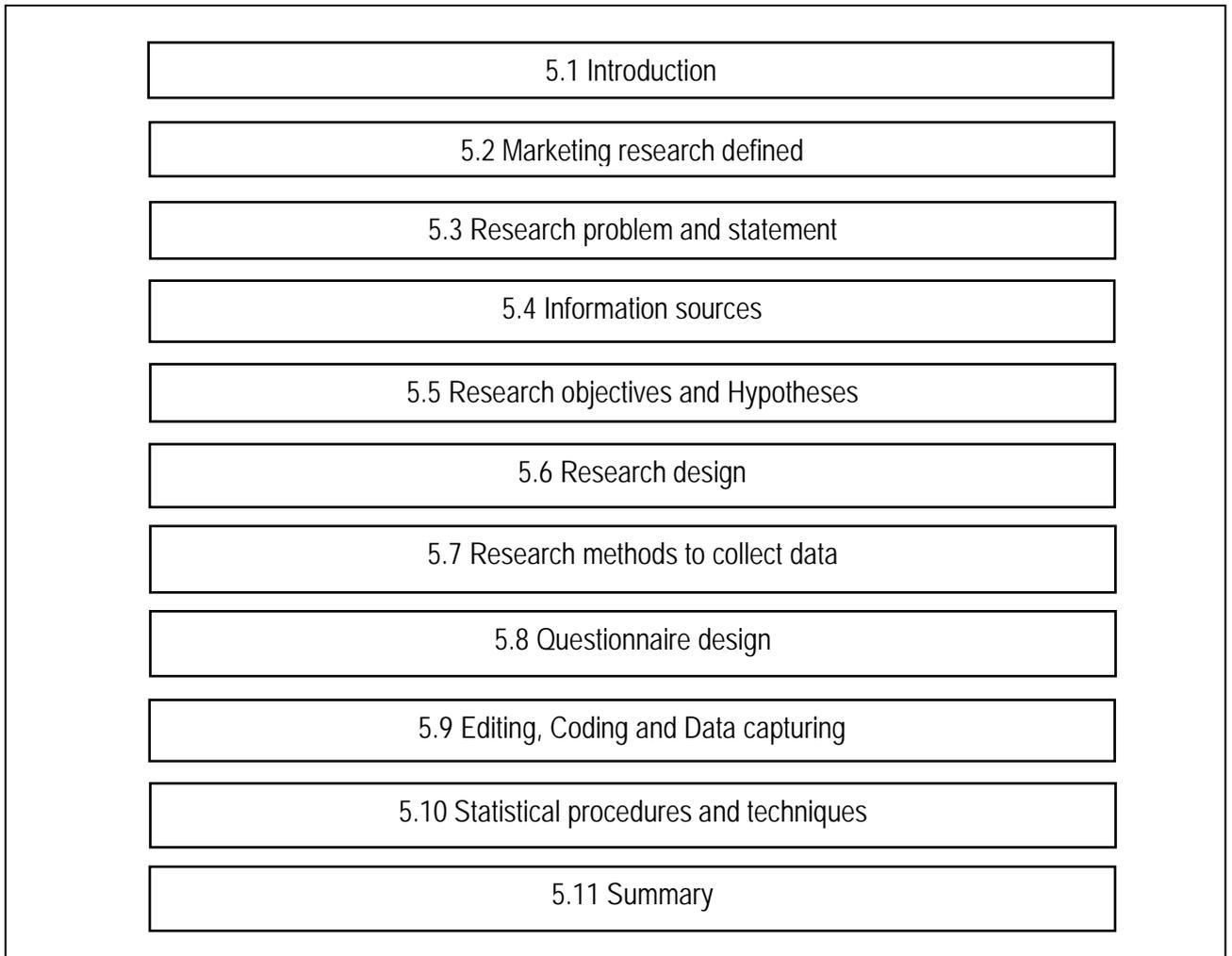
Business-to-business marketing was discussed in Chapter 2 of this study. In Chapter 3, the trade shows were discussed, by first looking at the different role players that comprise the attendees, organisers and exhibitors. This is followed by a discussion on the three stages (pre-, at- and after-) of a trade show. Chapter 4 focused on personal selling, and more specifically on the sales process that consists of the different stages. The afore-mentioned chapters formed the background to the development of the methodology and analysis that is done in this study. This chapter examines the research design and the methodologies used to conduct the empirical part of the study.

In this study, the research methodology mainly focuses on the sales process and its stages that are used by exhibit staff. The research methodology applied in a study must be applied in a scientific manner (Welman, Kruger & Mitchell, 2005: 2). Therefore, a scientific and structured research methodology approach was followed, to ensure that the information obtained was valid, and sufficiently reliable to support the objectives.

This chapter starts off by providing an introduction to the chapter, followed by a definition of marketing research and a brief reference to the research-problem statement. A short description on the sources of information provided; and thereafter, the research objectives and the hypotheses set for the study, as guided by the literature, are discussed. A more in-depth description is provided on the research design that includes: the sample framework, the sampling method, the sample size, and the selection of the sampling units. The steps in the designing of the questionnaire are also explained.

Thereafter, there are discussions on the coding, validation; editing and statistical procedures used. In Figure 5.1 a layout of Chapter 5 is given that serve as a visual guide for the chapter.

**Figure 5.1 Layout of Chapter 5**



Source: Own compilation

## **5.2 MARKETING RESEARCH DEFINED**

For research to be valid, it must make use of a scientific and systematic method to prove or disprove the assumptions and hypotheses that the researcher has made. Marketing research is, therefore, the systematic collection, analysis and interpretation of information about all marketing problems – by means of recognised scientific methods – to provide information that can be used in decision-making (Wiid & Diggines, 2015:5). Thus, marketing research is the use of

a scientific method in searching for the truth about a marketing phenomenon (Zikmund & Babin, 2010:5). Research, therefore, has to be conducted systematically, in order to examine the assumptions and hypotheses – before accepting or rejecting them to make it scientific (Ghauri & Grønhaug, 2010:3).

The systematic gathering of information means that research has to follow specific steps and processes – in order to be accepted as scientific. According to Churchill, Brown and Suter (2010:5-6), marketing research involves a number of stages of information-gathering: starting with determining what information is needed; the collection and analysis of the information; and lastly, the interpretation of the information in regard to the objectives of the study. Another view is that research consists of four stages, namely: stating the purpose of the study (why it is being done); the population under investigation; the procedure that are followed; and lastly, the publication that is the reporting of the findings from the study (Bradley, 2010:35-41).

This study started off in Chapter 1 by pointing out the research problem that indicated the reason why the research was done. In Chapter 2, Chapter 3 and Chapter 4, a literature review was conducted to assist in the development of the research objectives, hypotheses, research design and questionnaire development. In this chapter, the research methodology used in this study is discussed; and in the last two chapters of this study, the findings and conclusion of the study are provided.

### **5.3 RESEARCH PROBLEM STATEMENT**

According to Berndt and Petzer (2011:11), the research problem is the core issue that the researcher wants to investigate. The problem-statement process involves the narrowing down of a broad interest in a research topic by focusing on a specific research problem that is manageable in size, and can then be investigated (Welman *et al.*, 2005:13). A problem statement can be seen as the process of developing and defining a decision statement, and the use of such statements in creating more precise research terminology, such as the research objectives (Zikmund & Babin, 2010:106).

Problem definition assists in determining the purpose of the research (Arora & Mahankale, 2013:13). At the end of this section, the problem statement for this study is described.

This study was motivated by the importance of trade shows in B2B markets, due to the advantages they bring for personal communication with customers, and through dialogue, which the researcher had with the trade show exhibitors and organisers. A number of studies by Kirchgeorg *et al.* (2010a:68); Whitfield and Webber (2011:446), Dwyer and Tanner (2009:332), Blyth and Rayner (1996:21), Pitta *et al.* (2006:162), Johansson and Bengtsson (2011:73), Alessandra *et al.* (2009:69), Goldblatt (2005:11) and Golpalakrishna *et al.* (2010:245) done on trade shows in the last decade indicate that in the future, trade shows will continue to be an integral part of the B2B marketing mix of businesses.

In South Africa, trade shows provide an important platform for “person-to-person” business, with revenues of R2.6 billion in 2012, which is predicated to reach R4 billion by 2017 (Viviers, 2013:210). Due to this predicate growth, and the importance of trade shows in B2B marketing communication, it is important to determine the success factors for those businesses that exhibit. The sales process especially plays a significant role in trade shows, due to the “person-to-person” communication that takes place. This is due to the emphasis business markets place on personal selling, as the result of a unique communication strategy (Hutt & Speh, 2007:391).

Furthermore, trade shows serve as a marketing communication tool that offers personal interaction with the customers and the prospects (Dwyer & Tanner, 2009:298).

Businesses that are capable of becoming more competitive and adaptive in their strategies in exhibiting would achieve greater success at trade shows (Kirchgeorg, Jung & Klant, 2010b:310). As indicated before, trade shows and personal selling are interlinked with one another (vide Section 1.2, Chapter 3 & Chapter 4). Therefore, exhibitors who are capable of applying the selling process and its different stages should be able to increase their sales from trade shows

(Seringhaus & Rosssen, 2004:161). To achieve success, business therefore needs to determine the best practices, when exhibiting at trade shows through the use of the sales process.

These practices or factors for success guide businesses on how they should apply their different resources, in order to achieve their marketing and sales objectives.

A number of studies have been done on the role of selling at trade shows (Smith *et al.*, 1999, Kirchgeorg *et al.*, 2010a:68; Whitfield & Webber, 2011:446; Dwyer & Tanner, 2009:332; Blyth & Rayner, 1996:21, Pitta *et al.*, 2006:162; Johansson & Bengtsson, 2011:73; Alessandra *et al.*, 2009:69; Goldblatt, 2005:11; Golpalakrishna *et al.*, 2010:245). The authors looked at a number of different aspects related to sales; but none of them focused on the sales process, and its stages, thus leaving a gap in the field of personal selling at trade shows. The researcher could find two local studies (Bresler, 2008 & Keswell, 2010) on trade shows that relate to the sales process – but only on the general nature, such as attendee expenditure and the anticipated growth rate (Viviers, 2013:210; van Eyk, 2008:10).

To understand the research problem better an interview was done with an industry expert to gain better insight. An interview agenda (vide. Appendix D) was used to guide the interview. The interview was conducted in Midrand at the offices of Specialised Exhibitions Montgomery with Mr. Gary Corin (2009), the managing director of Specialised Exhibitions Montgomery, that is the largest B2B exhibition organisers in South Africa (Tassiopoulos, 2010:x). Specialised Exhibitions Montgomery have been organising B2B exhibitions since 1968 for a multitude of different fields such as building materials, mining, engineering, packaging and printing, transport, education and fishing equipment.

The first topic that was discussed was the role that trade shows play in business marketing. According to Corin (2009), the most important role of trade shows as a marketing medium “*is that it provides face-to-face interaction and it engages al the sense of the attendees*”. However, he indicated that exhibitors at trade shows tend to only come to exhibits “*because their competitors is there*” and that many have

no clear objectives for the show. Corin (2009) also stated that this creates a perception that trade shows is “*just something we do because others do it*”.

The second issue that was discussed was that of the importance of setting objectives for a trade show. The two objectives that must be set but are by exhibitors at a trade show is that of making sales and creating sales leads (Corin, 2009). Corin (2009) indicate to the research findings of Bresler (2009) regarding Electra Mining trade show one of the biggest mining shows in the southern Africa arranged by Specialised Exhibitions Montgomery. It was pointed out that one the main concerns is that there is a decrease in the number of sales at trade shows and this is influencing business perception of shows.

Corin (2009) further, indicated this as a concern since “*all research that I have read indicate that trade shows improves sales and double the success of selling to leads obtained at the show*”. The findings could have repercussions for the exhibition organisers since business that exhibit “*do not see trade shows as being a medium that provides value for money*” (Corin, 2009). Corin (2009) indicated that trade shows provide business with the opportunity to have “*face-to-face interaction and demonstrate products to customers*”. Furthermore, it was stated that trade shows in all sense should “*provide the exhibitor a way to build rapport with their customers but it seems they don’t know how to sell and obtain sales leads*”.

According to Corin (2009) one of the main reasons for the findings is that exhibitors do not establish who they are dealing with at the exhibit stand and the establishing the needs of the attendees. “*Exhibitors need to engage with attendees to ensure that the interaction is not a wasted opportunity to get business or sales*” Corin (2009). In many cases the behaviour and lack of experience of exhibitors in dealing with different types of attendees at the trade shows is the cause of not having a positive one-on-one interaction at the show. Exhibit stand staff in many cases do not follow basic effective communication by focusing on what they say and how they talk to attendees (Corin, 2009). A phrase used a number of times by Corin (2009) “*they just do not see trade shows as selling opportunity, but rather as a social outing*”. Corin (2009) further indicated that there

seems to be a lack of knowledge and selling skills by the exhibit stand staff and that this is a feeling shared by many in the exhibition industry.

On the aspect of who should man the trade show exhibition there was no clear answer. Corin (2009) however pointed out that *“the type of trade shows will determine the exhibit staff, but it must be someone with experience in dealing with customers that have the right knowledge”*. It was also indicated that many companies send anybody while sales people or senior managers would have been the best option for manning the exhibit stand (Corin, 2009).

One other aspect touched on was that trade shows provide a business the change to bench mark themselves against their competitors to see what they are offering to the market (Corin, 2009). According to Corin (2009), trade shows provide exhibitors a wealth of knowledge on their industry and what are the latest developments and is a great tool to educate staff.

The interview provided the following insights:

- Trade shows as a marketing medium provides business with face-to-face opportunity with their customers or potential customers.
- Exhibitors do not set objectives especially sales objectives that leads to a perception that trade shows do not provide value for money spend.
- That exhibit staff lack the knowledge and skills to sell at a trade show.
- Trade show exhibit staff should be sales people or senior managers.
- Business can use trade shows to train staff.
- A lack on a clear picture of the sale process at tradeshow

In conclusion, the research problem in this study is to determine the sales process used at trade shows and to expand on research as well as to assist on the practical needs expressed by industry. This lack of understanding limit exhibitors and non-exhibitors of effectively making and using this growing marketing opportunity as it is evident that tradeshow is an excellent platform to sell, build relationships, gather information and becoming more competitive. This, information can assist exhibitors at trade shows to utilise the sales process to

improve their success. Each of the stages of the sales process consists of a number of different factors that exhibitors can, or cannot, apply when selling at trade shows.

In this study, the stages, together with the sub-stages applied by exhibitor's exhibit staff have been researched.

To establish the different stages of the sales process, the researcher relied on different information sources. The information sources also guided the researcher in the setting of objectives, hypotheses and the questionnaire for the study.

#### **5.4 INFORMATION SOURCES**

In this study, both primary and secondary data sources were used to achieve the objectives set out. The data were needed to conduct the research process of the study; therefore, both sources of data were applied. Two types of information can be identified the primary data that consist of information that is collected for the problem at hand, and secondary data information that has already been collected (Burns & Bush, 2010:57). Bradley (2010:76), however, points out that secondary data might be outdated, or not relevant; or they might only cover a small aspect of the study under investigation. With the afore-mentioned in mind, it must however be noted that the secondary data can be invaluable in setting up the research methodology of a study. They can assist greatly in the construction of the measuring instrument (Kolb, 2008:88). For this study, a literature review was conducted – using the secondary sources to establish related research that was done before.

External secondary sources, such as text books, academic journal articles, media articles and trade journals were applied in this study.

As indicated in Chapter 1, one of the aims of this study was to do an investigation on secondary sources relating to business-to-business marketing, trade shows and personal selling – in order to support the research methodology. Firstly, an investigation was done on the secondary data relating to business-to-business

marketing; in order to establish what role trade shows and personal selling play in the marketing mix. Secondly, trade shows were looked at, including the three main role-players, namely: organisers, attendees and exhibitors. With regard to trade shows, specific attention was paid to the exhibitors; since this makes up the focus of the study. Lastly, personal selling was investigated to establish the stages of the sales process; and how each of these stages relates to trade shows.

The literature available on trade shows and personal selling came mostly from the United States, the United Kingdom, China and Germany. The researcher could only find a few literature sources on trade shows in South Africa by Bresler (2008) and Keswell (2010), and the only personal selling study found was done by Drotsky (2005) that researched sales in the pharmaceutical industry. A number of textbooks describing the sales process were found and journal articles were limited in number. The secondary information sources found on sales at trade shows was Lee and Kim (2008), Ling-yee (2008), Sharland and Balogh (1996), Smith, Gopalakrishna and Smith (2004) and Woolard (2007). Thus a major contribution of this study lays in the value it adds to personal selling at trade shows. Although numerous aspects relating to trade shows were discussed, specific emphasis was given to the stages of the trade show, and the functions and the exhibitor's staff at each.

In the realm of personal selling, each of the stages of the sales process was looked at in detail. The secondary research guided in setting the research objectives and hypotheses, as well as the research design.

## **5.5 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES AND HYPOTHESES**

According to Wiid and Diggins (2015:48), the research objectives must be in line with the information that the research requires, in order to solve the problem or opportunity that was set forth. The research objectives are, therefore, the goals to be achieved in conducting the research (Zikmund & Babin, 2010:64); and these are, in many cases, stated in the form of a hypothesis (McDaniel & Gates, 2010:49). For the purpose of this study, a number of research objectives were set out, in order to explore the research problem.

It was indicated that a number of studies (vide. Section 5.3) had been conducted on selling at trade shows as such; but no study could be found on the specific role of the sales process that is followed at trade shows. This information could be useful to businesses that exhibit at trade shows, in order to develop sales plans that would enable them to achieve greater success and be more effective when exhibiting. Trade show organisers can also make use of this information to guide or provide exhibitors with best practices when exhibiting. **The main objective of this study is therefore to explore the stages of the sales process at trade shows.** Through focusing on selected trade shows in South Africa, the following secondary research objectives were set out for this study:

- To determine the profile of exhibitors at trade shows and exhibit staff.
- To determine if sub-stages exist within each of the stages of the sales process at trade shows.
- To determine if sales persons and non-sales persons differ regarding the sales process followed at trade shows.
- To determine if the various types of trade shows influence the sales process followed.
- To determine if the type of business operations of an exhibitor influence the sales process followed at trade shows.

From the objectives and the literature review done, various hypotheses resulted. A hypothesis is a tentatively accepted statement about the formulated problem; and it defines the area of the research, and indicates its direction (Wiid & Diggines, 2015:49). Hair *et al.* (2010:67) define a hypothesis as an empirical testable, though yet unproven statement developed, in order to explain phenomena. A hypothesis is nothing more than a proposition statement; but if it is correct, it should be supported or accepted; and if it is wrong, it must be rejected (Bradley, 2010:37). Therefore, hypothetical statements are how two or more measurable variables are related; and they are based on an assumption about some characteristics of the population under investigation (Churchill *et al.*, 2010:81; McDaniel & Gates, 2010:410).

Hypotheses are stated using two forms, namely: the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ), and the alternative hypothesis ( $H_a$ ). The goal is to reject  $H_0$  in favour of  $H_a$ . Examples of the two forms of hypotheses are:  $H_0$ : “Sales and non-sales persons that man the exhibit stand do not differ significantly regarding business actions used”.  $H_a$ : “Sales and non-sales persons that man the exhibit stand differ significantly regarding business actions used”. By applying statistical and analytical methods, the hypothesis is tested; and the hypothesis is rejected when the significance level indicates a p value  $\leq 0.05$ ; and it is supported or accepted with a p value  $> 0.05$ .

In this study different hypotheses were formulated, in order to assist in the analysis of the objectives.

In order to gain a better understanding of the role of the sales process at trade shows it was deemed necessary to approach this from various viewpoints as previous research (vide. Section 3.5 & Section 3.6) indicated and literature suggested that the type of person manning the exhibit (sales vs. non-sales), the type of trade show (regional, national, international) as well as the business operations (sales of goods, service industry / professionals, construction / manufacturing or other) of the exhibitor could suggest a different approach to the sales process.

This information is not only useful for exhibitors; but it could be used by trade-show organisers to provide training or manuals to exhibit staff on the implementation of the sales process. Next, each of the objectives and the hypotheses formulated to test the stages and the sub-factors of the sales process are discussed.

#### **5.5.1 To determine if sales persons and non-sales persons differ regarding the sales process followed at trade shows**

Bathelt and Schuldt (2008:859) point out that the type of trade show has an impact on the exhibit staff; but they do not indicate whether this should be sales or non-sales people. Rinallo, Borghini and Golfetto (2010:251) also only point to the

exhibit staff functions that include: to display the products, to facilitate professional interaction, and to promote socialisation without stating whether this applies to sales or non-sales people. It is, however, pointed out that attendees appreciate those exhibitors that display their products and have competent exhibit staff (Rinallo *et al.*, 2010:254-255).

However, according to Ellis (2010:319-320) and Zimmerman and Blyth (2013:227-228), a number of activities make up the role of a B2B salesperson at trade shows, namely: selling, prospecting, pre-sale service, post-sale service, Customer Relationship Management (CRM), inbound information handling, outbound information handling, market research and sales teamwork. All of the aforementioned activities take place during the sales process.

Lee and Kim (2008:792-793) found that pre-show promotions have a significant positive influence on the image building of a business exhibiting at a trade show and that training of exhibit staff have a positive effective on pre-show promotions. Blyth (2002:630) points out in his research that exhibitors rate selling objectives above non-selling objectives at trade shows while Lee and Kim (2008) report that quantifying the show objectives had an important influence on the sales related performance of exhibitors. Trade show objectives and training is part of the business actions of an exhibitor as indicated in Section 3.6 and there are differences between sales and non-sales persons for example in regards to training. Lee and Kim (2008:793) further found that training of exhibit staff have an influence on image-building at trade shows. This indicates to the importance of exhibit staff to be able to communicate effectively. Hanchette (2007:112) indicate that exhibitors that emphasize pre-show activities do make more contact at the show than business which does not.

Bathelt and Schudt (2008:861) found that the entertainment provided at trade shows is more useful than other at-show promotional material with the most preferred method of interacting dinners with special customers (Herbig & O'Hara, 1998:431). Exhibit stand staff resources also enhance the at-show selling activities. Ling-yee (2008:40) further indicate that trade show performances (pre-show, promotions, at-show selling & post-show follow-up) were significant related

to the achievement of sales goals set. Hanchette (2007:112) point out that business that emphasize at-show activities have more sales leads from the show than business that does not.

It is evident from the discussion above that exhibit staff needs to fulfil many roles and activities at tradeshow as they move through the sales process. Emphasising the importance of using the most appropriate staff to man the exhibit. Bathelt and Schuldt (2008:859) point out that the type of trade show has an impact on the exhibit staff; but they do not indicate whether this should be sales or non-sales people. Other authors argue for and against sales or non-sales people as the most appropriate exhibit staff.

Ling-yee (2007:367) argues that internal knowledge such as sales knowledge, contribute to superior trade show performance, making salespeople the obvious choice to man the exhibit stand. However, Blyth (2010:60) indicate that one of the mistakes of exhibitors is to man exhibit stand with salespeople and this results on only focusing on closing deals and selling. Ling-yee (2008:39) furthermore, states that sales people is better trained and could use their sales skills to determine if an attendee is a possible prospect and ensure more sales. In Section 3.6.2.3 it was also indicated that due to the experience of sales staff and ability to facilitate information exchange they will be able to communicate more effectively with attendees.

With the afore-mentioned issues in mind, the logical choice of exhibit staff should be salespeople (Brennan *et al.*, 2014:195). Dwyer and Tanner (2009:332) agree with this statement and they postulate that salespeople must be involved with trade shows since they are personal and they provide sales leads due to the nature of B2B markets (Ellis, 2011:318). Although salespeople might be the best exhibit staff, in a study done by Liu *et al.* (2011:449), on Chinese trade shows, it was established that most exhibitors were at the show as part of public relations and not for selling or getting contracts and thus make more use of non-salespeople.

In conclusion, it is evident that authors differ on who should man the exhibit stand at trade shows. In Section 3.6.1, Section 3.6.2 and Section 4.6, the different roles played by both sales and non-sales persons at trade shows in the sales process are discussed. If the arguments of the various authors for and against salespeople to man exhibit stands are true, there should be differences in the various activities, methods and actions that sales vs non-sales exhibit stand staff encounter and make use moving through the sales process based on their specialised work experience, training and goals. Thus, seven hypotheses were therefore formulated reflecting the various stages of the sales process at trade shows and these differences. It must be noted that all hypotheses are set for the sales process at trade shows.

- H<sub>01</sub> There exist no significant differences between sales persons and non-sales persons regarding business actions used.
- H<sub>02</sub> There exist no significant differences between sales persons and non-sales persons regarding pre-show marketing activities.
- H<sub>03</sub> There exist no significant differences between sales persons and non-sales persons regarding at-show marketing activities.
- H<sub>04</sub> There exist no significant differences between sales persons and non-sales persons regarding the sales presentation.
- H<sub>05</sub> There exist no significant differences between sales persons and non-sales persons regarding objections experienced.
- H<sub>06</sub> There exist no significant differences between sales persons and non-sales persons regarding dealing with objections.
- H<sub>07</sub> There exist no significant differences between sales persons and non-sales persons regarding closing methods.

Two-tailed hypotheses were set for the first seven hypotheses that dealt with sales and non-sales persons. It was determined whether exhibit staff is employed as a salesperson and was measured using a dichotomous question (vide Appendix A, Question 23). As indicated in Section 4.6 of the study, a small number of research articles are available on the sales process at trade shows. Exploratory hypotheses were, therefore, formulated due to the limited literature available on the stages of the sales process at trade shows. Therefore, the stages of the sales process at a

trade show can be seen as being explorative; and this is discussed in the limitations section of this study. This has also been discussed in Section 4.6.

The explorative stages for the sales process was measured, using a Likert scale (vide Appendix A, Sections B to I).

Through the literature review, it was also established that the type of trade show can impact the stages of the sales process. Therefore, in the next section this objective is discussed.

### **5.5.2 To determine if the various types of trade shows influence the sales process**

The different types of trade shows and how the sales process can be implemented by exhibit staff (as discussed in Section 3.4, Section 3.5.3 and Section 3.6.2.4) often differ. In Section 2.6, the reasons why business markets are segmented is also indicated. By classifying trade shows, the organisers can provide guidelines on how to deal with a specific type of show to the exhibitor's exhibit staff. This could include how to implement the sales process (Kirchgeorg, 2005:47). It has also been established (in Section 3.6.2.4) that trade shows and the stages within the trade show are frequently viewed differently by the various types of exhibitors.

Trade shows provide attendees with the opportunity to experience geographical and culturally distant markets in a central location (Rinallo & Golfetto, 2006:865); and they provide businesses with the opportunity to compete and succeed in the fast-growing global business market (Seringhaus & Rosson, 1998:398). One of the main ways to classify trade shows is according to their geographical scope. This refers to the region that is covered by a trade show. Three types of geographical trade shows can be identified: international shows, national shows, and regional show

The type of trade shows that an exhibitor displays at can impact the way in which they apply the different stages of the sales process (Kirchgeorg, 2005:47). Ling-ye (2007:365-366) found that the knowledge and skill needed for at-show selling differed between the various types of trade shows and had a significant influence

on the achievement of trade show objectives. Furthermore Kijewski, Yoon and Young (1993:291-292) point out that there is different objectives depending on the type of trade show, for example with national shows focusing more on new product and market segments, regional shows supporting sales activities and international shows on identifying new distributors. Furthermore, Hansen (2004:9) argues that trade show performance (sales, information-gathering, relationship building, image building & motivation activities) are often better at global or international trade shows. A possible explanation could be that international trade shows typically last longer than other trade shows; and this provides exhibiting organisations with the opportunity to meet buyers directly, to investigate the markets, the products, to observe the competitors; and this is a way to gather marketing research data (Robbe, 2000:14-15; O'Hara *et al.*, 1993:234). Herbig *et al.* (1997:373) points out that businesses that exhibit at international tradeshow is more globally driven and have more customers and more product lines and hence a more complex sales process might be followed.

National trade shows comprise those trade shows that are not international but still relatively large in size and the visitors attending the trade show are only from one country or from areas extending beyond a given region. This, therefore, limits the number of contacts and how contact is made (Kirchgeorg, 2005:47), suggesting a less complex sales process with limited activities in each stage.

Regional trade shows are even smaller in size than national trade shows and they are held in a specific area of a country at various locations attracting regional attendees (Dwyer & Tanner, 2009:329). Godar and O'Conner (2001:82) point out that regional trade shows attract a higher portion of low level operating attendees compared to national and international trade shows. It can therefore be assumed that sales strategies and actions employed during the sales process might be different based on the fact that they sell to a different type of attendee. Shoham (1992:337) also indicate that the type of trade show can influence the type of attendee and resulting in a different type of sales process followed. Even the attendee contact differ at the various tradeshow as large international trade shows often have organised evenings where socialising takes place whereas at smaller regional trade shows exhibitors make more use of spontaneous social

events such as lunch. Thus implying that the promotional approach used in the sales process should also differ.

Thus, taking the afore-mentioned differences between international, national and regional trade shows into consideration, it could be assumed that exhibit staff will adapt the stages of the sales process, according to the type of trade show in which they exhibit. Seven hypotheses were formulated to reflect these difference in the various stages of the sales process in regards to type of trade shows.

- H<sub>08</sub> There exist no significant differences for the type of trade show regarding business actions used.
- H<sub>09</sub> There exist no significant differences for the type of trade show regarding pre-show marketing activities.
- H<sub>010</sub> There exist no significant differences for the type of trade show regarding at-show marketing activities.
- H<sub>011</sub> There exist no significant differences for the type of trade show regarding the sales presentation.
- H<sub>012</sub> There exist no significant differences for the type of trade show regarding objections experienced.
- H<sub>013</sub> There exist no significant differences for the type of trade show regarding dealing with objections.
- H<sub>014</sub> There exist no significant differences for the type of trade show regarding closing methods.

Hypotheses eight to fourteen deal with three groups; and two-tail exploratory hypotheses was set. The type of trade show was measured using a multiple-choice single-response question (vide Appendix A, Section A, Question 1). The explorative stages regarding the sales process are measured using a Likert scale (vide Appendix A, Sections B to I).

In Chapter 2, 3 and 4, it was indicated that business activities influence the stages of the sales process.

### **5.5.3 To determine if the type of business operations of an exhibitor influence the sales process followed at trade shows**

Trade shows are events that bring sellers and buyers together – to view and/or sell offerings from specific industries and build mutually beneficial relationships (Berridge, 2007:12). By matching the supply market with the target audience, trade shows can demonstrate the expertise of a specific industrial sector (Brennan et al., 2014:189).

Various types of B2B businesses can be identified based on their operations as indicated in Section 2.4 (Ellis, 2011:215; van Rensburg, 2008:132; Cant, Strydom, Jooste & du Plessis, 2006:206-208). Exhibitors can be classified according their business operations and the main types include sales of goods, service industry / professionals and construction or manufacturing (See Section 3.3). In Section 3.5.1, it was stated that exhibitors and attendees must be matched to ensure success for a trade show and it was also pointed out that trade-show exhibitors must select shows that are in line with their current business operations. Even the design of the trade show exhibit stand is influenced by the business operations of the business exhibiting, to provide the exhibit staff with the best opportunity to sell to the attendees (as indicated in Section 3.1.6.4).

A number of studies have been done on the importance of business operations and their influence on trade shows and selling (Munuera & Ruiz, 1999:18; Borghini, *et al.*, 2006:1157; Bathelt & Schuldt, 2008:859; Wu *et al.*, 2008:417; Rinallo *et al.*, 2010:253; Kirchgeorg *et al.*, 2010b:310).

Herbig *et al.* (1997:374) state that the business operations of a firm can impact whether they exhibit at trade shows or not as well as the frequency of exhibiting, with service firms rarely exhibiting. Kellezi (2014:469) found that the marketing and communication strategy used for and at trade shows is also influenced by business operations. Munuera and Ruiz (1999:18) argue that the nature of the business operation of the exhibitor will influence the type of attendee visiting the trade show as well as the objectives of the attendees. Furthermore, the authors argue that the products or services exhibited at the trade shows differ in regards to

complexity and tangibility due to different business operations. At industrial or manufacturing trade shows buyers are more focused on gathering market information while Borghini *et al.*, (2006:1157) found that firms selling of goods exhibits attract more atypical attendees than manufactures. An atypical attendee is someone that does not belong to a buying centre and are not interested in purchasing but only browsing, implying a shorter and less complex sales process.

Furthermore, Bathelt and Schuldt (2008:859) report that manufactures view tradeshow as much more than the normal marketing event that firms in other industries (e.g. retailers and professional services) often do. For them trade shows are more complex as the focus is more on interactive learning and knowledge creating, implying a more comprehensive sales process. Wu *et al.*, (2008:417) also report that selling and buying activities are more evident in specialised tradeshow, such as construction than horizontal tradeshow such as exhibitors selling a variety of goods. Rinaldo *et al.*, (2010:253) argue that even the exhibit stand displays differ as to reflect the focus of firms in different business operations. For example, manufacturing firms dedicate a larger space of the stand for relaxing and socialising, while professional services firms allocate the largest space to professional interaction while firms selling goods use the biggest part of the stand for product displays.

From the above it is evident that the various business operations (manufacturing or construction, selling of goods and the services industry) of firms exhibiting at trade shows lead to differences in the frequency of exhibiting, the type of attendee, type of marketing and communication used, exhibit stand display, trade show objectives as well as the type of product/service exhibited. These difference in turn influence the amount, type of activities, complexity as well as the length of the sales process. Therefore, the following seven two-tailed hypotheses were formulated for business operations in sales process used at trade shows.

H<sub>015</sub> There is no significant differences for business operations of an exhibitor regarding business actions used.

H<sub>016</sub> There is no significant differences for business operations of an exhibitor regarding pre-show marketing activities.

- H<sub>o17</sub> There is no significant differences for business operations of an exhibitor regarding at-show marketing activities.
- H<sub>o18</sub> There is no significant differences for business operations of an exhibitor regarding the sales presentation.
- H<sub>o19</sub> There is no significant differences for business operations of an exhibitor regarding objections experienced.
- H<sub>o20</sub> There is no significant differences for business operations of an exhibitor regarding dealing with objections.
- H<sub>o21</sub> There is no significant differences for business operations of an exhibitor regarding closing methods.

Two-tailed hypotheses were set for business operations of exhibitors. Businesses operations were measured by using a multiple-choice single-response question (vide Appendix A, Section A, Question 5). The explorative stages regarding the sales process is measured using a Likert scale (vide Appendix A, Sections B to I). Also, explorative hypotheses were set out; and these are discussed as part of the limitations of the study (in the last chapter and in Section 4.6).

The different research objectives and the hypotheses needed to solve the research problem or opportunity therefore it is necessary to do research.

## **5.6 THE RESEARCH DESIGN**

According to Zikmund and Babin (2010:64), after the researcher has established the research problem, a research design must be developed that would be the masterplan on the methods and processes to be used for collecting and analysing the information needed. The research design is the plan that is followed to answer a study's research questions (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2009: 136). The research design is implemented at the stage when the researcher plans the process and methods to be used to analyse the data obtained. This must be done; so that the researcher can find answers to the objectives that were set for the study at hand.

The research design contribute to the overall research; and therefore, it has to be selected very carefully (Berndt & Petzer, 2011:31). To be able to answer the research objectives of this study, a research design was developed to acquire the primary data needed.

Three types of marketing research designs can be identified, namely: exploratory, causal and descriptive (Ghuri & Grønhaug, 2010:56). **Exploratory research** is done to clarify or explore unknown situations. In doing an exploratory study, the researcher can gain a better understanding of the problem. An exploratory study includes looking at the literature, talking to experts in the subject investigated, or doing focus-group interviews (Saunders *et al.*, 2009:140). In this study, exploratory research was not used.

**Causal research** is done to establish the cause-and-effect relationship; and it is mostly done in the form of experiments. Ghauri and Grønhaug (2010:57) state that in causal research, the researcher tries to determine whether the cause results in an effect. Causal research can be used to confirm that an event causes another to happen (Zikmund & Babin, 2010:53); and it is therefore, used to ascertain whether the research question indicates a cause-and-effect between events (Kolb, 2008:27; Churchill *et al.*, 2010:116). In this study, causal research was not used since this study was explorative to establish the stages of the sales process.

**Descriptive research** answers the questions: Who, what, when, where and why (McDaniel & Gates, 2010:49). Descriptive research describes the characteristics of objects, people, groups, organisations or environments (Zikmund & Babin, 2010:51); and it can be used where the emphasis is on determining the frequency with which something occurs, or whether there is a relationship between two variables (Churchill *et al.*, 2010:79). According to Kolb (2008:25), descriptive research is done when statistical data are needed on a fact; and almost always, they are done through surveys.

In this study, descriptive research was used; as it provides quantitative data to the answer research questions (Hair *et al.*, 2010:36), as the researcher wanted to survey the stages of the sales process for trade shows.

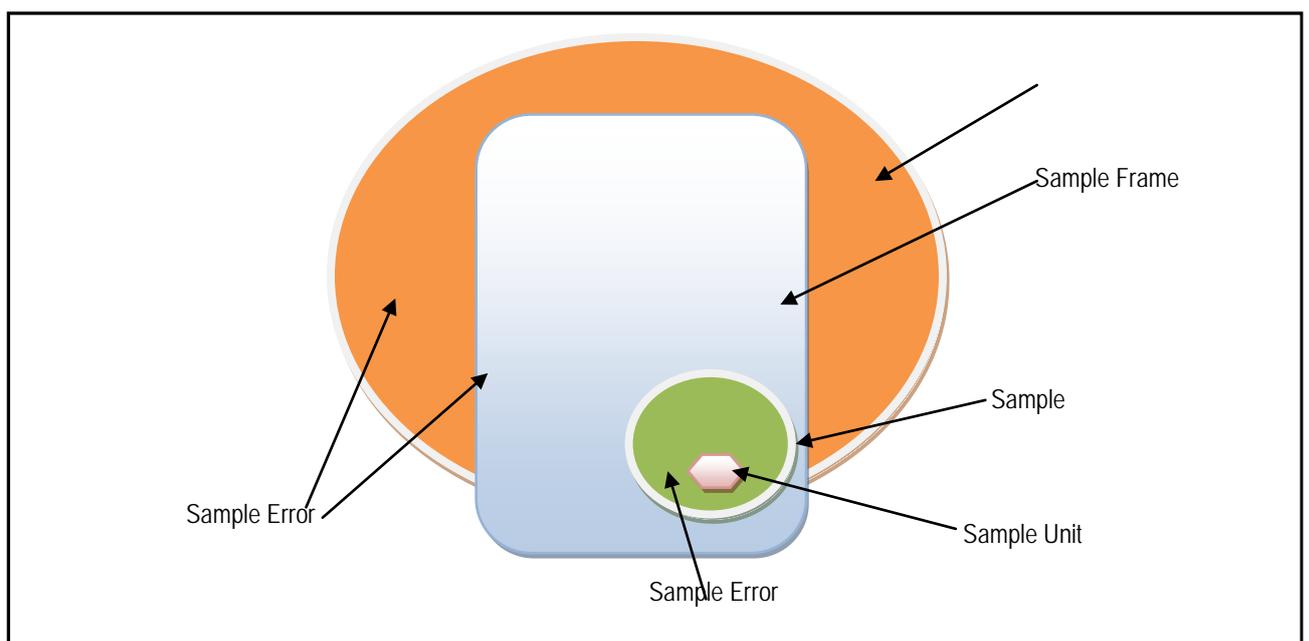
Once the type of research design has been decided on, a sampling plan needs to be developed, to ensure that the data gathered would answer the research problem or the research questions. Next, the sampling used in this study is discussed; and thereafter, the rest of the research design is looked at. This will include the research method used, the data-collection method and the design of the data-collection instrument.

### 5.6.1 SAMPLING

There are a number of reasons why sampling is used. In this study, a sample was used because of the restricted time and limited financial resources available.. The researcher, therefore, selected specific sampling units to obtain the required information. The sample statistics, which are a characteristic of the measures of a sample, can be used to make inferences about the population (Churchill *et al.*, 2010:330).

In sampling, there are a number of basic concepts, as illustrated in Figure 5.2. The basic concepts in sampling include: sampling, the sample, census, population, sample unit, sample frame, sample-frame error, and the sample error (Burns & Bush, 2010:364).

**Figure 5.2 Basic Sampling concepts**



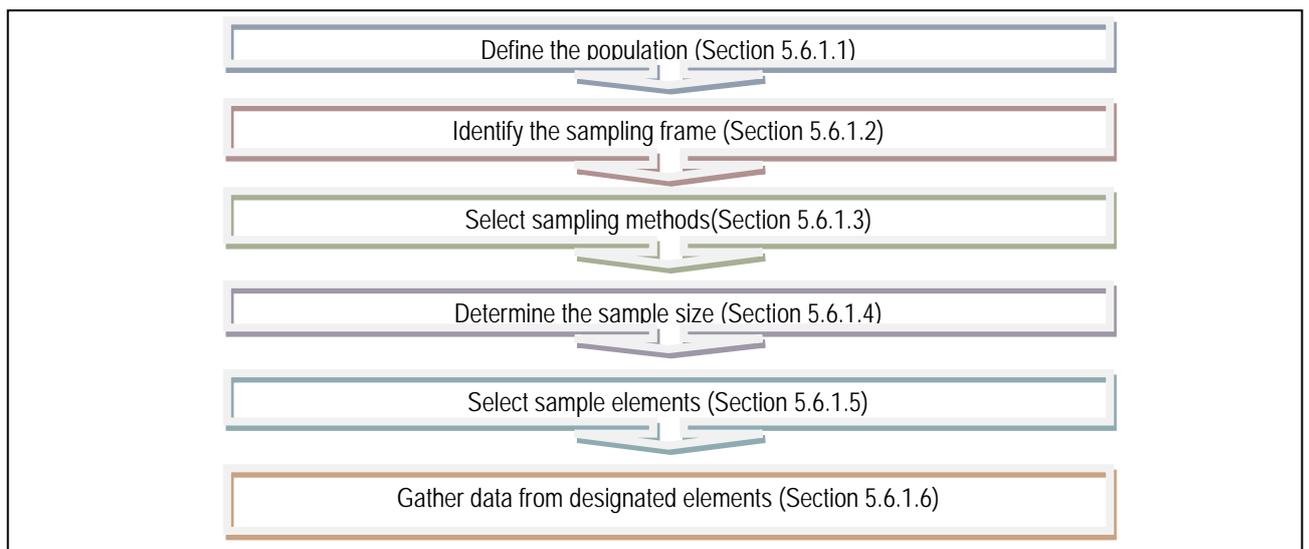
Source: Adapted from Burns & Bush (2010:364)

**Sampling** is the process whereby the researcher obtains information from a sample or subset of a larger group or population (McDaniel & Gates, 2010:326). The notion in doing sampling is to select some elements of the population; so that the researcher can draw conclusions about the entire population (Berndt & Petzer, 2011:165). Tustin *et al.* (2009:337) indicated that a **sample** is a subset of a group. A sample is a small number of a whole that tell us about the whole (Bradley, 2010:151). On the other hand, it is a **census** in which everyone in the population is accounted for (Kolb, 2008:178).

Zikmund and Babin (2010:412) define a population as “... any complete group of entities that share some common set of characteristics”. The population is, therefore, the entire group under study, as defined in the research objectives (Burns & Bush, 2010:364). In this study, the population comprised those businesses that exhibit at trade shows in South Africa.

**Sample units** are the items that are studied in a specific survey; and they must be clearly defined before the time (Wiid & Diggines, 2015:184). A **sample frame**, on the other hand, is the list of the population elements from which the sample will be drawn (Bradley, 2010:165); and a **sampling error** occurs when the researcher obtains a list of the population that is unrepresentative of the sample. Sample units, sample frame and sampling error are discussed later on in this chapter.

**Figure 5.3 The steps in the sampling process**



Source: Adapted from Churchill *et al.* (2010:327) and Wiid & Diggines (2015:184)

### 5.6.1.1 Defining the population

According to McDaniel and Gates (2010:326), the population is the group of people from which the researcher needs to obtain information. The population does not only refer to people; but it can include businesses, products, business units, individuals, or any group of interest, as defined by the objectives of the study (Ghuri & Grønhaug, 2010:138). It is not always appropriate to use the total population; and therefore, sample units are selected (Hair *et al.*, 2010:131). The target population includes all the people or objects that have been identified for a research project; while the sampling unit comprises those elements from the target population, which are available for selection in the sampling process.

The **element**: The element identified for this study is businesses that exhibit at trade shows in South Africa. **Sampling unit**: This includes all businesses, which had exhibit staff at the four selected trade shows. **Extent**: The exhibit staff at the exhibition stands at the four trade shows (IFSEC, AFRIMOLD, OSH & Cape Town industrial trade show).

### 5.6.1.2 The sampling frame

The sampling frame is the master list of population elements, from which the sample is drawn (Churchill *et al.*, 2010:330). The sampling frame used in this study was exhibition organisers that are listed by EXSA. It must be noted that the list also contained exhibition organisers that did not organise trade shows, but merely organise expos and consumer exhibitions. The researcher – after discussions with the General Manager of EXSA – established which organisers had arranged trade shows that were on the master list provided. The master list contains all the trade show organisers that are operate in South Africa.

### 5.6.1.3 The sampling method

Two types of sampling plans can be identified, namely: probability and non-probability. **Probability** sampling is the technique whereby members of the population have a known probability of being selected for the sample; while with

**non-probability** sampling, the selection of a member of the population for inclusion in the sample is unknown (Burns & Bush, 2010:368). Due to financial and logistical constraints, a census was not done for this study; but rather a sample was used.

The advantage of probability sampling is that it enables the researcher to indicate the probability with which the results deviate in differing degrees from the corresponding population values (Welman *et al.*, 2005:56-57). This means that the sampling error can be determined. The researcher, however, frequently makes use of non-probability sampling – for convenience and economic reasons. In non-probability sampling, the researcher makes the decision on who should be included and who should be excluded – since they could make the study less accurate. Probability sampling, however, can lead to a low response rate for the study; since the respondents selected to be part of the study were pre-selected (Bradley, 2010:160).

**Figure 5.4 Types of probability and non-probability sampling methods**

<p><b>Probability sampling methods:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Simple random sample</li> <li>• Cluster sample</li> <li>• Stratified sample</li> <li>• Systematic sample</li> <li>• Multi-stage sample</li> </ul>	<p><b>Non-probability sampling methods:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Convenience sample</li> <li>• Judgment</li> <li>• Snow ball</li> <li>• Quota sample</li> </ul>
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Source: Adapted from Wiid & Diggins (2015:189)

In Figure 5.4, the different probability and non-probability methods are illustrated. The four non-probability sampling methods are briefly discussed, followed by the non-probability methods. Firstly, **convenience sampling** is the most-simple form of sampling; since the sample respondents are chosen on the basis of their availability or accessibility; and selection is done on the basis of convenience (Tustin *et al.*, 2009:346).

Secondly, **judgment sampling** is when the sample is selected subjectively, and intentionally by the researcher to represent the population (Wiid & Diggins, 2015:190) and the respondent is, therefore, chosen according to whether they fit a

certain profile (Cant *et al.*, 2006:174). Thirdly, **snow-ball sampling** makes use of the initial contact with a respondent, who is then asked whether they know other respondents who might be prepared to participate. These would then have similar characteristics; and they could then be recruited for the study through referencing (Bradley, 2010:167; Lamb *et al.*, 2015:165). Lastly, **quota sampling** is used to ensure that the various subgroups in a population are represented on the relevant sample characteristics, to the precise extent that the researcher wants (Zikmund & Babin, 2010:425).

Probability sampling operates on the concept of random selection (Berndt & Petzer, 2011:175). The different methods include: simple random sample, cluster sampling, stratified sampling, systematic sampling and multistage sampling. In a **simple random sample**, each member of the population is assigned a number; and then using a table of random numbers, specific members are selected for inclusion in the sample (McDaniel & Gates, 2010:338).

With simple random sampling, each element or respondent has a known and equal chance of being selected (Cooper & Schindler, 2006:446). **Cluster sampling** occurs when the target population is divided into mutually exclusive and exhaustive subsets; and thereafter, a random sample of one or more subsets is selected (Churchill *et al.*, 2010:342). Three types of cluster sampling can be followed. Firstly, **stage one**, in which the clusters are selected randomly; and the data are then gathered from all the elements in the cluster. Secondly, **stage two** in which the clusters are randomly selected; and the data are gathered from a random sample of the element in the selected cluster.

Lastly, **area sampling**, where geographical clusters are created and a random sample of the elements is selected (Housden, 2007:197). **Stratified samplings** consist of two steps that include: firstly, to group the heterogeneous population into homogeneous strata that are mutually exclusive and comprehensive; and secondly, to use either a random or systematic sampling method to draw members from each of the strata (Berndt & Petzer, 2011:175). In **systematic sampling**, the members are chosen from a complete list of the population; where after a starting

point is selected randomly; and then, every  $n$ th number on the list is chosen for inclusion in the list (Wiid & Diggines, 2015:205).

The last method is a **multistage sample** which is a cluster-sampling approach involving multiple steps that combine some of the probability methods (Zikmund & Babin, 2010:431). The multistage sample consists of the researcher dividing the population into various groups or clusters, and then drawing a representative sample, using a random-selection method (Wiid & Diggines, 2015:205). In this study, a **multistage sample** was used.

In the first step of the multistage sample, a list of the exhibition organisers was obtained from EXSA. The list of expo and trade show organisers is presented in Table 5.1.

**Table 5.1 List of Exhibition Organisers Obtained from EXSA**

Afrimold	Homemakers Fair Port Elizabeth	Professional Exhibition Solutions
Agri Expo	Hypenica	Scan on Show
Complete Exhibitions	IHOP World Ltd.	Specialised Exhibitions Montgomery
Conker Exhibitions	IIR South Africa BV	Spintelligent
Dogan Exhibition and Events Ltd	Ikhono Communications	The Wedding Expo
Event Guru	Impact Exhibitions	Three City Events Ltd.
Expo Trends	Informa UK	Trade Show Training
Exposure Marketing & Communication	Inkanyezi Event Organisers Ltd.	Witch & Wizards
Extra Dimensions 1261 cc	Legendary Events	World Wide Exhibitions Services
Fair consultants SA cc	LTE South Africa	Zimbabwe International Trade Fair Company
Gauteng Homemakers Expo Ltd.	Moshate Media CC	
Homemakers Durban	Practical Publishing	

The second stage determined which of the exhibition organisers on the list obtained from the EXSA arranged trade shows, would be approached. This was done; since it was established that a large number of the exhibition organisers only arrange consumer expos and not trade shows. According to the list provided to the researcher by EXSA of expo and trade-show organisers, there were 23 organisers. In discussions with EXSA, it was established that only 13 of the exhibition organisers arranged trade shows; while eight organisers focus only on consumer expos. The names of the Trade-Show Training group were also excluded; since they are only a training company; and so were the Zimbabwe

International Trade Fair Company; since they arrange trade shows in Zimbabwe only.

The research used stratified sampling at this stage by listing only the exhibition organisers that arrange trade shows. The list of exhibition organisers that arrange trade shows is listed in Table 5.2.

**Table 5.2 Exhibition organisers that arrange trade shows**

Afrimold	IIR South Africa BV	Scan on Show
Agri Expo	Impact Exhibitions	Specialised Exhibitions Montgomery
Dogan Exhibition and Events Ltd	LTE South Africa	Spintelligent
Fair consultants SA cc	Moshate Media CC	
Hypenica	Practical Publishing	

The researcher contacted all 13 trade-show organisers; but only three gave their consent and were willing to participate in the study. In contacting the 13 trade show organisers the researcher pointed out to them the importance of the study for their industry to try and motivate them to participate. A number of trade show organisers did not want to participate. Possible reasons for not participating included: fear of exhibitors being hassled and researcher compiling list of exhibitors, and distributing it to other organisers. From the three trade-show organisers, two gave permission for one trade show each; and the Specialised Exhibitions Montgomery organiser gave permission for two of their trade shows to be used. As indicated, the researcher obtained permission for four trade shows, namely: International Safety and Security (IFSEC) that focuses on the security industry, Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) that focuses on health and safety, Afrimold that deals with the moulding industry, and the Cape Town Industrial trade show that deals with a number of different types of industrial products and services.

In the third and last stage of the sampling method, the researcher distributed questionnaires at each of the trade shows to each of the exhibitor's stands. It must, however, be noted that the researcher did establish that many exhibitors exhibit at more than one trade show, and was careful to avoid duplication in doing the fieldwork. This is discussed in more detail in the next section on sample size.

#### 5.6.1.4 Calculation of the sample size

According to Wiid and Diggins (2015:198), there are a number of generalisations regarding sampling size, including that an increase in sample size means an increase in accuracy. Burns and Bush (2010:401) and Housden (2007:200) agree with Wiid and Diggins (2015:198); and they point out that there is no relationship between sample size and repetition. If the research sample is classified as being homogeneous, the researcher does not need to make use of a large sample to get sufficient data (Tustin *et al.*, 2009:359). In this study, the respondents can be viewed as being homogeneous; since only exhibitors that exhibit at trade shows, and who sell to other businesses, were questioned.

The researcher obtained lists of those exhibitors from the trade-show organisers who gave their consent, and were willing to participate in the study as indicated in Section 5.6.1.3. This limited the access that the researcher had to potential respondents. It was established that there would be 423 exhibitors at the four trade shows. Although two of the trade shows, namely: IFSEC and OSH had a large number of exhibitors, the researcher found that a number of the exhibitors had exhibited at Afrimold as well. The same happened at the Cape Town Industrial trade show; where the exhibitors had already completed the questionnaire at Afrimold, IFSEC or OSH. It was established that 64 of the exhibitors had already exhibited at more than one trade show; and they had, therefore, only completed one questionnaire. This made the sample population much smaller than the researcher expected. A further 118 exhibitors did not give their consent to participate in the study.

In this study the confidence level of 95% is used and all exhibitors that exhibited at the four trade shows was included. Using the law of numbers the sample required for this study would be 217 if there was 500 in the sample (Saunders *et al.*, 2009:213). The sample size is also in line with other trade show studies such as Keswell (2010); Tafesse and Korneliussen (2011); Lee and Kim (2008); Seringhaus and Rosson (2004); Yuksel and Voola (2010); Plouffe *et al.* (2013); Blyth (2002); Smith *et al.* (2004) and Hanchette (2007). The researcher obtained 241 questionnaires; and of these, nine questionnaires were rejected – giving a

total of 232 questionnaires. Therefore, the required number sample size was achieved.

#### **5.6.1.5 Selecting sample elements**

In this step of the sampling process, the researcher must select the specific respondents to be included in the research. This is done to indicate to the fieldworkers who will be included in the research. The fieldworkers were instructed to only hand out the questionnaires to one exhibit staff member at each exhibition. The selected respondents also needed to indicate that they interact with the attendees, while manning the exhibit stand.

The fieldworkers were instructed to each take a row of exhibition stands, and to move down their indicated row, and hand out the questionnaires. This was done to ensure that all the exhibition stands were included in the study. The interviewers were also provided with a list of respondents who had previously completed a questionnaire at previous trade shows – so as to not duplicate the data.

#### **5.6.1.6 Gathering data from designated elements**

In the last step of the sampling process, the researcher gathered the data from respondents. A number of things can happen at this stage, such as unwillingness from the respondents to participate, respondents not being available, interviewers not following procedures, or other sampling-related errors (Wiid & Diggins, 2015:204). The researcher took note of all the possible problems that can happen in this stage; and he placed checks in place to ensure that the interviewers followed their instructions. In this step, the researcher was also available at each of the trade shows, to monitor and assist the fieldworkers. It must be noted that a number of the respondents were unwilling to participate in the study.

If there is a sampling error, it would mean that there is a difference between the results obtained from a sample and the results that a researcher would have gathered – if the whole population had been used (Churchill *et al.*, 2010:330). This can occur when the researcher does not have the right size of sample, or failed to

include the right sample unit (Bradley, 2010:151). Consequently, the researcher in this study made use of the Exhibition and Event Association of Southern Africa (EXSA) official members' list. Furthermore, a clear sampling process was followed in this study, to ensure that no sampling errors occurred. A clear process consisting of six steps, as indicated in Figure 5.3, was applied in this study.

The research method used in this study is discussed in the next section.

## **5.7 RESEARCH METHODS TO COLLECT THE DATA**

After the sampling has been done the next process the researcher needs to consider is the data-collection method that would be used to gather the required information, in order to achieve the objectives of the study. A researcher has to choose between qualitative and quantitative research – taking into consideration the differences between the two methods. Qualitative research can be seen as unstructured research that is exploratory in nature based on a small sample to provide insight. Quantitative research quantifies the data and asks the questions: What? Where? When? How many? and How often? (Malhotra & Birks, 2007:133).

In this study, both qualitative and quantitative data were used. According to Wiid and Diggines (2015:87), the qualitative approach is defined as the collection, analysis, and interpretation of that data that cannot be meaningfully quantified, which are summarised in the form of numbers. Qualitative research reveals the behaviour and perception that influence a target population in regard to a topic or issue (Burns & Bush, 2010:233). Qualitative research also provides a research with insight into the specific behaviours of people. In many research studies, qualitative research is done before quantitative research is undertaken, in order to provide the researchers with a better understanding to the background of the research problem (Berndt & Petzer, 2011:45).

In this study, the researcher conducted the qualitative research by talking to the trade-show organisers, EXSA and the exhibitors, in order to gain a better understanding of the role of selling in trade shows. It must be noted that the interviews were not done in a structured manner; and they were done to guide the

researcher, rather than to provide specific facts. The information gathered with other information sources, such as previous research studies, was used as a guide to assist in the construction of the data-collection instrument that was also used in this study.

Quantitative research makes use of structured questions, in which the response options have been pre-set; and a large number of respondents are involved (Burns & Bush, 2010:235); and where mathematical analysis can be done, which can be used to find the statistically significant differences (McDaniel & Gates, 2010:91). According to Berndt and Petzer (2011:47), quantitative research methods are either descriptive in nature, or can be used to determine the causal relationships between variables. Quantitative research therefore, aims to determine the relations between the independent variable and dependent variable in a population – by means of statistical, mathematical or computational techniques (Wiid & Diggines, 2015:59).

It was indicated that in this study, both primary and secondary data are to be used. The data-collection method used in this study comprised primary data that could be done by means of a survey, observation or experiment (McDaniel & Gates, 2010:72). A **survey** is a method, in which the information is gathered by communicating with a representative sample of people in the population (Wiid & Diggines, 2015:109); while **observation** research, on the other hand, is the process of observing people by using systematically planned and carefully recorded methods (Churchill *et al.*, 2010:223); and lastly, **experimental** research is the process of changing one variable, and then observing whether there is a change in another variable (Bradley, 2010:267).

One of the most popular primary methods used is the survey method, in which the fieldworkers interact with the respondents to gather opinions, attitudes and behaviours. Survey methods include: personal interviews, telephone interviews, mail surveys, internet surveys, executive interviews, mall-intercept interviews and self-administered questionnaires (Wiid & Diggines, 2015:112; McDaniel & Gates, 2010:129). Surveys are mostly done through interviews with a number of respondents – by way of a designed questionnaire (Burns & Bush, 2010:266).

The survey method used for this study was a self-administered questionnaire. Self-administered questionnaires were used; since the respondents were in a central location, where the researcher had access to a captive audience (McDaniel & Gates, 2010:134).

The respondents were all at the trade-show venue, for a specific period of time, in a central location; and the researcher therefore, had access to them. Another reason for making use of a self-administered survey method was that the respondents could complete the questionnaire at their own pace and select the place, and time to complete it (Burns & Bush, 2010:266).

The exhibition organisers requested the researcher not to interfere with the exhibitors; while they were busy with the attendees. A self-administered questionnaire was used to allow the respondents to complete the questionnaire unhindered by the researcher. The questionnaire was dropped off at an exhibition stand, and then later picked-up by the interviewers (Zikmund & Babin, 2010:431). With a self-administered questionnaire, the researcher needed to take great care in designing the questionnaire; since the interviewers were not available to assist the respondents. The design of the self-administered questionnaires was of the utmost importance – to ensure that the correct data were obtained. Next, the questionnaire-design process used in this study is discussed.

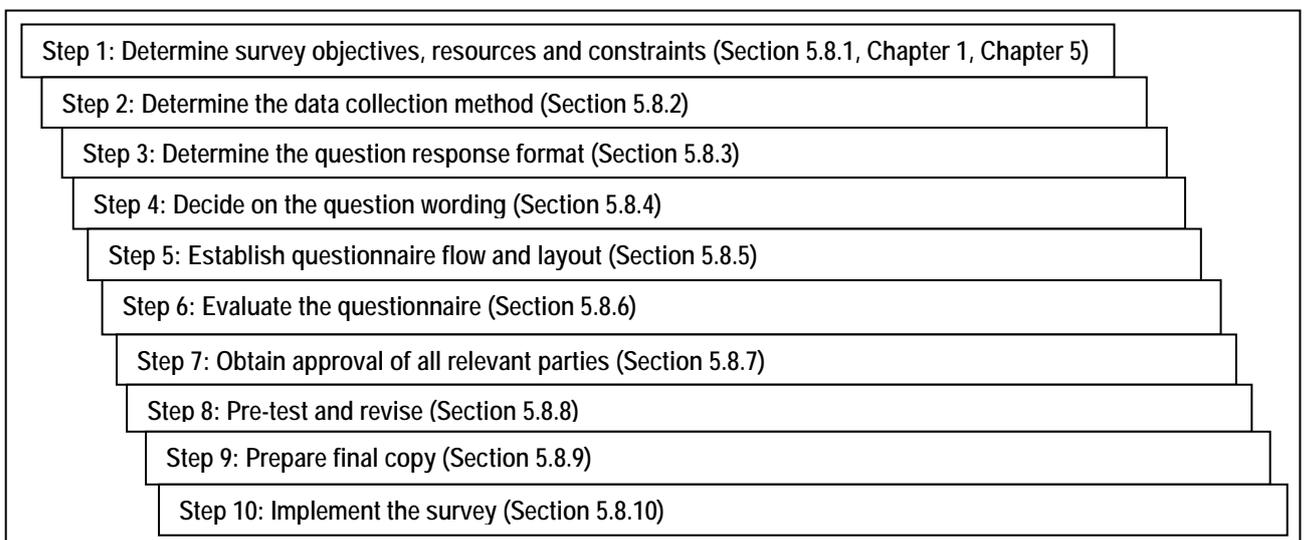
## **5.8 THE QUESTIONNAIRE DESIGN**

Questionnaire design must be done in a constructed manner; since it impacts how the respondents view the questions' meaning; and how they respond to each question (ESOMAR, 2007:85). Questionnaires provide the advantage that all the respondents answer the same questions. A questionnaire can be called a schedule, an interview form, or a measuring instrument; since it comprises a formalised set of questions for obtaining information from the respondents (Malhotra & Birks, 2007:326). A questionnaire is a set of questions that is designed to generate the data necessary for accomplishing the objectives of the research study (McDaniel & Gates, 2010:287).

According to Burns and Bush (2010:330), a questionnaire serves six key functions: namely:

- It converts the research objectives into specific questions that are asked of the respondents;
- It standardises the questions and the response groupings, so that all the respondents react in the same way;
- The wording, question flow, and the appearance of a questionnaire can encourage and motivate the respondents to co-operate during the interview;
- Questionnaires provide a permanent record of the research;
- The type of questionnaire used can speed up the process of the data analysis; and
- The questionnaire contains information on which reliability assessments can be conducted; and the validation of the respondent's participation can be followed up on.

**Figure 5.5 The questionnaire design process**



Source: Adapted from McDaniel and Gates (2010:292)

To make sure that the questionnaire achieves the objectives of the research study, the researcher must make use of a process to construct the questionnaire. The process of constructing the questionnaire must be seen as being just as important as getting the correct sample (Churchill *et al.*, 2010:287). Therefore, in this study, a structured process was used to design the questionnaire, in order to achieve the

objectives of this study. The questionnaire design process, as set out by McDaniel and Gates (2010:292), and illustrated in Figure 5.5, was used for this study.

In this study, a questionnaire design process was followed; since no previous study that focused on the sales process at trade shows and all its stages had been done. The researcher, therefore, made use of the variables obtained from numerous journal articles and discussions with exhibitors. Not a lot of previous tested scales existed for the sales process at trade shows therefore this study was exploratory in nature and is one of the possible limitations of this study. A number of other studies needed to be adapted with literature and discussions with organisers to make it relevant for the South African market. Studies done by Weinrauch, Stephens-Friesen and Carlson (2001:186-188), Guenzi (2001:715) and the scale of the Bureau for Market Research (BMR) was used to assist in setting up the questions relating to the profile of a business. For the main variables of the questionnaire, a study done by Jaramillo and Marshall (2004:9-25) was used. This was done on the critical success factors in the selling process in the banking industry. The afore-mentioned article provided the researcher with a pre-tested set of questions relating to the sales process; although it was somewhat adapted for the purpose of this study.

The researcher also relied on a number of studies that relate to trade shows, in order to guide the construct of the questionnaire on issues relating to pre-show activities (Blyth & Rayner, 1996:20-24; Herbig *et al.*, 1998: 425–435; Hansen 1996:47; Kirchgeorg *et al.*, 2010a:63-72).

### **5.8.1 Survey objectives, resources and constraints**

The objectives of this study were stated in this chapter in Section 5.4 and also in Chapter 1. The research objectives guided the research in determining, which questions should be used in the questionnaire. A number of resource constraints were experienced in the study. Travel, printing costs for the questionnaires, and payment of the field workers had to be accounted for. Travelling to Cape Town to gather data from the Cape Town Industrial trade show, and the transport of fieldworkers, were some of the resource issues that had to be considered in this

study. The cost per questionnaire was extremely high due to the afore-mentioned expenses.

### **5.8.2 Determining the data-collection method**

In this study, survey research was used, with a self-administered questionnaire. In selecting a self-administrated questionnaire, the researcher looked at a number of different issues relating to the selection; since this impacted the rest of the design process (Wiid & Diggins, 2015:115; McDaniel & Gates, 2010:293). The main reason for the selection of self-administered questionnaires was the nature of trade shows. In discussions the researcher had with both the organisers and the exhibitors, it came to light that the exhibitors had no control on when attendees would visit their exhibit stands. It was pointed out to the researcher that exhibit staff would be able and more willing to complete the questionnaires if they could do so on their own time at the trade show.

The format of the questionnaire was important; since it was a self-administered questionnaire. The questionnaire in this study consisted of a number of different types of questions.

### **5.8.3 Determining the question-response format**

A researcher must carefully select the format of the questionnaire, so as to limit response-order bias. Response-order bias is an error that arises when the response to questions is influenced by the order in which they are asked (Brown & Suter, 2013:102). In this study, the questionnaire response format was especially important due to the self-administered questionnaire. This meant that the researcher was not present to assist the respondents; while they completed the questionnaire.

Two basic types of questions can be used in setting up a questionnaire: an open-ended or a fixed-alternative, also known as a closed-ended question (Churchill & Iacobucci, 2005:242). Open-ended questions state a specific problem; and the respondent then answers in his or her own words. While closed-ended questions

provide a specific, limited-alternative response; and they are asked to provide the one closest to their own viewpoint (Zikmund & Babin, 2010:370). For the purpose of this study, the researcher only made use of closed-ended questions; since a self-administered questionnaire was selected. After the types of questions; the construction of each section of the questionnaire is discussed.

According to McDaniel and Gates (2010: 297-300), the following closed-ended questions can be used by a researcher: dichotomous, multiple-choice or scaled questions. Each of the different closed-ended questions used in this study is discussed.

- **Dichotomous questions**

The respondent is asked to choose between two answers. The wording is important, in order to ensure an accurate response. The main advantage of dichotomous questions is that they are easy to administer and tabulate; and furthermore, they generally evoke a rapid response.

Example: Are you employed as a sales person?:

Yes	1	
No	2	V23

- **Multiple-choice questions**

The respondent is requested to choose among several answers. Two types of multiple-choice questions can be applied: either a single, or a multiple-answer question.

**Multiple-choice questions with single answers:** the respondents are asked to give one alternative that correctly expresses their opinion, or to indicate the alternative that applies to that particular respondent.

Example: Highest educational qualification:

No schooling	1	
Matric (Grade 12)	2	
Artisan's certificate obtained	3	
Tertiary – Certificate/Diploma	4	
Tertiary – Degree	5	V26

**Multiple-choice questions with multiple answers:** the respondent is asked to provide more than one alternative that best conforms to his or her opinion.

Example: Is your business operating on a regional, national or international level? [ **Multiple answers allowed**]:

Local/Regional (clients are located within your metro area)	1	
National (have clients on a national level)	2	
International (have clients on an international level)	3	V12

- **Scaled-response questions**

With scaled-response questions, the response choices are designed to capture the intensity of the respondent's feelings. In this study, scaled questions were used extensively. A five-point **Likert scale** was used in the study to measure the strength of agreement or the frequency towards one or more clearly worded statements.

Example:

Dimension: The following statements are aimed to determine sales presentation activities at the trade show exhibit stand

Please indicate the frequency applicable to the statements below using the five point scale 1 (Never), 5 (Always) by marking the number of your choice with an X on the scale.

*Example of the scale*

Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
1	2	3	4	5

1. I introduce myself to start the sales presentation	1	2	3	4	5	V16.1
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**Section A** of the questionnaire consisted of the demographic profile of the exhibitor's business and exhibit information. Both multiple-choice questions with single and multiple answers were used to obtain the information. The scales of profiling exhibitors and businesses from the research of Weinrauch *et al.* (2001:186-188), Guenzi (2001:715) and the Bureau of Market Research (BMR), from the University of South Africa, were used. The scales from the BMR were used for determining the economic sector that the exhibitor operates in, their main business activities and business structure. Keswell's (2010:76) scale was used for the number of exhibits the business exhibited at and position of respondents in the business. The researcher added questions after discussions with Mr. Corin (2009)

such as the number of product, turn-over and how many staff members participate in the trade show.

**Sections B**, of the questionnaire dealt with business actions in regards to trade shows. Business actions include elements, such as: marketing; the setting of objectives; evaluation and planning; staff at trade shows; training of exhibit staff, the introduction of products, and the measurement of success. Here the scales of Hanchett (2007:146-150) was used pertaining to exhibit staff and objectives. Furthermore, Seringhaus and Rosson (2004:164) scales for communication used to attract attendees, staff training, prospecting and exhibit service were used. Ling-yee (2007:378) questions on trade shows performance was used for different objectives. Questions on pre-show sales activities was added after decisions with Corin (2009).

**Section C** of the questionnaire the pre-show marketing activities used to attract attendees to a trade show. Seringhaus and Rosson (2004:164), and Hanchett (2007:146-150) questions on the different methods used to invite attendees such as mass media, personal interview and the different types of business media was used.

**Section D** focused on the marketing activities used to attract attended to the exhibit stand at the show. Hanchett (2007:146-150) questions pertaining to attracting attendees to the exhibit stand was mainly utilised while Herbig and O'Hara (1998:431) was consulted to construct the questions on the use of social activities by exhibitors.

**Sections E, F, G and I** obtained information on the use of the sales process in regard to the sales presentation, the type of objections, dealing with objections, and closing the sale. Scaled questions were used to measure the respondents' level of agreement or frequency regarding specific stages in the sales process. Here, the scales of Jaramillo and Marshall (2004:9-25) were used extensively; and only a minor adjustment was made to change the focus on the selling process for trade shows. Furthermore, Ling-yee (2008:41), Tanner (2002:234) and Hansen (2004:11) was used to construct questions related to what is done during the

presentation and closing the sale. A number of the before mentioned authors refer to the closing and getting sales leads therefore, questions was asked in this regard. A number of questions were also constructed by the researcher based on the discussions with Mr. Corin from specialised exhibitions. Questions on the use of technology during the presentation, dealing with objections and close was added since it play an important role in trade show sales.

For section G of the questionnaire a number of questions was adapted since the terminology from this section of Jaramillo and Marshall (2004:9-25) might have not been familiar to South African sales persons. Wording such as non-disputing method was replaced with simpler terminology such as 'direct denial'. Section I was also expanded to include not only the closing methods of Jaramillo and Marshall (2004:9-25) since their study focused only on the selling of banking products, while at trade shows a much wider variety of products is being offered to attendees. Questions reflecting negotiations or leaving the close of the deal for after the trade show was also added as to reflect the current practices in industry.

In this study, a number of questions was used and adapted from the aforementioned authors – due to the limited number of studies that deal with the sales process (vide Section 4.6). The changes made to the questions were done after consultation with the industry experts and a statistician. This was done to make it applicable for obtaining the data required for this study.

Lastly, in **section J**, multiple-choice questions were asked to obtain the demographic profile exhibit staff. In this section, the researcher made use of scales developed by Weinrauch *et al.* (2001:186-188) and Guenzi (2001:715) as well as more general questions related to the position (sales vs non-sales) and the age of the respondents.

#### **5.8.4 Deciding on the question wording**

The wording of questions is a critical step in the questionnaire design; since it must be done in such a manner that the respondent can clearly and easily understand it (Malhotra & Birks, 2007:338). It must be noted that better-worded

questions give the respondents the opportunity to respond in degrees, such as: never, rarely, sometimes, often and always. This makes the questions more consistent with the respondent's actual deliberations or actions, rather than any the absolute versions (Burns & Bush, 2010:333). Zikmund and Babin (2010:373) point out that the type of data-collection method would influence the wording format and phrasing in a questionnaire. As indicated in this study, a self-administered questionnaire was used; and the interviewers not present to explain any questions or concepts to the respondents. The researcher followed guidelines to ensure that the respondents would be able to answer all the questions in the questionnaire.

Wiid and Diggines (2015:169) provide guidelines in formulating questions:

- Use simple words that are familiar to the respondents;
- Avoid ambiguous words and questions;
- Do not use leading questions that indicate the answer;
- Avoid presumptions and assumptions;
- Keep away from using generalisations;
- Avoid double-barrelled questions that ask two questions at the same time;
- Avoid any questions that the respondent might find awkward.

The guidelines, as stated, in wording questions were followed by the researcher to ensure that exhibit staff, could answer all the questions that were asked in the questionnaire. The data-collection method also influences the structure of the questionnaire.

#### **5.8.5 Establishing the questionnaire flow and layout**

According to Churchill *et al.* (2010:306), the order in which questions are presented can be crucial to the success of the research study. The layout is important; since the arrangement of the questions and the ease with which the respondents can complete the questions could have the potential to affect the quality of the information gathered (Burns & Bush, 2010:341). In this study, the questionnaire started with a covering letter that informed the respondent on the

purpose of the research; and what the data that would be used for. As part of the covering letter, the respondent also provided his/her consent to participate in the study. Any self-administered survey qualifies for anonymity, provided the respondent does not reveal his/her identity (Burns & Bush, 2010:343). To motivate the respondents to complete the questionnaire honestly; it was indicated in the covering letter that the respondents would not be identified.

Easy-to-answer questions and positive questions should be placed at the beginning of a questionnaire – to motivate the respondents to complete the questions (Ghuri & Grønhaug, 2010:125). **Section A** of the questionnaire dealt with the business profiles of the exhibitors and exhibit information; these questions were placed first, to motivate the respondents to complete the questions; since they were short and easy to answer. Thereafter, in **section B**, more in-depth questions were asked. These sections consisted of a banner stating what the respondent would be questioned on in each section, and an example of the scale that would be used. An example of the scale was provided to make it easier for the respondent to complete the questions within the section.

In **section J**, the demographic questions of the exhibit staff were asked.

As part of the layout, the researcher made sure that the questionnaire was presentable by ensuring that it looked neat and professional (Berndt & Petzer, 2011:47). The researcher, therefore, looked at the font size, the table layout, and how the different sections had been laid out in the questionnaire. In this study, the questionnaire was printed on white paper; and black ink was used – to make it easy for the respondents to read the questions (Bradley, 2010:210).

#### **5.8.6 Evaluating the questionnaire**

After the completion of the initial questionnaire, the researcher must re-examine each question, and pay specific attention to the questions' content, phrasing, the required answer, and the logical flow of the questions (Wiid & Diggins, 2015:171). The researcher took a critical look at the questionnaire on completion. The researcher consulted a statistician, a trade-show exhibitor and EXSA to help with

the evaluation of the questionnaire. McDaniel and Gates (2010:309) state that a researcher needs to answer the following question, when evaluating the questionnaire:

- Is the question necessary? The researcher, statistician, trade-show organiser and EXSA evaluated each question and statement to determine whether it would benefit the trade-show industry and the academic environment. It was ensured that each of the statements and questions in the questionnaire served a purpose in the study.
- Is the questionnaire too long? In this study, a self-administered questionnaire was used; and it was established that it takes about 15 minutes to complete. This was important to establish; since the researcher needed to indicate to the respondents how much time it would take to complete the questionnaire. It was established that 15 minutes would be an acceptable time in which to complete the questionnaire.
- Would the questions provide the information needed to attain the research objectives? To establish this, each objective was written next to each question; and then the statements were positioned for each specific question section of the study. The purpose of doing this was to establish whether the questions and statements were in line the objectives of the study (see Table 5.3). A number of questions were removed; and three additional questions were added.

**Table 5.3 Study objectives related to sections, questions and statements used in the questionnaire**

Research objectives set for the study	Sections and questions or statements used in questionnaire
Determine the profile of exhibitors at trade shows and exhibit staff.	<p style="text-align: center;">Section A</p> Q 1 - Type of trade show Q 2 - What is your position in the business Q 3 - Years of service at business Q 4 - Which do you regards as the economic sector that your business operates in. Q 5 - Please tell me what your business activities are. Q 6 - Business entity. Q 7 - Number of products or service lines exhibited. Q 8 - Number of exhibit staff that will be working during the full duration of the show Q 9 - Number of exhibit staff that will be working per session for the duration of the show Q 10 - Estimated annual turnover for the past financial year Q 11 - How many times did your business exhibit at trade shows in the last three years including this show Q 12 - Is your business operating in a regional, national or international level

**Table 5.3 continue...**

Research objectives set for the study	Sections and questions or statements used in questionnaire
	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Section J</b></p> <p>Q 21 – Gender Q 22 – Indicate the department you work in Q 23 – Are you employed as a sales person Q 24 – Age of respondent Q 25 – Highest educational qualification</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To determine if sub-stages exist within each of the stages of the sales process at trade shows.</li> <li>• To determine if sales persons and non-sales persons differ regarding the sales process followed at trade shows.</li> <li>• To determine if the various types of trade shows influence the sales process.</li> <li>• To determine if the type of business operations of an exhibitor influence the sales process followed at trade shows.</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Section B</b></p> <p>Q 13.1 Our business have written financial objectives for the trade show Q 13.2 Our business have written promotional objectives for the trade show Q 13.3 Our business have written sales objectives for the trade show Q 13.4 Our business exhibit at trade shows to get sales Q 13.5 Our business planned before the trade show to exhibit to specific target customers Q 13.6 Our business measures success at the trade show in terms of financial gains Q 13.7 Our business measure trade show success by the number of new prospects Q 13.8 Non-financial aspects are used to measure trade show success Q 13.9 Our business use trade shows to introduce new products Q 13.10 Trade shows are used to as a platform to test new product concepts Q 13.11 Trade shows provide our business with information on my industry Q 13.12 Trade shows are used to maintain contact with existing customers Q 13.13 Trade shows are applied to develop new customer contacts Q 13.14 Trade shows are used to get a competitive advantage over non-exhibiting competitors Q 13.15 Trade shows are applied to enhance the business image Q 13.16 Trade shows assist our business with other marketing communication functions Q 13.17 Trade shows assist our business in the training of staff Q 13.18 Trade shows assist our business to motivate staff Q 13.19 Our business has a tracking system to keep information on attendees that visited our exhibit stand</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Section C</b></p> <p>Q 14.1 Invitations to attend the trade show are personally delivered to customers Q 14.2 Our business apply electronic communication e.g. internet, e-mail to inform customer about a trade show Q 14.3 I personally invite customers to a trade show Q 14.4 Our business apply electronic communication e.g. internet, e-mail to inform customer about a trade show Q 14.5 Sending direct mail gets attendees to visit a trade show Q 14.6 Our business provide customers with free entry vouchers to attract them to trade shows</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Section D</b></p> <p>Q 15.1 Our business use video screens to attract attendees to our exhibit stand Q 15.2 Our business hand out free promotional material to attendees to attract them to our exhibit stand Q 15.3 Our business use competitions to attract attendees to our exhibit stand Q 15.4 Our booth staff move around the trade show to attract attendees Q 15.5 Our business co-sponsor coffee courts, luncheons etc. to attract attendees to our exhibit stand Q 15.6 Our exhibit staff invite attendees at social activities (luncheons, gala diners etc.) at the trade show to visit our exhibit stand</p>

**Table 5.3 continue...**

Research objectives set for the study	Sections and questions or statements used in questionnaire
	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Section E</b></p> <p>Q 16. 1 I use a benefit of the product or service to start the sales presentation            Q 16.2 I start the sales presentation with a statement            Q 16.3 I use a compliment to start the sales presentation            Q 16. 4 I start the sales presentation by asking questions to the attendees            Q 16. 5 I express an opinion to begin the sales presentation            Q 16. 6 I use a memorised sales presentation at the trade show            Q 16 7 I use a sales presentation that follows a general outline to determine attendees' needs            Q 16.8 I start the sales presentation with questions to determine attendees' needs            Q 16. 9 I use an in-depth analysis of attendees' needs during the sales presentation            Q 16.10 I use the group sales presentations            Q 16.11 I ask questions during the sales presentation to establish the customers' interest in the product/service            Q 16.12 I use product/service demonstrations during the sales presentation            Q 16.13 I use information technology (e.g. a computer, tablet, PDA etc.) to demonstrate the product/service features            Q 16. 14 I keep a note of the attendees' interest in the product/service during the sales presentation            Q 16.15I keep a record of attendee's names that visit our exhibit stand</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Section F</b></p> <p>Q 17.1 Attendees do not openly state reasons for not being interested in the product/service            Q 17.2 Attendees stall decision-making at trade shows            Q 17.3 Attendees indicate that they do not need the product/service, as a way to stop the sales presentation            Q 17.4 Money objections occur during the sales presentation            Q 17.5 Product/service related objections occur during the sales presentation            Q 17.6 Objections about our business occur during the sales presentation</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Section G</b></p> <p>Q18.1 I deal with an objection by directly denying it            Q 18.2 I deal with objections by indirectly denying it            Q 18.3 If there is an objection I let it go and continue with the sales presentation            Q 18.4 I compensate with another benefit of the product/service to overcome an objection during the sales presentation            Q 18.5 I use a disadvantage of my product/service as an advantage to overcome the objections            Q 18.6 If there is an objection, I let another staff member present, answer it</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Section I</b></p> <p>Q 20.1 I ask directly for a sale during the sales presentation            Q 20.2 I list the benefits of the product/service to close the sales presentation            Q 20.3 I list the advantages of the product against the disadvantages to close the sale            Q 20.4 Once I assume a customer will buy I start closing the sales presentation            Q 20.5 I provide the attendee with two options regarding the product/service and then close the sales presentation            Q 20.6 I close the sales presentation on a minor point            Q 20.7I compliment the attendee and close the sales presentation            Q 20.8 I get the attendee to say yes all the time and then close the sales presentation            Q 20.9 I indicate to the attendee to act now otherwise something in the sale will change (e.g. price, availability) to close the sales presentation            Q 20.10 I use the negotiations to close the sales presentation</p>

In evaluating a questionnaire there needs to be looked at the validity of the measuring instrument. Validity is the extent to which differences in observed scale scores reflect true differences among objects on the characteristics being measured rather than systematic or random error (Malhotra, 2007:226). There are three ways to establish validity: face, criterion and construct validity. Face validity is when professionals agree that a scale logical reflects the concept being measured. In this study the questionnaire was evaluated by the researcher, promoter, statistician and the trade show organisers and governing body. Criterion validity deals with the degree to which a measurement instrument can predict a variable that is designated a criterion. In this study criterion validity was important since the study was explorative in nature and a combination of literature was used to construct the questionnaire. Construct validity exist when a measure reliably measures and truthfully represent a unique concept. In this study there need to be looked at how the construct of the stages of the sales process at trade shows are related to one another (McDaniel & Gates, 2010:255-256; Zikmund & Babin, 2010:335-336).

Reliability is the degree to which the measure is free from random error and therefore provides consistent data. To have reliability there must be consistency in the measuring instrument (McDaniel & Gates, 2010:251). To determine the reliability of constructs the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient technique can be used and is discussed in this chapter.

### **5.8.7 Obtaining the approval of all the relevant parties**

Once the questionnaire had been evaluated, copies were distributed to all parties that had any direct authority over the project (McDaniel & Gates, 2010:310). Firstly, ethical clearance was obtained from the University of Pretoria. Secondly, permission was obtained from EXSA to approach the different members of trade-show organisers to assist the researcher. Thirdly, permission was obtained from the trade-show organisers for the researcher to distribute the questionnaires to the different exhibition stands at their trade shows. Lastly, informed consent was obtained from each of the respondents at the exhibit stands. It must be noted that the researcher did not make use of any incentives in this study.

Once approval had been received from all the parties involved, the researcher proceeded to continue to pre-test the questionnaire.

#### **5.8.8 Pre-testing and revision**

According to Churchill *et al.* (2010:311), a pre-test is when the questionnaire is used on a trial basis in a small pilot study, in order to determine how well the questionnaire works. The pilot test would also provide answers on the validity and reliability of the data that would be collected (Saunders *et al.*, 2009:394). The questionnaire was pre-tested before any actual fieldwork started on the study.

Once the questionnaire was constructed it was discussed with Specialised Exhibitions and Exhibition Association of Southern Africa (EXSA) to provide inputs before the pilot study was done. Permission was obtained by the researcher to pre-test the questionnaire at Afrimold; where the exhibit staff at the exhibit completed the questionnaire. The Afrimold trade show was chosen, because of its small size; and so that the researcher would have access to most of the respondents.

At the trade show, the researcher was able to obtain 42 completed questionnaires. A factor analysis and a Cronbach`s alpha were done after the data had been collected, in order to test the reliability and validity of the data. The tests indicated that the questionnaire was valid and reliable; and that it was ready for the final copy. At the end of this study in Appendix E, the pilot study is discussed in more detail.

#### **5.8.9 Preparing final copies of the questionnaire**

McDaniel and Gates (2010:310) point out that in preparing final copies, the skip patterns, numbering and pre-coding must be done; and the results must be proofread. In this study, the questionnaire, that included the cover lettering, was proofread; before it was sent for printing. A language editor and a statistician approved the questionnaire by looking at the typing, the numbering, the pre-coding and the covering letter.

### 5.8.10 Implementing the survey

In the final stage, the researcher has to make use of the constructed questionnaire to gain access to the sample and get an optimal response rate (Saunders *et al.*, 2009:395). For the purpose of this study, the researcher made use of fieldworkers to assist in gathering the necessary data.

Berndt and Petzer (2011:206) indicate that the data-collection process consists of five steps; and in this study, such a process was followed. In the first step, the researcher selected the fieldworkers to assist in the data collection. The researcher selected two part-time lecturers and a student assistant to assist with the data gathering. This was done; since they had already assisted another doctoral student, and had the correct attributes. Secondly, the field workers were trained by the researcher on how to approach and qualify the respondents for the study. The fieldworkers were already knowledgeable – due to their participation in previous studies.

Thirdly, the supervision was done by the researcher himself who did the quality control, the provisional editing and the sampling control. Fourthly, the validation of the fieldwork was done to ensure that the correct procedures had been followed and the completeness of the questionnaires was checked. Lastly, the evaluation of the fieldworkers was done.

The function of the fieldworkers was to approach each exhibit stand, and drop off one questionnaire at each. The fieldworkers qualified the respondents by only giving questionnaires to exhibit staff that manned the exhibit; and they had not completed the questionnaire at another trade show. The respondents were asked to complete the questionnaire; and it was indicated that it would be collected at the end of the day.

If the respondents did not complete the questionnaire, they were once again asked to complete it; and they were told that it would be collected the next day. On the last day of the trade show, the fieldworkers made three attempts throughout the day to get the questionnaires from the exhibit staff. If the exhibit staff that had not

completed the questionnaire, this was regarded as a refusal to participate in the study.

Once the completed questionnaires were received, the next step was to edit the questionnaires.

## **5.9 EDITING, CODING, DATA-CAPTURING**

### **5.9.1 Editing**

Editing involves the inspection of the questionnaires, and if needed, the correction thereof. This process is done to ensure that the answers are complete, accurate and suitable for further processing (Bradley, 2010:314). Editing is done in two stages: in the field edit, and in the central-office edit (Churchill *et al.*, 2010:401). In this study, the fieldworkers checked each questionnaire, as it was collected at each of the exhibit stands from the respondents. The fieldworkers checked that there were no omissions in the questionnaire, and that the respondents had filled in all the required questions. Central-office editing was done by the researcher who checked each of the questionnaires; this was done once again before the data were captured for correctness and completion.

The researcher could take specific action if questionnaires had not been completed. They could be returned to the field, assigned missing values, or the questionnaire could be discarded (Malhotra & Birks, 2007:423). In this study, the researcher could not return the questionnaire; since the researcher did not record any personal contact data of the respondents – in order to maintain confidentiality. Where the researcher did find that the respondents left out one or two questions, the average of the other respondents' answers was used to assign a value. The researcher discarded nine questionnaires; but this was not due to incompleteness; but it was clear that the respondents had not taken the research seriously.

Ghuri and Grønhaug (2010:150) point out that if respondents only chose one option per answer right through the questionnaire; then this is an indication that they did not take it seriously. Nine of the questionnaires were discarded for this

reason – where the respondents only chose one response continuously. Once the editing of the questionnaires had been done; the coding was considered to be complete.

### **5.9.2 Coding**

According to McDaniel and Gates (2010:388), coding is the process of grouping and assigning numeric codes to the various codes for the different responses to the questions. The process of categorising, recording and transferring the data to a data-storage medium is named coding (Arora & Mahankale, 2013:15). In this study, only closed-ended questions were used; and this made the process of coding easier than with open-ended question. To facilitate the process of statistical analysis and the data capturing, the researcher made use of numbers to code the questions (Ghuri & Grønhaug, 2010:151). In this study, the questions that only had one possible answer; for example, gender only received one code number; while those questions that had more than one answer received more than one code (Churchill *et al.*, 2010:403).

A researcher had two options in doing the coding; it could be done either before the time, or after the questionnaire had been completed. Pre-coding is the process of assigning predetermined categories, into which the answers must be placed, when the questionnaire is designed (Wiid & Diggines, 2015:223). In this study, pre-coding was done; since the questionnaire consisted of closed-ended, multiple-choice and scaled questions; where the answers could be anticipated by the researcher. Pre-coding meant that the researcher did not need to set-up a code book to capture the data in the computer file. Due to the afore-mentioned data, which were directly available from the questionnaire; this saved time and money; while also limiting the chances of making any coding errors.

### **5.9.3 Data capturing**

Data capturing is the process of creating a computer file that holds the raw data taken from all of the questionnaires judged suitable for analysis (Burns & Bush, 2010:459). For the purpose of this study, a spreadsheet was created, using

Microsoft Excel. The data were entered directly into MS Excel by the researcher of the study. All the questionnaire data were entered by the researcher to provide a better understanding of the data, and the possible statistical analysis that would be done. Once the data had been entered into the MS Excel spreadsheet, the researcher checked them again to ensure that there were no missing codes (Zikmund & Babin, 2010:503). If any codes were found to be missing, the researcher went back to the original questionnaire to correct any problems. Once the data had been gathered, the statistical analysis was done.

## 5.10 STATISTICAL PROCEDURES AND TECHNIQUES

In the study, both descriptive and inferential statistics are/were/used to either confirm or reject the hypotheses formulated for the study; therefore, the analysis of the data utilised a multi-step approach. Firstly, descriptive statistics were done that included calculation of the means, the standard deviation and frequency. In Chapter 6, the relevant results are presented in the form of graphs and summary tables. In the second step of the analysis, more advanced statistical techniques were employed, starting with an exploratory factor analysis, as a data-reduction method and as a reliability analysis to establish the internal consistency and the reliability.

As stated before, the descriptive statistics used the means, the standard deviation and the frequency to represent the data. The **mean** is a common measure of central tendency (Zikmund 2003:447); and it is the number obtained by adding together all the elements in a set, and then dividing them by the number of elements (Bluman, 2004:98). The mean will be used to measure the central tendency; because a Likert scale was used in the questionnaires to gather the required data; and the mean fits the purpose of measuring the central distribution of levels used on the scale regarding the statements. The **standard deviation** is a quantitative index of a distribution's spread (Zikmund, 2003:452); and it is the positive square root of the variance (Howell, 2010: 79). It is basically a measure of the average of the deviations of each score from the mean.

The **frequency** distribution is a summary of how many times each possible question in a scale was recorded by the entire group of respondents (Hair *et al.*, 2000:394); and it entails the construction of a table that shows in absolute and relative terms how often the different values of the variable are encountered in the sample (Tusten *et al.*, 2005:523). The key results can be presented efficiently through graphs (McDaniel & Gates, 2005:431). In this study, the exhibitor's profile and the demographic information of the respondents will be presented in the graphics and tables in Chapter 6.

In the second phase of the study, an inferential statistical analysis was done. Inferential statistics allow the researcher to make claims about a population based on a sample of the data from that population (Donnelly, 2007:6). The process of inferential statistics is to generalise the sample results to the population results. Burns and Bush (2010:495) state that the statistical inference provides steps for estimating the population parameter, based on the evidence of the sample statistics, and taking into account the sample error, based on the sample size. In this study, the hypotheses were formulated to make inferences about the population; and consequently, inferential statistics were used (Tustin *et al.*, 2009:584). The first analysis done was a factor analysis.

The first analysis conducted was a factor analysis to establish whether the variables developed from the literature review and from the preliminary qualitative research could, in fact, be grouped into meaningful factors at each stage in the sales process for trade shows. According to Hair *et al.*, (2010:94) the purpose of a factor analysis is to define underlying structure among variables in the analysis. A factor analysis allows a researcher to reduce a large set of scaled items down a manageable number of factors (Pallant, 2013:104). Therefore, a factor analysis is a method for finding relationships in multivariate data – with the intention of reducing the factors – without the loss of any information. A factor analysis uses the multi-variability between items to derive a new set of independent construct measures, which can account for some of the variability found in the original set of items (Hair *et al.*, 1998:95-96).

Before a factor analysis was done the suitability of the data for a factor analysis needed to be assessed. The ideal sample size is more than a 150, therefore the sample size of 232 was deemed sufficient (Pallant, 2013:187). The Bartlett's test was used to test overall significance of all correlation within the correlation matrix. Bartlett's test is used to evaluate all factors and each of the factors is evaluated separately against the hypothesis that there are no factors. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling will be used to determine if the patterns of correlations are relatively compact and that the factor analysis will yield distinct and reliable factors (Field & Miles, 2010:560). The closer to 1 the KMO is the more suitable the data is for factor analysis although it should at least be more than 0.6 (Pallant, 2013:187).

According to Hair *et al.*, (2010:117), factor loadings of 0.3 is acceptable. In this study therefore factor loadings of 0.3 will be considered part of the group variables and those less than 0.3 will be omitted. It must however be noted that factor loadings do depend on sample size. The higher the sample size the more reliable the correlation will be (Field & Miles, 2010:557). The cut-off of variable loading can be determined by homogeneity of scores where, if homogeneity is suspected, interpretation of lower loading is warranted (Tabachnick & Fidel, 2013:625).

Eigenvalues for the factor are equal to the sum of squared loadings for all variables on that factor. The first factor usually load the highest eigenvalue followed by the second factor with the second highest. Eigenvalues are a measure of the percentage of variance in the variable contained in a factor that is explained by the factor. The sum of the eigenvalues is a representation of the total amount of variance to be explained by the analysis and the ratio of each of the eigenvalues to the sum indicates the percentage of variance explained by the relevant factor. Hair *et al.*, (2010:109) state that factors with a eigenvalue larger than 1 is kept while those that is lower than 1 are seen as explaining less than one variables worth of variance.

Factors are dealt with as new variables representing combinations of original variable therefore the value of each are calculated and are known as a factor score. In certain cases item will be discarded if: there are low communality

estimated within a chosen factor grouping, variables load strongly on more than one factor and there is poor internal consistency among the variables in terms of Cronbach's alpha (Hair *et al.*, 2010:119)

In this study Principal Axis factoring was done to determine latent factors represented in the variables. In Principal Axis factoring the first factor extracted produces the highest correlation between the variables and the factor. The remaining factors are extracted using remaining matrices that have been adjusted to account for variance of the factors that have already been isolated. The first factor therefore account for the greatest amount of variance amongst variables (Malhotra *et al.*, 2012:782; Hair *et al.*, 2010:16). The rotation of the factors attempts to ensure that all variables have high loadings on only one factor. In this study a varimax rotation was used to ensure that each factor has a small number of large loadings and a large number of small loadings. This simplifies the interpretation because, after a varimax rotation, each original variable tends to be associated with a small number of factors, and each factor represents only a small number of variables. In addition, the factors can often be interpreted from the opposition of few variables with positive loadings to few variables with negative loadings (Lewis-Beck, Bryman & Futing, 2003:978-982)

Cronbach's Alpha coefficient is a technique of taking the average of all possible split-half coefficients, to measure the internal consistency of multidimensional or summated scales. If a researcher makes use of summated scale, it should be analysed for reliability, to ensure its appropriateness. Scale reliability is the extent to which a scale can produce the same measurement results in repeated trials (DeVellis, 2012:28-29; Hair *et al.*, 2000: 390-391). Reliability analysis measures the extent to which a scale produces consistent results; if repeated measurements are made on a characteristic (Malhotra, 2015:227). Cronbach's alpha coefficient is the measurement of reliability that ranges from 0 to 1, with values of 0.6 to 0.7 deemed to be the lower limit of acceptability (Hair *et al.*, 1998: 118). Pallant (2013:100), however, points out that values above 0.7 are acceptable; while values above 0.8 are preferable.

In this study, a Likert scale was used in the questionnaire to gather the required information; and therefore, the reliability of the scales was tested. In **Chapter 6**, the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient values will be reported as part of the factor analysis.

T-tests were used to provide the inferences for making statements on the means of the parent population (Malhotra & Birks, 2003:469). The independent t-test is, therefore, used to establish whether two groups differ on some characteristics assessed on a continuous measure (Churchill *et al.*, 2010:460). In this study, the independent t-test is used to compare the mean scores of two groups of exhibit staff, namely: sales and non-sales persons (Pallant, 2013:239). ). For the t-test, five assumptions must be met namely level of measurement, random sampling, independence of observations, normal distribution and homogeneity of variance (Howell, 2010:180-181; Robert & Russo, 1999:70-73). If the assumptions are not met, the no-parametric alternative Mann-Withney test is used.

Secondly, one-way ANOVA's were done that tested the r samples from two or more groups come from populations with equal means (Wiid & Diggines, 2015:277). The ANOVA is an extension of the t-test that enables a researcher to compare the means that result from three or more groups (Churchill & Iacobucci, 2005:467). An ANOVA analysis is, therefore, a variance test; and the F statistic represents the differences (Saunders *et al.*, 2009:458). The ANOVA is also a hypothesis-testing technique to determine whether statistically significant differences in means occur between two or more groups (Zikmund & Babin, 2010:573). To ensure a sufficient sample size for the t test and ANOVA, the research also did an eta squared and Cohen's d analysis. For the researcher to use the ANOVA specific assumptions need to be addressed; the level measurement for the dependent variable was used, random sampling was used, the observations was independent, the population sample was normally distributed and there was homogeneity of variance (Hair, *et al.*, 2010:348-349; Pallant, 2013:205-207, Malhotra *et al.*, 2012:675).

MANOVA testing was also done. The statistical test used for the afore-mentioned hypotheses was the MANOVA, which assesses the differences between groups

collectively rather than individually, using univariate tests. The objective of MANOVA is to test for differences in the mean values of several dependent variables. A MANOVA test has to have three assumptions, which need to be met, namely: the observation must be independent; the dependent variables must follow a multivariate normal distribution; and the variance covariance matrices must be equal for all the treatment groups (Hair *et al.*, 2010:347).

For some questions a MANOVA was performed instead of a ANOVA. Although the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity indicated that the data is suitable for factor analysis, on the Eigenvalues some factors only had one item. Through further inspection of the screen plot it was also evident that there were some sections or stages that only had one or highly two factors that loaded. This is likely due to the use of a Principal axis factor analysis and therefore it was decided to make use of an MANOVA. The Wilks' Lambda was used to test the significance differences. If there is a significant difference, the null hypothesis is rejected; and if there is not, then the null hypothesis is accepted (Pallant, 2013:294). Once the Wilks' Lambda results find a significant difference, a Scheffè *post hoc* test was done to determine whether there were more specific differences between the groups on each of the identified variables.

In this study, parametric statistics were used to test for any significant differences. Pallant (2013:205) state to do parametric test certain assumptions need to be met namely: the level of measurement must be assessed, it must be random sampling, and there must be independence of observations, normal distribution and homogeneity of variance. Asthena and Bhushan (2007:5) indicate that parametric statistics are more reliable than non-parametric statistics; and it is more important to establish the significance of effects and the differences among variables. As indicated in Section 5.11.3, the data obtained were captured on an MS Excell; thereafter, they were transferred to a Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 21.0 for Windows, to do the analysis for the descriptive and hypothesis testing. In doing the analysis, a significance level of 95 per cent ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ) was used. Hair *et al.* (2010: 327) indicate that the significance level must be small, to limit the possibility of making a Type I error, which is to reject the null hypothesis; when it should be accepted. Therefore, the alpha value ( $\alpha$ ) indicates

the amount of risk a researcher will take concerning the rejection of the null hypothesis that is true (Wiid & Diggins 2015:260-261). In Table 5.4, a summary of possible statistical analysis used to test the set of hypotheses, including the objectives and the research questions from the questionnaire.

**Table 5.4 Objectives, hypotheses, sections and statistical test**

OBJECTIVE	HYPOTHESIS / RESEARCH QUESTION	SECTION	POSSIBLE TEST / STATS
To determine the profile of exhibitors at trade shows and exhibit staff.	What is the profile of exhibitors at trade shows and exhibit staff?.	A & J	Descriptive statistics
To determine if sub-stages exist within each of the stages of the sales process at trade shows.		B, C, D, E, F, G & I	Factor analysis
To determine if sales persons and non-sales persons differ regarding the sales process followed at trade shows.	<p>H<sub>01</sub> There exist no significant differences between sales persons and non-sales persons regarding business actions used.</p> <p>H<sub>02</sub> There exist no significant differences between sales persons and non-sales persons regarding pre-show marketing activities used.</p> <p>H<sub>03</sub> There exist no significant differences between sales persons and non-sales persons regarding at-show marketing activities used.</p> <p>H<sub>04</sub> There exist no significant differences between sales persons and non-sales persons regarding sales presentation used.</p> <p>H<sub>05</sub> There exist no significant differences between sales persons and non-sales persons regarding objections experienced.</p> <p>H<sub>06</sub> There exist no significant differences between sales persons and non-sales persons regarding dealing with objections.</p> <p>H<sub>07</sub> There exist no significant differences between sales persons and non-sales persons regarding closing used.</p>	B, C, D, E, F, G & I	Independent t-test or MANOVA

**Table 5.4 continue...**

OBJECTIVE	HYPOTHESIS / RESEARCH QUESTION	SECTION	POSSIBLE TEST / STATS
To determine if the various types of trade shows influence the sales process.	<p>H<sub>08</sub> There exist no significant differences for the type of trade show regarding business actions used</p> <p>H<sub>09</sub> There exist no significant differences for the type of trade show regarding pre-show marketing activities used.</p> <p>H<sub>010</sub> There exist no significant differences for the type of trade show regarding at-show marketing activities used</p> <p>H<sub>011</sub> There exist no significant differences for the type of trade show regarding the sales presentation used.</p> <p>H<sub>012</sub> There exist no significant differences for the type of trade show regarding the objections experienced.</p> <p>H<sub>013</sub> There exist no significant differences for the type of trade show regarding dealing with objections.</p> <p>H<sub>014</sub> There exist no significant differences for the type of trade show regarding closing used.</p>	B, C, D, E, F, G & I	ANOVA or MANOVA
To determine if the type of business operations of an exhibitor influence the sales process followed at trade shows.	<p>H<sub>015</sub> There is no significant differences for business operations of an exhibitor regarding business actions used.</p> <p>H<sub>016</sub> There is no significant differences for business operations of an exhibitor regarding pre-show marketing activities used.</p> <p>H<sub>017</sub> There is no significant differences for business operations of an exhibitor regarding at-show marketing activities used.</p> <p>H<sub>018</sub> There is no significant differences for business operations of an exhibitor regarding the sales presentation used.</p> <p>H<sub>019</sub> There is no significant differences for business operations of an exhibitor regarding objections experienced.</p> <p>H<sub>020</sub> There is no significant differences for business operations of an exhibitor regarding dealing with objections.</p> <p>H<sub>021</sub> There is no significant differences for business operations of an exhibitor regarding closing used.</p>	B, C, D, E, F, G & I	ANOVA or MANOVA

## 5.11 Summary

At the beginning of this chapter, marketing research was defined; and the research problem – and how it relates to the literature – was explained. The link between the research objectives and the question statements used in the questionnaire was discussed. The 21 hypotheses that were proposed for the study were defined and related back to the research objectives. In this chapter, the research design and the sampling methods used in the study were also discussed.

The three data-collection methods: experiments, observations and survey research, were explained. It was also indicated in this chapter why the researcher used survey research to collect the required data from the population. The researcher selected a self-administered questionnaire, as the method to collect the data due to the nature of trade shows. Experienced and well-trained fieldworkers under the supervision of the researcher approached the different exhibition stands and dropped off the self-administered questionnaires.

The self-administered questionnaires were constructed by using specific guidelines to ensure their correctness. Emphasis was placed on the covering letter; since the researcher would not be present to explain to the respondents how to complete the self-administered questionnaire. The questionnaire was also pre-coded; since the data were captured in Microsoft Excel. Each questionnaire was edited and screened by the researcher for quality control.

In this study, both descriptive and inferential statistics were used – to either accept or reject the hypotheses set for the study. Inferential statistics allows the researcher to make claims about a population based on a sample of the data from that population. The researcher also made use of the descriptive statistics to provide a better understanding of the characteristics of trade-show exhibitors and exhibit staff in this study. The results and findings of the study are presented in Chapter 6 and Chapter 7.

## CHAPTER 6

### DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

#### 6.1 INTRODUCTION

In Chapter 6 the results obtained from the analyses of the empirical data collected to address the objectives of this study as set out in Chapters 1 and Chapter 5 are reported. The first part of the chapter provides a demographic profile of exhibit staff and exhibitors. As indicated in Chapter 5 this was done using data from IBM SPSS Version 21 and the tables and graphs was set-up using Microsoft Excel.

The second part of the chapter reports on the inferential statistics. As indicated in Chapter 5 a Principal axis factor analysis with varimax rotation was done to identify any underlying hypothetical factors for different sections of the questionnaire as guided by the literature on the sales process. However for question 13 a MANOVA was performed. Although the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure and Barlett's Test of Sphericity indicated that the data is suitable for factor analysis, on the Eigenvalues six factors was indicated of which one only had one item. Through further inspection of the screen plot it was also evident that there were only one or highly two factors that were not theoretical or practical supported. The before mentioned is likely due to the use of a Principal axis factor analysis and therefore it was decided to make use of an MANOVA. Lastly, t-tests and ANOVAS were done on the different factors identified for sales and non-sales persons, types of trade show and business activities to test the various hypotheses.

From the four trade shows that it was established there were 423 exhibitors the response rate was 241 questionnaires; and of these, nine questionnaires were rejected – giving a total of 232 questionnaires. It must be noted that a number of the exhibitors exhibited at more than one trade show; and they had, therefore, only completed one questionnaire. This made the sample population much smaller than expected (vide. Section 5.6.1.4).

## 6.2 DEMOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS OF THE POPULATION

The demographics of the population of interest serve as background for the analysis and interpretations of the findings. The demographic data gathered on the exhibit staff included their gender (Figure 6.1); the business department they work in (Figure 6.2); employed as sales person or non-sales personal (Figure 6.3); age (Figure 6.4); highest educational qualification (Figure 6.5) and years of service at business (Figure 6.6).

**Figure 6.1 Gender of exhibit staff**

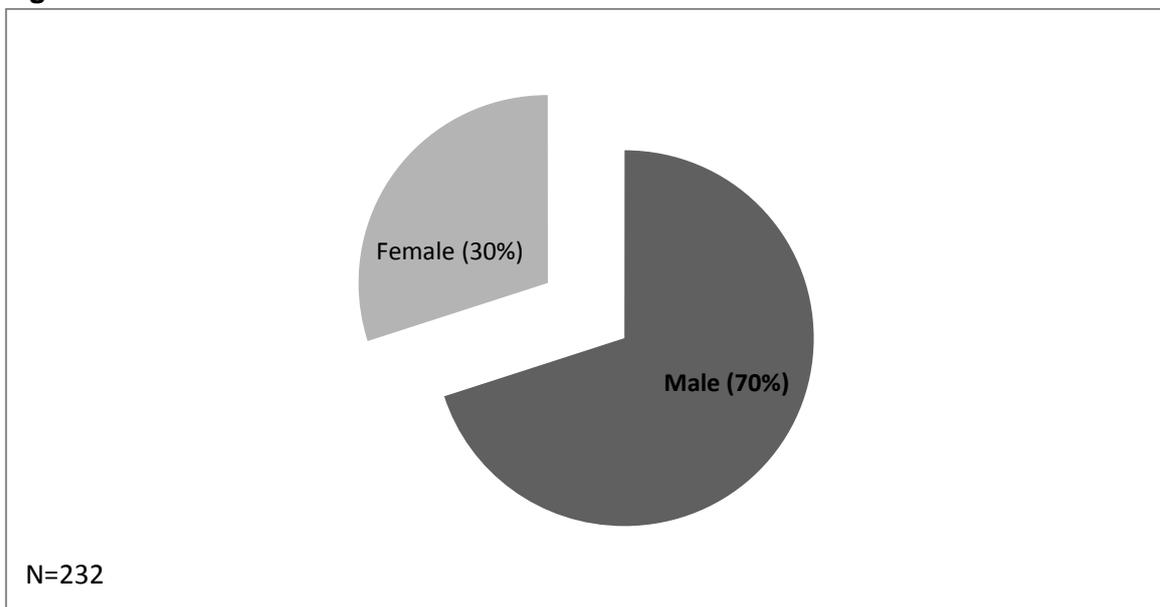
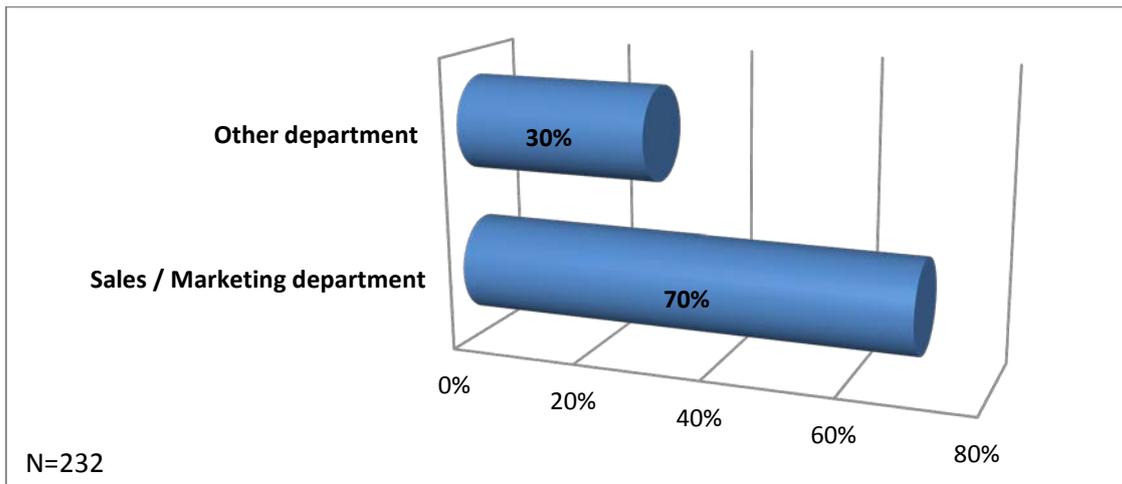


Figure 6.1 indicates that of the 232 respondents, 30 percent (69) were female and 70 percent (163) male. The reason for more male respondents could be due to the nature of business-to-business (B2B) markets, which is more likely viewed as being male dominated.

In Figure 6.2 it is indicated if the exhibit staff works in sale / marketing or other departments.

**Figure 6.2 The business department exhibit staff works in**

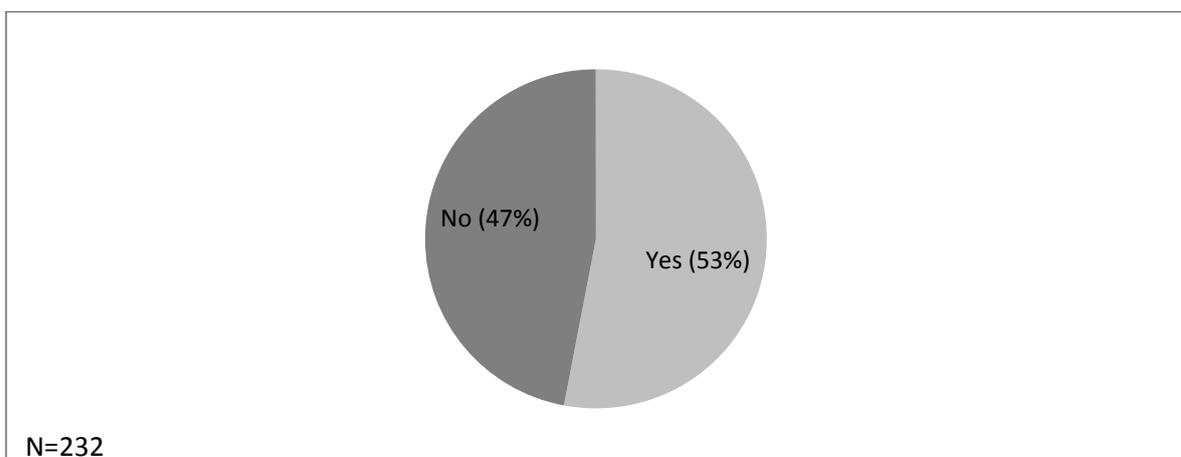


From Figure 6.2 it is evident that the majority namely 70 percent (163) of respondents is from the sales or marketing department, while only 30 percent (69) is from other departments such as production, research and development etc. This is congruent with the literature review (vide. Chapter 3 and 4) that pointed out that it is mostly the responsibility of the sales and marketing department to organise trade show activities.

However it is important to note that although 70 percent of the staff is employed in the sales or marketing department, not all are employed as sales people.

Figure 6.3 indicate whether the exhibit staff is employed as a sales person or not.

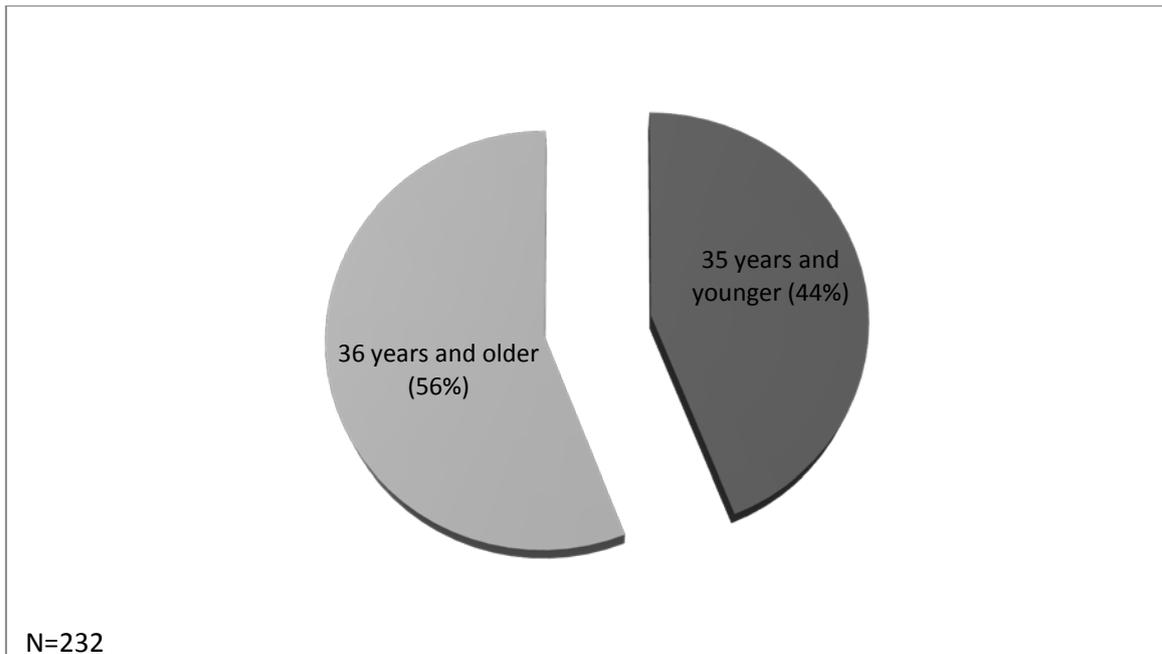
**Figure 6.3 Employed as a sales person**



The number of respondents employed as sales persons 53 percent (124) versus those that are not at 47 percent (108) accounts almost for an equal distribution as indicated in Figure 6.3.

Figure 6.4 indicates the age of the respondents.

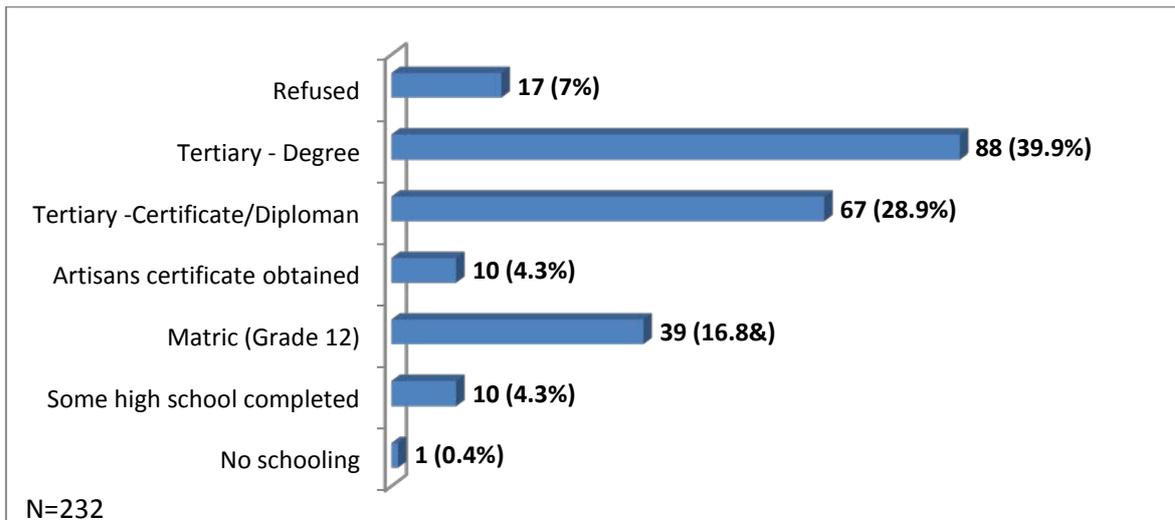
**Figure 6.4 Age of exhibit staff**



It is evident in Figure 6.4 that 44 percent (101) of the respondents are 35 years and younger, while 56 percent (131) are 36 years and older. The number of respondents 36 years and older are important to the B2B industry due to their experience. The aging of personnel in B2B markets is negatively affecting sales people in that their experience, credibility, dependability and overall ability to support the needs of customers are being questioned (Pullins *et al.*, 2011:443-451).

The highest educational qualification of exhibit staff is reflected in Figure 6.5. The number of respondents is indicated and not the percentages due to the small number of respondents in certain categories that rounds of to zero percentage. This is done to provide a better representation of the results.

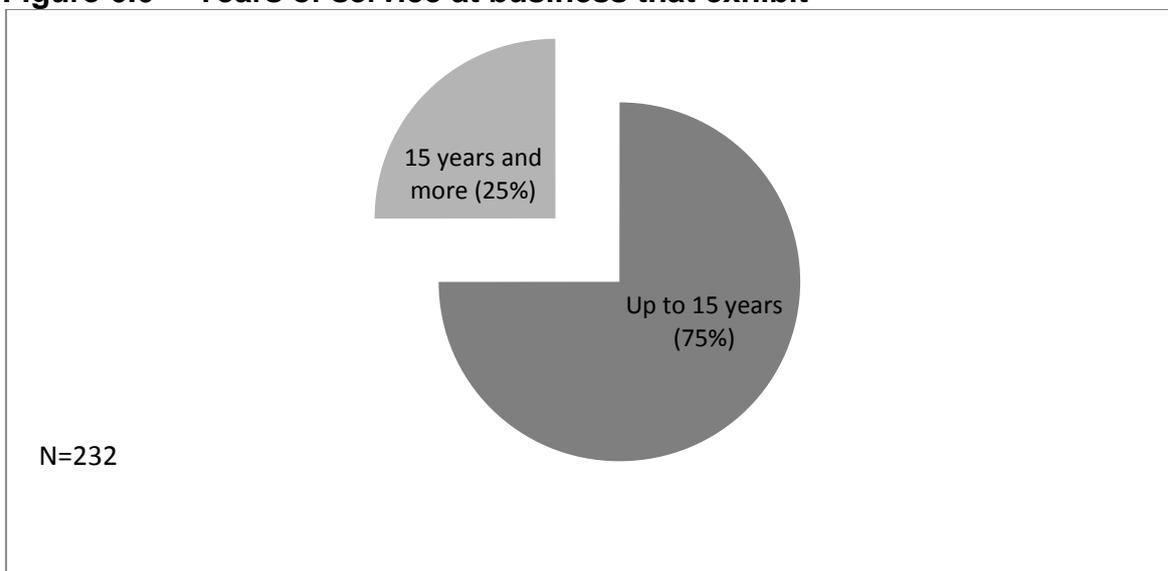
**Figure 6.5 Highest educational qualification of exhibit staff**



From Figure 6.5 it is evident the majority of respondents have a tertiary education, 88 (39.9%) with a tertiary degree and 67 (28.9%) with tertiary certificate or diploma. This is in line with the literature as indicated in Section 4.4 of the study where it is pointed out that in B2B for example sales people are engineers or qualified technical people (Blem, 2007:15; Wilson & Hunt, 2011:131). Furthermore 39 (16.8%) of the respondents had a grade 12 and 10 (4.3%) an artisan certificate. Only one (0.4%) of respondents had no schooling and 17 (7%) refused to answer the question.

In Figure 6.6 the years of service at business is illustrated.

**Figure 6.6 Years of service at business that exhibit**



From Figure 6.6 it seems that the majority of respondents have up to 15 years (75%) of service with the business that they are with, while only 25 percent have 15 years or more.

Next the profile of the business that exhibited at the trade shows are discussed to provide a summary of the business that exhibit at trade shows.

### 6.3 PROFILE OF BUSINESSES THAT EXHIBIT AT TRADE SHOWS

In this section of this chapter the profile of businesses that exhibit at trade shows will be discussed. The profile data that was gathered included the type of trade shows (Table 6.1); economic sector that the business operates in (Table 6.2); business activities of organisations that exhibit at trade shows (Table 6.3); number of products or service lines exhibited (Table 6.4); number of exhibit staff working during the full duration of the trade show (Table 6.5); estimated annual turnover for the past financial year (Table 6.6) and number of times exhibited at trade shows in the last three years including this show (Table 6.7).

**Table 6.1 Trade shows that businesses exhibit at majority of times**

	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
Regional	76	32.8
National	63	27.2
International	93	40.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>232</b>	<b>100.0</b>

It is evident from Table 6.1 that International trade shows is the most exhibited at with 40 percent of business participating in such shows. This is followed by regional trade show with 32.8 percent and national with 27.2 percent. This is in line with the sample of the study where the majority of trade shows where the data was gathered were international trade shows.

In Table 6.2 the economic sector the business operates is in is reported.

**Table 6.2 Economic sector that the business operates in**

Economic sector	N	%
Manufacturing	97	41.8
Construction	10	4.3
Wholesale & Retail	41	17.7
Repair & Maintenance Services	27	11.6
Accommodation, Restaurants, Catering & Conference	10	4.3
Transport, Storage and Communication	5	2.2
Financial Intermediation & Insurance	3	1.3
Business Services – Professional (attorneys, accountants, consulting engineers, architects, quantity surveyor)	16	6.9
Business Services – Other	13	5.6
Real Estate	1	0.4
Community, Social & Personal Services – Professional (medical practitioners, dentists, psychologists, veterinarians)	2	0.9
Community, Social & Personal Services – Other	7	3.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>232</b>	<b>100.0</b>

It seems from Table 6.2 that the majority of business operates in the manufacturing sector (41.8%). Only two sectors are above 10 percent with wholesale and retail with 17.1 percent and repair and maintenance services with 11.6 percent.

In Table 6.3 the business activities of exhibitors are indicated.

**Table 6.3 Business operations of exhibitor**

Business activities	N	%
Sales of goods	83	35.8
Service industry / Professionals	41	17.7
Construction / Manufacturing	80	34.5
Other	28	12.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>232</b>	<b>100.0</b>

The majority of respondents as indicated in Table 6.3 are in the business of the sales of goods (35.8%) and construction / manufacturing (34.5%). As indicated in Chapter 2 of this study on the nature of B2B markets the findings is in line with the literature. In that the majority of business in B2B markets either sell goods or are in the manufacturing industry. Other business operations are limited and include business that for example architects, lawyers and consulting engineers. Table 6.3 are of importance since this type of classification is used selling to ensure that the correct sales person is hired since the before mentioned classification are used for sales career classification (Blem, 2007:15; Futrell, 2011:10; Manning & Reece

2007:38-43). Exhibitors need to make sure that the sales exhibit staff is the correct person for the type of trade show that they are exhibiting at.

In Table 6.4 the number of product or service lines exhibited by exhibitors is indicated.

**Table 6.4 Number of products or service lines exhibited**

Number of product/service lines	N	%
1 – 3	86	37.0
4 – 7	57	24.6
8 +	89	38.4
Total	232	100.0

Table 6.4 provide an interesting representation of the number of products that is exhibited. Exhibitors either exhibit one to three (37%) or more than 8 (38.4%) products at a trade show. It must be noted that at a number of trade shows exhibitors only exhibit one product such as at Afrimold while at IFSEC many companies have a number of products. This is due to the differences in the two industries where the nature of the products that they sell differ (vide. Chapter 2). At trade shows such as Afrimold the products are much bigger and technical in nature and business are specialised in their offering and therefore only have one or two products. Trade shows such as IFSEC on the other hand provide a number of different security products that are not that technical and industry specific.

In Table 6.5 the number of exhibit staff working during the full duration of the trade show is indicated.

**Table 6.5 Number of exhibit staff working during the full duration of the trade show**

Number of exhibit staff (full duration)	N	%
1-2	75	32.3
3-4	83	35.8
5-6	28	12.1
7-8	26	11.2
9+	20	8.6
Total	232	100.0

It is evident in Table 6.5 that the majority of exhibitors have one to two (32.3%) or three to four (35.8%) exhibit staff members working during a trade show. Only a

small number had five or more staff members working during a trade show. The before mentioned trend could be due to the nature of B2B products that is specialised. That means exhibitors only have a few selected product experts at the trade show.

Table 6.6 reflects the estimated turnover of business for the last financial year that exhibit at trade shows.

**Table 6.6 Estimated annual turnover for the past financial year**

Turnover per year	N	%
Less than R1 million	52	22.4
R1 million – R20 million	63	27.2
R20 million +	49	21.1
Don't know/ Refused	68	29.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>232</b>	<b>100.0</b>

From Table 6.6 it seems that there is an even spread of the estimated turnover of exhibitors in the past financial year. A number of respondents did not know or refused to answer the question (29.3%). This could be due to them not knowing or the exhibit staff was afraid to provide confidential information about their business. In a discussion during the pilot study the researcher was informed that many businesses do not make this information available to all staff members.

Question 11 in the questionnaire dealt with the number of times an organisation exhibited in the last three years including this show where they were interviewed.

**Table 6.7 Number of times exhibited at trade shows in the last three years**

Number of times exhibited	N	%
1-2	73	31.5
3-4	55	23.7
5-6	50	21.6
7-8	16	6.9
9+	38	16.4
Do not know	0	0.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>232</b>	<b>100.0</b>

It is evident that most exhibitors exhibited one to two times in the last three years (31.5%), while a number exhibited three to four times (23.7%) and five to six (21.6%) times. It seems from Table 6.7 that a number of exhibitors are exhibiting

at more than three trade shows every three years. It is therefore interesting to note that trade shows are utilised by business in their B2B marketing with almost 50% exhibiting 3-6 times in the last three years. This study can therefore be a valuable tool to provide guidelines and strategies to make sure that they take full advantage of trade shows as a selling tool.

In Section 6.3 the descriptive statistics as indicated by mean and standard deviation of each section of the questionnaire is discussed.

## 6.4 DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS FOR EACH SECTION OF QUESTIONNAIRE

In this part of the study the mean score (M) and standard deviation (SD) of the variables in the different sections of the questionnaire is discussed to provide an overview of exhibit staff agreement or opinion regarding the different stages in the sales process. The mean score is the average scores calculated on each of the different variables. Standard deviation indicates the spread of the responses. If the standard deviation is high it indicates that there is a wide spread of the data and not a lot of agreement regarding a variable.

### 6.4.1 Business actions taken regarding trade show

In Table 6.8 the first section of the questionnaire will be discussed that deals with the different business actions taken regarding trade shows. A five point Likert scale was used to measure the level of agreement of the exhibit staff and their business action of the organisation before the trade show. The scale ranged from one to five with the scale points labelled strongly disagrees to strongly agree. The results are presented in descending order based on their mean value.

**Table 6.8 Business actions taken regarding trade show**

	Business actions taken regarding trade show	M	SD
1	V13.16 Trade shows are applied to develop new customer contacts	4.19	0.859
2	V13.18 Trade shows are applied to enhance the business image	4.08	0.908
3	V13.2 Our business provided booth staff with product/service material to prepare themselves for the trade show	4.03	0.949

**Table 6.8 continue...**

	Business actions taken regarding trade show	M	SD
4	V13.9 Our business measure trade show success by the number of new prospects	3.99	0.897
5	V13.6 Our business exhibit at trade shows to get sales	3.86	1.147
6	V13.1 Our business train and brief booth staff before the trade show	3.83	1.034
7	V13.19 Trade shows assist our business with other marketing communication functions	3.82	0.948
8	V13.11 Our business use trade shows to introduce new products	3.72	1.106
9	V13.7 Our business planned before the trade show to exhibit to specific target customers	3.69	1.018
10	V13.4 Our business have written promotional objectives for the trade show	3.67	1.107
11	V13.15 Trade shows are used to maintain contact with existing customers	3.66	1.073
12	V13.17 Trade shows are used to get a competitive advantage over non-exhibiting competitors	3.64	1.107
13	V13.14 Trade shows provide our business with information on my industry	3.63	1.065
14	V13.22 Our business has a tracking system to keep information on attendees that visited our exhibit stand	3.62	1.186
15	V13.10 Non-financial aspects are used to measure trade show success	3.52	0.971
16	V13.8 Our business measures success at the trade show in terms of financial gains	3.46	1.611
17	V13.5 Our business have written sales objectives for the trade show	3.41	1.147
18	V13.3 Our business have written financial objectives for the trade show	3.25	1.155
19	V13.12 Trade shows are used to as a platform to test new product concepts	3.25	1.182
20	V13.21 Trade shows assist our business to motivate staff	3.09	1.129
21	V13.13. The business I work for use trade shows to collect information about competitors	3.07	1.182
22	V13.20 Trade shows assist our business in the training of staff	3.01	1.160

From Table 6.8 the following deductions can be made on the levels of agreement regarding the business activities utilised at trade shows:

- The top five business activities utilised before a trade show is “Trade shows are applied to develop new customer contacts” (M=4.19, SD=0.859), “Trade shows are applied to enhance the business image” (M=4.08, SD=0.908), “Our business provided exhibit staff with product/service material to prepare themselves for the trade show” (M=4.03, SD=0.949), “Our business measure trade show success by the number of new prospects” (M=3.99, SD=0.897) and “Our business exhibit at trade shows to get sales”

( $M=3.86, SD=1.147$ ). Three of the exhibitor's strategies as indicated in Table 3.2 are present in the top five namely selling, inbound and outbound communication. Business image building is also higher than sales that are in line with research done in China (Liu *et al.*, 2011:449). Thus, it is clear that trade shows are viewed as playing a role in the image building strategies for many businesses.

- The last variable that deals with getting sales at a trade show however loaded a  $SD=1.147$  that indicate that there is not agreement between the exhibit staff and that their responses were heterogeneous
- The variable "Our business train and brief booth staff before the trade show" ( $M=3.83, SD=1.034$ ) only loaded sixth and almost agreed. It must be noted that a number of studies indicated a lot of focused is placed on training of exhibit staff before a show (Seringhaus & Rosson 2004:156; Lee & Kim; 2008:786; Ling-yee, 2008:42; Pitta *et al.*, 2006:163; Hanlon, 1982:99). However it is interesting that in this study it was not one of the most important actions and that image building for example is viewed as more important.
- One of the least used business activities was "Our business have written financial objectives for the trade show" ( $M=3.25, SD=1.155$ ), "Trade shows are used to as a platform to test new product concepts" ( $M=3.25, SD=1.182$ ), "Trade shows assist our business to motivate staff" ( $M=3.09, SD=1.129$ ), "The business I work for use trade shows to collect information about competitors" ( $M=3.07, SD=1.182$ ) and "Trade shows assist our business in the training of staff" ( $M=3.01, SD=1.160$ ). Although the mean values indicated agreement it seems it does have the same importance for exhibitors as other business actions do.

The high mean value for the activity develop new customer contacts are in line with a number of previous studies (Burgess & Bothma, 2007:349; Bettis-Outland *et al.*, 2012:386; Saget, 2006:113-114). It must also be noted that a number of previous studies point to the setting of sales objectives for a trade show and its importance (Bellizzi & Lipps, 1984:52; Kirchgeorg *et al.*, 2010a:64; Miller, 1999:44; Shoham, 1992:340; Kirchgeorg *et al.*, 2005:1003). In this study however setting

sales objectives had a low mean value ( $M=3.41$ ) meaning that it is not used often that can have an impact on measuring their success at trade shows.

#### 6.4.2 Pre-show marketing activities

In the sales process the organisation engage in pre-show marketing to attract the attendees to the trade show. In this section the seven variables will be discussed.

**Table 6.9 Pre-show marketing activities**

	Marketing activities used to attract attendees to attend the trade show	M	SD
1	V14.2. Our business apply electronic communication e.g. internet, e-mail to inform customer about a trade show	3.85	1.107
2	V14.3. I personally invite customers to a trade show	3.58	1.218
3	V14.7. Our business provide customers with free entry vouchers to attract them to trade shows	3.44	1.251
4	V.14.5. Sending direct mail gets attendees to visit a trade show	3.42	1.106
5	V14.6. Trade journals are used to attract customers to trade shows	3.13	1.119
6	V.14.1. Invitations to attend the trade show is personally delivered to customers	3.06	1.255
7	V.14.4. Our business use mass media to attract attendees	3.02	1.175

The following conclusions can be made from Table 6.9 on the levels of agreement for marketing activities used to attract attendees to attend the trade show:

- Most of the exhibit staff are in agreement ( $M=3.85$ ) that their business apply electronic communication such as the internet, e-mail etc. to inform their customers about trade shows. Electronic communication is becoming more popular and is being used more by exhibitors to attract customers to trade shows since it is more cost effective (Kirchgeorg *et al.*, 2010b:683).
- The pre-marketing activity that had the second highest mean score is that they personally invite customers to a trade show ( $M=3.58$ ). The relatively high standard deviation suggests that response were varied for this activity.
- Exhibit staff are also in agreement that they provide customers with free entry vouchers to attract them to trade shows ( $M=3.44$ ). This agreement with the use of free entry vouchers means that it plays an important part of pre-show marketing for exhibitors.

- The two variables that loaded the lowest was “Invitations to attend the trade show is personally delivered to customers” (M=3.06, SD=1.255) and “Our business use mass media to attract attendees” (M=3.02, SD=1.175). Although exhibit staff is still in agreement that personally deliver invitations and use mass media the before mentioned lower level of agreement is most likely due to the nature of trade shows and business to business marketing as discussed in Chapter 2 of this study.

Kirchgeorg *et al.* (2010b:683) and Ling-ye, (2010:272) refers to the importance of electronic communication in promoting trade shows due to its cost effectiveness. This could be the reasons why electronic communication is used by business to promote trade shows. It must however be noted that the second highest is still the use of personally inviting customers to a trade show as Tanner, (2002:236) and Kirchgeorg *et al.* (2010b:683-684) also point out. A number of business also make use of free entry vouchers in South Africa trade shows such as Afrimold provide the exhibitors a number of free tickets to give to their customers (McIntosh, 2008:19). Direct mail loaded fourth and this could be a future risk to exhibitors since a number of studies have found it to be ineffective (Summers, 1992:46; O’Hara *et al.*, 1993:234).

### 6.4.3 At-show marketing activities

Once the exhibiting businesses have attracted the customer to attend the trade show the next step is to market their exhibit stand to ensure that the attendees visit it.

**Table 6.10 At-show marketing activities**

	Marketing activities used to attract attendees to the business exhibit stand at the show	M	SD
1	V15.2. Our business hand out free promotional material to attendees to attract them to our exhibit stand	3.72	1.181
2	V15.1. Our business use video screens to attract attendees to our exhibit stand	3.34	1.348
3	V15.3. Our booth staff move around the trade show to attract attendees	3.04	1.244
4	V15.4. Our business use competitions to attract attendees to our exhibit stand	2.59	1.319
5	V15.6. Our exhibit staff invite attendees at social activities (luncheons, gala dinners etc.) at the trade show to visit our exhibit stand	2.50	1.306
6	V15.5. Our business co-sponsor coffee courts, luncheons etc. to attract attendees to our exhibit stand	2.28	1.239

From Table 6.10 the following is evident regarding the at-show marketing activities used to attract attendees to the business exhibit stand is indicated and discussed below:

- The exhibit staff agree that their business hand out free promotional material to attendees to attract them to the exhibit stand ( $M=3.72$ ). This indicates that the handing out free promotional material is still used extensively by exhibit staff.
- The staff also slightly agree that that they use video screens ( $M=3.34$ ,  $SD=1.348$ ) and that stand staff move around to attract attendees ( $M=3.04$ ,  $SD=1.244$ ).
- What is interesting is that “Our exhibit staff invite attendees at social activities (luncheons, gala dinners etc.) at the trade show to visit our exhibit stand” ( $M=2.50$ ,  $SD=1.306$ ) and “Our business co-sponsor coffee courts, luncheons etc. to attract attendees to our exhibit stand” ( $M=2.28$ ,  $SD=1.239$ ) loaded the lowest mean values meaning there is disagreement regarding the use of social activities. This could also be an indication that exhibitors do not place a high emphasis on social interaction away from the exhibit stand.
- The standard deviation for all the variables in Table 6.10 loaded above 1 which indicates that there are heterogeneous opinions between the exhibitors in all of the listed variables.

The findings of Table 6.10 links up with the findings of other studies that point out that 75 percent of exhibitors make use of free promotional material at trade shows and it plays an important role (Summers 1992:46; Yuksel & Voola, 2010:298). Suh (2003:47-49) and, Bathelt and Schuldt, (2008:861) point to the important role that sponsorships play at trade shows however in this study it was indicated by exhibitors that they do not really make use of sponsorships. The reasons why sponsorship is not used could be that business for example due to not having the financial capability or that trade show organisers are not making its advantages known to exhibitors.

#### 6.4.4 The sales presentation

In this stage of the sales process a number of variables was analysed to obtain the opinions of exhibitors regarding their sales presentation at the trade show exhibit stand.

**Table 6.11 Sales presentation**

	Sales presentation at the trade show exhibit stand	M	SD
1	V16.1. I introduce myself to start the sales presentation	4.03	1.034
2	V16.17. I keep a record of attendee's names that visit our exhibit stand	3.97	1.068
3	V16.13. I ask questions during the sales presentation to establish the customers' interest in the product/service	3.91	0.911
4	V16.16. I keep a note of the attendees' interest in the product/service during the sales presentation	3.87	1.030
5	V16.2. I use a benefit of the product or service to start the sales presentation	3.84	1.030
6	V16.14. I use product/service demonstrations during the sales presentation	3.72	1.102
7	V16.10. I start the sales presentation with questions to determine attendees' needs	3.64	1.035
8	V16.5. I start the sales presentation by asking questions to the attendees	3.57	1.087
9	V16.15. I use information technology (e.g. a computer, PDA etc.) to demonstrate the product/service features	3.45	1.258
10	V16.6. I use demonstrations to start the sales presentation	3.32	1.125
11	V16.3. I start the sales presentation with a statement	3.30	1.114
12	V16.9. I use a sales presentation that follows a general outline to determine attendees' needs	3.22	1.143
13	V16.11. I use an in-depth analysis of attendees' needs during the sales presentation	3.13	1.183
14	V16.4. I use a compliment to start the sales presentation	2.97	1.099
15	V16.7. I express an opinion to begin the sales presentation	2.92	1.169
16	V16.12. I use the group sales presentation method	2.82	1.216
17	V16.8. I use a memorised sales presentation at the trade show	2.58	1.235

From Table 6.11 several deductions were made:

- On the mean value the highest five variables was always used and include: "I introduce myself to start the sales presentation" (M=4.03, SD=1.034), "I keep a record of attendee's names that visit our exhibit stand" (M=3.97, SD=1.068), "I ask questions during the sales presentation to establish the

customers Interest in the product/service” (M=3.91, SD=0.911), “I keep a note of the attendees’ interest in the product/service during the sales presentation” (M=3.87, SD=1.030) and “I use a benefit of the product or service to start the sales presentation” (M=3.84, SD=1.030). Two variables relating to the approach in the sales presentation loaded in the top five meaning that these activities is of importance to exhibit staff.

- Interestingly two of the variables that loaded close to one another is the seventh “I start the sales presentation with questions to determine attendees’ needs” (M=3.64, SD=1.035) and the eight “I start the sales presentation by asking questions to the attendees” (M=3.57, SD=1.087) that indicated they often occur. This could be an indication that the asking of questions play considerable role in how exhibit staff sell at the exhibit stand.
- “I use information technology (e.g. a computer, PDA etc.) to demonstrate the product/service features” (M=3.45, 1.087) also show that it often used and only loaded ninth this could be due to the use of real life demonstration at many of the exhibit stands.
- “I use a memorised sales presentation at the trade show” (M=2.58, SD=1.235) loaded the lowest and showed that it is rarely used although using it at trade shows has its advantages due to time constraints experienced at the exhibit stand.

Since attendees will decide to give their attention to exhibit staff on how they introduce themselves this is an important element in the sales presentation (Johansson & Bengtsson, 2011:73). Jain (2010:403) point out that exhibit staff must introduce themselves to attract attention and as indicated in Table 6.11 this is how the majority of staff does it. Whitfield and Webber (2011:446) indicate to the importance of demonstrations in the sales presentation and from Table 6.11 it is apparent that it is sometimes applied by exhibit staff. It must also be noted that the best persons to do this demonstrations will be sales people due to their product knowledge (Miller, 1999:89-91). The reason why many exhibit staff does not make use of memorised sales presentations is due to the nature of trade shows that is business-to-business focused (Lambert & Kerkhoff, 2005:29) and therefore requires questions to be asked to get to customers’ needs (Halvadar & Cavale,

2007:15; Zimmerman & Blyth, 2013:227). However, as, pointed out memorised sales presentations can be useful in getting the relevant information to attendees in a short time period.

#### 6.4.5 Objections experienced

During a sales presentation the exhibit staff can experience a number of different objections and reasons why an attendee are not interested in their product that they are selling to them. The identification of how frequently objections occur is useful to exhibitors since this information can be used to train exhibit staff on what to expect and how to deal with them.

**Table 6.12 Objections experienced**

	Objections experienced	M	SD
1	V17.2. Attendees stall decision-making at trade shows	3.25	0.914
2	V17.1. Attendees do not openly state reasons for not being interested in the product/service	3.00	0.928
3	V17.3. Attendees indicate that they do not need the product/service, as a way to stop the sales presentation	2.90	0.991
4	V17.5. Product/service related objections occur during the sales presentation	2.87	0.976
5	V17.4. Money objections occur during the sales presentation	2.69	0.988
6	V17.6. Objections about our business occur during the sales presentation	2.53	1.116

From Table 6.12 the following deductions can be made regarding the variable means and their order of importance:

- Only two variables loaded a mean score above 3.00 indicating that objections experienced at trade shows is possibly low.
- “Attendees stall decision-making at trade shows” (M=3.25, SD=0.914) and “Attendees do not openly state reasons for not being interested in the product/service” (M=3.00, SD=0.928) are experienced sometimes, and it seems that these objections happens during the sales presentation.
- “Money objections occur during the sales presentation” (M=2.39, SD=0.988) and “Objections about our business occur during the sales presentation” (M=2.53, SD=1.116) that had the lowest mean value indicating these objections are rarely experienced.

A number of the exhibit staff indicated that attendees stall decision-making at trade shows. Stalling decision-making could be due to not visiting all the exhibit stands and/or still wanting to evaluate all possible suppliers. Another reason for stalling the decision-making is not to indicate the real reason such as money objections. It must be however be taken in context that most attendees only purchase after the trade show (Munuera & Ruiz, 1999:22-23) and this could be a possible reason why they stall the decision-making. There is limited objections about the business of the exhibit staff and this is most likely due to the nature of trade shows that is specialised in what is exhibited (Brennan, Canning & McDowell, 2014:188).

#### 6.4.6 Dealing with objections

Once the objections of attendees have been established the next step is for the exhibit staff to deal with the objections. In dealing with objections the exhibit staff has a number of different options. In Table 6.13 the frequency of use is indicated in regards to the mean when dealing with objections.

**Table 6.13 Dealing with objections**

	Dealing with objections	M	SD
1	V18.4. I compensate with another benefit of the product/service to overcome an objection during the sales presentation	3.19	1.215
2	V18.5. I use a disadvantage of my product/service as an advantage to overcome the objections	2.76	1.279
3	V18.3. If there is an objection I let it go and continue with the sales presentation	2.49	1.120
4	V18.6. If there is an objection, I let another staff member present, answer it	2.17	1.167
5	V18.2. I deal with objections by indirectly denying it	2.06	1.019
6	V18.1. I deal with objection by directly denying it	1.87	1.046

The following is evident from Table 6.13 for means on how exhibit staff deals with objections:

- The variable that loaded the highest mean indicating that it occurred sometimes was “I compensate with another benefit of the product/service to overcome an objection during the sales presentation” (M=3.19, SD=1.125) which is an indication that the using of the product benefits is seen as an effective way of dealing with objections.

- “I deal with objection by directly denying it” (M=1.87, SD=1.046) which did not happen a lot was encouraging since it seems that that staff rarely directly deny objections.
- The mean values in Table 6.13 is low over all indicating that the exhibit staff does not often rely on different methods to overcome objections. This is in line with Table 6.12 that indicated that not a lot of objections is usually not experienced during trade shows

Several studies indicated it is necessary for exhibitors to have technical or engineering staff to help with answering questions that attendees might have at trade shows (Whitfield & Webber, 2011:446; Tafesse & Korneliussen, 2011:47). However on the mean values the use of another staff member to answer questions is rarely used. This could mean that exhibit staff is not using other staff from the exhibitors business to help them answer questions. This could be due to that there is not an expert available and this point to the value of sales training for trade shows. Encouraging is that exhibit staff does not rely on direct denials when dealing with objections and prefer to use other methods. This is in line with literature on sales where direct denial is only used when a prospect makes an incorrect or false claim (Manning *et al.*, 2010:290).

#### 6.4.7 Closing methods

Once the exhibit staff dealt with objections the last step at trade shows is to close the sale. In the closing exhibit staff has a number options that they can apply to get the sale.

**Table 6.14 Closing methods**

	Closing methods	M	SD
1	V20.2. I list the benefits of the product/service to close the sales presentation	3.75	1.102
2	V20.3. I list the advantages of the product against the disadvantages and to close the sales presentation	3.58	1.178
3	V20.7. I compliment the attendee and close the sales presentation	3.26	1.190
4	V20.4. Once I assume a customer will buy I start closing the sales presentation	3.19	1.243

**Table 6.4** continue...

	Closing methods	M	SD
5	V20.10. I use the negotiation technique to close the sales presentation	3.10	1.211
6	V20.11. I leave the close of the sale until after the trade show in the follow-up visit	3.08	1.204
7	V20.5. I provide the attendee with two options regarding the product/service and then close the sales presentation	2.98	1.138
8	V20.8. I get the attendee to say yes all the time and then close the sales presentation	2.81	1.273
9	V20.6. I close the sales presentation on a minor point	2.59	1.145
10	V20.1. I ask directly for a sale during the sales presentation	2.58	1.234
11	V20.9. I indicate to the attendee to act now otherwise something in the sale will change (e.g. price, availability) to close the sales presentation	2.49	1.236

From Table 6.14 the following deductions can be made regarding the means values for closing:

- The exhibit staff often make use of the product benefits and advantages to close the sale with the top two variables being “I list the benefits of the product/service to close the sales presentation” (M=3.75, SD=1.102) and “I list the advantages of the product against the disadvantages and to close the sales presentation” (M=3.58, SD=1.178). It therefore seems that the use of the product in closing is popular in closing the sale and is used by exhibit staff to try and, get the sale.
- Three closing techniques rarely to only sometimes used is “I close the sales presentation on a minor point” (M=2.59, SD=1.145), “I ask directly for a sale during the sales presentation” (M=2.58, SD=1.234) and “I indicate to the attendee to act now otherwise something in the sale will change (e.g. price, availability) to close the sales presentation” (M=2.49, SD=1.236).
- It must be noted that a number of the standard deviations loaded high indicating heterogenous opinions for the variables type of close techniques used at a trade show between exhibitors.

Although certain business close the sale at a trade show a number of exhibitors do not close the sales at the exhibit stand but rather do it in the follow-up after the show (Blyth & Rayner, 1996:21; Seringhaus & Rosson, 2004:161; Gopalakrishna & Williams, 1992:220). In trade shows certain types of closes are used more

frequently namely: the assumptive close, direct close, minor point close, standing room close and alternative close (Blem, 2007:305). It is evident that these closing techniques are not used very often by exhibit staff. However it is clear that the comparison techniques are the most popular.

In this study a factor analysis was preferred to reduce the number of items on each stages of the sales process. Next the factor analysis for this study will be is discussed.

## **6.5 FACTOR ANALYSIS AS WELL AS THE RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY OF THE MEASURING INSTRUMENT**

As indicated in Chapter 5 Principal axis factoring with varimax rotation was used that is a type of exploratory factor analysis and was done to provide structure to the different stages of the sales process. As discussed in Chapter 5 Principal axis factoring with varimax rotation analyse common variances. This method also assists in identifying items that do not measure a specific factor or measure multiple factors. Therefore items were disregarded when: there were low communality estimates within the chosen factor grouping (less than 0.3); variables loaded strongly on more than one factor and there was poor internal consistency among the variables in terms of Cronbach's alpha. In doing Principal axis factoring with varimax rotation a more accurate computer-generated test was provided taking the before mentioned into account (DeVellis, 2003: 132-133). A factor analysis was done for each of the sections of the questionnaire that made up the stages of the sales process that was developed for this study.

The literature study refers to different stages that exist in the sales process of trade shows. These stages was incorporated in the questionnaire (vide. Annexure A). The list of statements developed to measure each stage was based on extensive literature research and preliminary discussions with the trade show participants that included organisers and exhibitors. As indicated in Chapter 5 a self-administrated questionnaire was developed using literature reviews of previous studies done on the sales process and trade shows (vide. Chapter 2, Chapter 3, Chapter 4 & Chapter 5)

For each of the seven sections ordinal measurements were applied by using a Likert scale. In Section 5.12 the Cronbach alpha coefficient was discussed and it was indicated that the preferred measure should be 0.70 or higher in exploratory research. However, a number of authors point out that in scales where the number of items is less than 10 a lower Cronbach alpha coefficient can be acceptable although it is not suggested (Pallant, 2013:100; Hair *et al.*, 1998:118). In such instances the inter-item correlation could be used in conjunction to establish internal consistency reliability.

It should however be noted that in some instance although several factors maybe indentified it should still be theoretical and practical relevant. Therefore since there are no clear expectations or relative incomplete Principal axis factoring with varimax rotation analysis was done (Fabrigar & Wegner, 2012:5).

Next the factor analysis for each stage of the sales process in the questionnaire will be discussed.

**Objective: To determine if sub-stages exist in the various stages of the sales process at trade shows.**

### **6.5.1 Business actions taken regarding the trade show**

Business actions taken for trade shows were measured by 22-items on a 5 point Likert scale ranging from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree”.

The 22-items that were included in this stage were subjected to a factor analysis with the aim to determine underlying factors in each of the stages of the sales process at trade shows. To determine if the data was suitable for a factor analysis the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin was calculated (Pallant, 2013:183). Furthermore the Bartlett’s Test of Sphericity indicated statistical significance ( $p = 0.000$ ) supporting the factorability of the correlation matrix. However on the Eigenvalues six factors were presented of which one only had one item. On further inspection of the screen plot it was clear that there were only two factors and these factors were not theoretical or practical supported. MANOVA testing was used since it reveals

the differences not shown in ANOVA's and it protects against Type I error when there are several dependant variables.

### 6.5.2 Pre-show marketing activities

In this stage of the sales process the focus is on exhibit staff's level of agreement in regards to pre-show marketing activities that is used to attract attendees to a trade show. The before mentioned was measured by seven-items on a 5 point Likert scale ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree". The factor loadings for the levels of agreement regarding the marketing activities in attracting attendees to a trade show are indicated in Table 6.15.

The seven items included in this stage were subjected to a Principal axis factoring with Varimax rotation. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin value was 0.802 and the Bartlett's Test of Sphericity indicated statistical significance ( $p = 0.000$ ) supporting the factorability of the correlation matrix. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient values where acceptable since it was 0.802 above 0.7 required.

**Table 6.15 Factors pre-show marketing activities**

Variables	Sub-stages	
	1	2
14.2 Our business apply electronic communication eg internet, e-mail to inform customer about a trade show	0.730	
14.3 I personally invite customers to a trade show	0.697	
14.5 Sending direct mail gets attendees to visit a trade show	0.515	
14.1 Invitations to attend the trade show are personally delivered to customers	0.491	
14.6 Trade journals are used to attract customers to trade shows		0.804
14.4 Our business uses mass media to attract attendees		0.598
14.7 Our business provide customers with free entry vouchers to attract them to trade shows		0.487
<b>No. of items</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>% of Variance explained</b>	<b>45.83</b>	<b>16.12</b>
<b>Cronbach's Alpha</b>	<b>0.802</b>	

For marketing activities used to attract attendees to attend the trade show two factors was identified direct communication (Factor 1) and promotional elements (Factor 2). The two factors extracted explained 61.95% of variance.

### 6.5.3 At-show marketing activities

At-show marketing activities to attract attendees to the exhibit at trade show was measured by six items on a 5 point Likert scale ranging from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree”. The factor loadings for at-show marketing activities used to attract attendees to the exhibit stand are shown in Table 6.16.

The six items that were included in this stage of the sales process on marketing activities at trade show were subjected to a Principal axis factoring with Varimax rotation. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin value was 0.771 that exceeds the recommended value of 0.5 and the Bartlett’s Test of Sphericity indicated statistical significance ( $p = 0.000$ ) supporting the factorability of the correlation matrix. The Cronbach’s alpha coefficient value was 0.761 exceeding the required 0.7.

**Table 6.16 Factors for at-show marketing activities**

Variables	Sub-stages	
	1	2
15.5 Our business co-sponsor coffee courts, luncheons etc to attract attendees to our exhibit stand	0.830	
15.6 Our exhibit staff invite attendees at social activities (luncheons, gala dinners etc) at the trade show to visit our exhibit stand	0.796	
15.4 Our business use competitions to attract attendees to our exhibit stand	0.609	
15.3 Our booth staff move around the trade show to attract attendees	0.466	
15.2 Our business hand out free promotional material to attendees to attract them to our exhibit stand		0.821
15.1 Our business use video screens to attract attendees to our exhibit stand		0.392
<b>No. of items</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>% of Variance explained</b>	<b>46.74</b>	<b>18.49</b>
<b>Cronbach’s Alpha</b>	<b>0.761</b>	

Two factors loaded for marketing activities used to attract attendees to the business exhibit stand at the trade show namely trade show sponsorship (Factor 1) and promotional tools (Factor 2) explaining at 65.23% variance.

### 6.5.4 The sales presentation

The use of the sales presentation by the exhibit staff was measured by 15 items on a 5 point Likert scale ranging from “never” to “always”. The factor loadings for the sales presentation at the exhibit stand are indicated in Table 6.17.

The 15 items that were included in this section, of the use of sales presentations by staff at the trade show, were subjected to a Principal axis factoring with Varimax rotation. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin value was 0.860 and the Bartlett's Test of Sphericity indicated statistical significance ( $p = 0.000$ ) supporting the factorability of the correlation matrix. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient value was 0.883 that exceeded the required 0.7.

**Table 6.17 Factors for the sales presentation**

Variables	Sub-stages			
	1	2	3	4
16.12 I use the group sales presentations	0.762			
16.8 I use a memorised sales presentation at the trade show	0.726			
16.9 I use a sales presentation that follows a general outline to determine attendees' needs	0.559			
16.11 I use an in-depth analysis of attendees' needs during the sales presentation	0.486			
16.16 I keep a note of the attendees' interest in the product/service during the sales presentation		0.690		
16.15 I use information technology (eg a computer, tablet, PDA etc) to demonstrate the product/service features		0.590		
16.13 I ask questions during the sales presentation to establish the customers' interest in the product/service		0.583		
16.17 I keep a record of attendee's names that visit our exhibit stand		0.579		
16.14 I use product/service demonstrations during the sales presentation		0.515		
16.3 I start the sales presentation with a statement			0.774	
16.4 I use a compliment to start the sales presentation			0.626	
16.7 I express an opinion to begin the sales presentation			0.493	
16.2 I use a benefit of the product or service to start the sales presentation			0.478	
16.10 I start the sales presentation with questions to determine attendees' needs				0.683
16.5 I start the sales presentation by asking questions to the attendees				0.669
<b>No. of items</b>	4	5	4	2
<b>% of Variance explained</b>	35.23	13.52	8.31	7.18
<b>Cronbach's Alpha</b>	0.883			

For the sales presentation at trade show four factors were identified: presentation methods (Factor 1), presentation actions (Factor 2), approach methods (Factor 3) and question approach (Factor 4). The four factors explained 64.24% variance.

### 6.5.5 Objections experienced

The types of objections that are experienced during the sales presentation by exhibit staff was measured by six items on a 5 point Likert scale ranging from "never" to "always". The factor loadings for objections experienced during the sales presentation by exhibit staff are indicated in Table 6.18.

The six items that were included in this stage of the sales process on objections experienced during the sales presentation by exhibit staff were subjected to a Principal axis factoring with Varimax rotation. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin value was 0.775 and the Bartlett's Test of Sphericity indicated statistical significance ( $p = 0.000$ ) supporting the factorability of the correlation matrix. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient value was 0.788 that exceeded 0.7.

**Table 6.18 Factors for objections experienced**

Variables	Sub-stages	
	1	2
17.5 Product/service related objections occur during the sales presentation	0.779	
17.6 Objections about our business occur during the sales presentation	0.758	
17.4 Money objections occur during the sales presentation	0.598	
17.3 Attendees indicate that they do not need the product/service, as a way to stop the sales presentation		0.459
17.2 Attendees stall decision-making at trade shows		0.643
17.1 Attendees do not openly state reasons for not being interested in the product/service		0.635
No. of items	4	2
% of Variance explained	48.75	17.93
Cronbach's Alpha	0.788	

For the objections experienced during the sales presentation two factors were identified manifested objections (Factor 1) and latent objections (Factor 2) explaining 66.70% variance.

### 6.5.6 Dealing with objections

The methods used to deal with objections during the sales presentation was measured with six items on a 5 point Likert scale ranging from "never" to "always". The factor loadings for dealing with objections during the sales presentation of exhibit staff at trade show are indicated in Table 6.19.

The six items that were included in the stage of the sales process on dealing with objections during the sales presentation by exhibit staff at trade shows were subjected to a Principal axis factoring with Varimax rotation. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin value was 0.676 and the Bartlett's Test of Sphericity indicated statistical significance ( $p = 0.000$ ) supporting the factorability of the correlation matrix. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient value was 0.747 exceeding the accepted 0.7.

**Table 6.19 Factors dealing with objections**

Variables	Sub-stages	
	1	2
18.1 I deal with an objection by directly denying it	0.797	
18.2 I deal with objections by indirectly denying it	0.748	
18.6 If there is an objection, I let another staff member present, answer it	0.457	
18.3 If there is an objection I let it go and continue with the sales presentation	0.444	
18.4 I compensate with another benefit of the product/service to overcome an objection during the sales presentation		0.742
18.5 I use a disadvantage of my product/service as an advantage to overcome the objections		0.663
<b>No. of items</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>% of Variance Explained</b>	<b>44.97</b>	<b>19.87</b>
<b>Cronbach's Alpha</b>	<b>0.747</b>	

The handling of objections during the sales presentations presented two factors standard objection solutions (Factor 1) and product objection solution (Factor 2) explaining 64.84% variance.

### 6.5.7 Closing methods

The closing methods used during the sales presentation was measured by 10 items on a 5 point Likert scale ranging from “never” to “always”. The factor loadings for closing methods used during sales presentation of exhibit staff at trade show are indicated in Table 6.20.

The 10 items that were included in the stage of the sales process on closing methods at exhibit stands of trade shows during the sales presentation were subjected to a Principal axis factoring with Varimax rotation.

The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin value was 0.870 exceeded the required 0.6. The Bartlett's Test of Sphericity indicated statistical significance ( $p = 0.000$ ) supporting the factorability of the correlation matrix and the Cronbach's alpha coefficient value was 0.866.

**Table 6.20 Factors closing methods**

Variables	Sub-stages	
	1	2
20.8 I get the attendee to say yes all the time and then close the sales presentation	0.801	
20.9 I indicate to the attendee to act now otherwise something in the sale will change (eg price, availability) to close the sales presentation	0.738	
20.10 I use the negotiations to close the sales presentation	0.705	
20.1 I ask directly for a sale during the sales presentation	0.641	
20.6 I close the sales presentation on a minor point	0.616	
20.5 I provide the attendee with two options regarding the product/service and then close the sales presentation	0.591	
20.7 I compliment the attendee and close the sales presentation	0.582	
20.4 Once I assume a customer will buy I start closing the sales presentation	0.575	
20.2 I list the benefits of the product/service to close the sales presentation		0.842
20.3 I list the advantages of the product against the disadvantages to close the sale		0.687
<b>No. of items</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>% of Variance Explained</b>	<b>47.50</b>	<b>12.38</b>
<b>Cronbach's Alpha</b>	<b>0.866</b>	

The factor analysis revealed two factors typical closing (Factor 1) and product closing (Factor 2) with a 59.88% variance explained.

## 6.6 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES AND HYPOTHESES RESULTS

In Chapter 1 and Chapter 5 of the study the objectives of the study was indicated. From the objectives and the literature review that was done a number of different stages of the sales process were identified and incorporated in the questionnaire (vide. Chapter 2, Chapter 3 and Chapter 4). Once the different sections were constructed a Principal axis factoring with Varimax rotation analysis was done and the factors identified indicated in Section 6.5. From the objectives, literature reviews and different stages that came from it, a number of null and alternative hypotheses were formulated. Thereafter the significance level was selected (vide. Chapter 5) and set at a 5 percent significance level ( $\alpha=0.05$ ) for this study. The significance level indicates under which circumstances the null hypothesis can be accepted or rejected. Once this was done an appropriate statistical test (t-test, ANOVA and MANOVA) was chosen in consultation with the statistician. The chosen statistical tests were performed and the data interpreted to make the decision to either accept or reject the null hypothesis.

For the t-testing it was determined which t-values was to be included in the analysis. Leven's test was done and if the significance value was higher than 0.05

equal variance was assumed. In cases where Leven's test value was 0.05 or less the alternative t-value provides by the SPSS output was used referred to as equal variances not assumed. This means that although the assumption of equal variance was violated the alternative t-test can be used. Secondly, the differences between groups were assessed using the significant 2-tailed results. If the significant 2-tailed test was equal or less than 0.05 it was accepted that there is significant differences between the groups. On the other hand if the value was above 0.05 it is assumed that there is no significant differences between the groups (Pallant, 2013:241-242; Wiid & Diggins, 2015:282). For the t-test the five assumptions of doing parametric test was met namely level of measurement, random sampling, independence of observations, normal distribution and homogeneity of variance (Howell, 2010:180-181; Robert & Russo, 1999:70-73).

The second type of test applied was a one-way variance analysis (ANOVA) between groups. An ANOVA test was used since there were one independent grouping of variables with three or more groups and one dependent continuous variable. For the researcher to use the ANOVA specific assumptions need to be addressed; the level measurement for the dependent variable was used, random sampling was used, the observations was independent, the population sample was normally distributed and there was homogeneity of variance (Hair, *et al.*, 1998:348-349; Pallant, 2013:205-207). It must be noted that only one of the variables did not meet homogeneity of variance. However the ANOVA test is a robust enough when it comes to moderate departures from underlying homogeneity of variance assumptions that if groups are largely equally distributed it can be assessed on lower values such as 0.03 (Hair, *et al.*, 1998:349; Salkind, 2010:579).

In Chapter 5 it was indicated that a Principal axis factoring with varimax rotation was done to indentify underlining factors as to reduce the data. For the stages of the sales process were no theoretical and practical factors was identified using Principal axis factoring with varimax rotation it was decided to rather apply a MANOVA. In statistics MANOVA is applied to examine the values of the dependent variable across the groups of two or more independent variables that share similar characteristics. The MANOVA protects against Type I error when

there are a number of dependent variables and indicates differences that an ANOVA does not (Tabachnik & Fidell, 2013:323). According to Pallant (2013:285) and Hair *et al.* (1998:347), three assumptions needs to be addressed before an MANOVA can be conducted: the observations must be independent; there must be normality for the set of dependent variables and the covariance matrices must be equal for all treatment groups. This study had no major ovulations of normality due to the large sample size and due to a MANOVA being robust to modes violations.

The overall significance of the MANOVA was assessed by the Wilks' Lambda since it is immune to violations of the assumptions underlining the MANOVA without compromising on power (Hair *et al.*, 1998:35). In using the Wilks' Lambda the significant value for differences is  $p < 0.05$  and no significant differences  $p > 0.05$ .

In the rest of the chapter the objectives and the related hypothesis will be discussed.

#### **6.6.1 Objective: To determine if sales persons and non-sales persons differ regarding the sales process followed at trade shows**

It was indicate in Chapter 3 and Chapter 5 that there are differences in opinions on who should exhibit staff. This was also indicated to the researcher through discussions with trade show exhibitors. Trade shows are seen as a place to gather sales leads so the logical choice would be sales persons (vide. Chapter 3). However many exhibitors see trade shows as a place to do public relations and not sales. In Figure 6.3 it was indicated that the number respondents that was in sales was almost equal to those who were not, therefore it is necessary to determine if they use the sales process the same. Salespeople who therefore man the exhibit stand must know their organisation and product to help the attendees in their decision-making (O'Connor, 2001:152-154). Miller (1999:89-91) contends that when it comes to products, the exhibitor has control over the four main elements relating to the product, namely: product knowledge; product

demonstrations; comparison of your product to that of the competitions; and product enthusiasm.

The lack of product knowledge is one of the main complaints that attendees have about stand personnel. Therefore, it may be assumed that sales personnel would be the best exhibit staff – due to their knowledge of the products. Salespeople would most probably be more capable of demonstrating and showing enthusiasm towards their own products (Miller, 1999:89-91).

The seven hypotheses tested below will provide an indication if sales persons and non-sales persons use these stages in the sales process to the same extent. The first hypothesis will be analysed by means of a MANOVA and the rest of the hypotheses by means of a t-test or ANOVA.

As stated in Chapter 5 all hypotheses are set regarding the sales process for trade shows.

### **Hypothesis 1**

The first hypothesis deal with exhibitors planning of trade show activities MANOVA testing was used to assess the differences between the groups.

**H<sub>01</sub>** There exist no significant differences between sales persons and non-sales persons regarding business actions used.

MANOVA testing, which assess the difference between groups collectively rather than individually, was used to test hypothesis one. The researcher relied on a 95 % level of confidence, and a subsequent significance level of 5% ( $p\text{-value} \leq 0.05$ ) to interpret the results of the hypothesis testing. Preliminary assumptions testing was conducted to check for normality, linearity, univariate and multivariate outliers, and homogeneity of variance and no serious violations were noted.

The Wilks' Lambda value indicates that there is no significant differences between sales and non-sales person exhibit staff regarding business actions used  $F(22.208)=1.501, p=0.076$ ; Wilks' Lambda=0.863; partial Eta Squared=0.137.

**The null hypothesis  $H_{01}$  was thus accepted**, as there are no support that there is a significant difference between sales and non-sales persons regarding business actions used.

## Hypothesis 2

**$H_{02}$**  There exist no significant differences between sales persons and non-sales persons regarding pre-show marketing activities.

The factor analysis identified two factors for pre-show marketing activities namely direct communications and promotional tools, the following two sub-hypotheses flowed.

**$H_{02a}$**  There exist no significant differences between sales persons and non-sales persons regarding direct communication used in pre-show marketing activities.

**Table 6.21 Mean values and t-test results for direct communication for sales and non-sales persons**

Factor	Sales person		Non-sales person		Total Sample (Sales & non-sales personal)
	Mean	n	Mean	n	
Direct communication	3.58	124	3.37	108	MD 0.21087 t 1.829 df 212.543 Sig. 0.069 p-value = > 0.05 $H_0$ Accepted

For the factor "Direct communication", sales people (mean = 3.58) *agree* while non-sales people (mean = 3.37) *neither agree nor disagree* regarding direct communication used to attract attendees to a trade show. From the findings it is evident that there are no significant differences between sales or non-sales

persons regarding the use of direct communication that they utilise. **Therefore, the null hypothesis H<sub>02a</sub> was accepted.**

**H<sub>02b</sub>** There exist no significant differences between sales persons and non-sales persons regarding promotional elements used in pre-show marketing activities.

**Table 6.22 Mean values and t-test results for promotional elements for sales and non-sales persons**

Factor	Sales person		Non-sales person		Total Sample (Sales & non-sales personal)
	Mean	n	Mean	n	
Promotional elements	3.20	124	3.11	108	MD 0.8204 t 0.668 df 210.441 Sig. 0.505 p-value = > 0.05 H <sub>0</sub> Accepted

For the factor “Promotional elements”, both sales people (mean = 3.20) and non-sales (mean = 3.11) *neither agree nor disagree* that promotional tools are used to attract attendees to a trade show. From the Table 6.22, it can be seen that there is no significant differences between sales and non-sales personal and promotional tools used for marketing. **Therefore, the null hypothesis H<sub>02b</sub> is accepted.**

### Hypothesis 3

**H<sub>03</sub>** There exist no significant differences between sales persons and non-sales persons regarding at-show marketing activities.

The factor analysis identified two factors trade show sponsorship and promotional tools therefore, two sub-hypotheses followed from the at-show marketing activities hypothesis.

**H<sub>03a</sub>** There exist no significant differences between sales persons and non-sales persons regarding trade show sponsorship used as at-show marketing activity.

**Table 6.23 Mean values and t-test results for trade shows sponsorship for sales and non-sales persons**

Factor	Sales person		Non-sales person		Total Sample (Sales & non-sales personal)
	Mean	n	Mean	n	
Trade show sponsorship	2.70	124	2.50	108	MD 0.19325 t 1.457 df 224.827 Sig. 0.147 p-value = > 0.05 H <sub>0</sub> Accepted

For the factor “Trade show sponsorship” both sales persons (mean = 2.70) and non-sales persons (mean = 2.50) disagree on the methods used to attract attendees to the business exhibit stand at the trade shows. **It is evident from Table 6.17 that there are no significant differences between sales and non-sales persons and therefore H<sub>03a</sub> is accepted.**

**H<sub>03b</sub>** There exist no significant differences between sales persons and non-sales persons regarding promotional tools used as an at-show marketing activity.

**Table 6.24 Mean values and t-test results for promotional tools for sales and non-sales persons**

Factor	Sales person		Non-sales person		Total Sample (Sales & non-sales personal)
	Mean	n	Mean	n	
Promotional tools	3.66	124	3.37	108	MD 0.28166 t 2.079 df 230.000 Sig. 0.039 p-value = < 0.05 H <sub>a</sub> Supported

For the factor “Promotional tools” sales persons (mean = 3.66) *agree* and non-sales persons (mean = 3.37) *neither agree nor disagree* on the promotional tools used to attract attendees to the exhibit stand. There exists significant difference between sales and non-sales person’s and their use of “Promotional tools” as evident from Table 6.24. **Therefore H<sub>03b</sub> is not accepted as there is support for H<sub>a3b</sub>.**

## Hypothesis 4

**H<sub>04</sub>** There exist no significant differences between sales persons and non-sales persons regarding the sales presentation.

Since the factor analysis identified four factors namely presentation methods, presentation activities, approach methods and question approach four sub-hypotheses followed from Hypothesis 4.

**H<sub>04a</sub>** There exist no significant differences between sales persons and non-sales persons regarding presentation methods used during the sales presentation.

**Table 6.25 Mean values and t-test results for presentation methods for sales and non-sales persons**

Factor	Sales person		Non-sales person		Total Sample (Sales & non-sales personal)
	Mean	n	Mean	n	
Presentation methods	3.05	124	2.80	108	MD 0.25119 t 2.070 df 22.137 Sig. 0.040 p-value = < 0.05 H <sub>a</sub> Supported

For the factor “Presentation methods”, sales persons (mean = 3.05) *rarely to sometimes* and non-sales persons (mean = 2.80) *rarely* use presentation methods as part of sales presentation at the trade show exhibit stand. From the Table 6.25, it can be seen that there is significant differences between sales and non-sales persons regarding presentation methods with sales people making more use of presentation methods than non-sales persons. **Therefore, H<sub>04a</sub> is not accepted as there is support for the alternative hypothesis H<sub>a4a</sub>.**

**H<sub>04b</sub>** There exist no significant differences between sales persons and non-sales persons regarding presentation actions used during the sales presentation.

**Table 6.26 Mean values and t-test results for presentation actions for sales and non-sales persons**

Factor	Sales person		Non-sales person		Total Sample (Sales & non-sales personal)
	Mean	n	Mean	n	
Presentation actions	3.90	124	3.65	108	MD 0.25024 t 2.444 df 217.892 Sig. 0.015 p-value = < 0.05 H <sub>a</sub> Supported

For the factor “Presentation actions” both sales persons (mean = 3.90) and non-sales persons (mean = 3.65) indicate they often take actions during the sales presentations. It is evident that there is significant (p=0.015) differences between sales and non-sales persons. **Therefore, the null hypothesis H<sub>04b</sub> is not accepted as H<sub>a4b</sub> is supported.**

**H<sub>04c</sub>** There exist no significant differences between sales persons and non-sales persons regarding approach methods used in the sales presentation.

**Table 6.27 Mean values and t-test results for approach methods for sales and non-sales persons**

Factor	Sales person		Non-sales person		Total Sample (Sales & non-sales personal)
	Mean	n	Mean	n	
Approach methods	3.33	124	3.17	108	MD 0.16570 t 1.493 df 221.441 Sig. 0.137 p-value = > 0.05 H <sub>0</sub> Accepted

For the factor “Approach methods” both sales persons (mean = 3.33) and non-sales persons (mean = 3.17) sometimes use specific approach methods to start the sales presentation. From the Table 6.27 it is evident that there are no significant differences between sales and non-sales person regarding approach methods used in the sales presentation. **Therefore, H<sub>04c</sub> is accepted.**

**H<sub>04d</sub>** There exist no significant differences between sales persons and non-sales persons regarding question approach used in the sales presentation.

**Table 6.28 Mean values and t-test results for question approach for sales and non-sales persons**

Factor	Sales person		Non-sales person		Total Sample (Sales & non-sales personal)
	Mean	n	Mean	n	
Question approach	3.78	124	3.43	108	MD 0.33214 t 2.747 df 217.815 Sig. 0.006 p-value = < 0.05 H <sub>a</sub> <b>Supported</b>

For the factor “Question approach”, sales persons (mean = 3.78) *often* ask questions and non-sales persons (mean = 3.43) *sometimes* ask questions in presentations. From the findings it is evident that there is significant (p=0.006) for the use a question approach between sales and non-sales persons. **Therefore, H<sub>04d</sub> is not accepted as there is support for H<sub>a4d</sub>.**

### Hypothesis 5

**H<sub>05</sub>** There exist no significant differences between sales persons and non-sales persons regarding objections experienced.

Since the factor analysed identified two factors namely manifested objections and latent objections two sub-hypotheses followed from Hypothesis 5.

**H<sub>05a</sub>** There exist no significant differences between sales persons and non-sales persons regarding manifested objections experienced.

**Table 6.29 Mean values and t-test results for manifested objections experienced for sales and non-sales persons**

Factor	Sales person		Non-sales person		Total Sample (Sales & non-sales personal)
	Mean	n	Mean	n	
Manifested objections	2.83	124	2.65	108	MD 0.18220 t 1.731 df 219.931 Sig. 0.085 p-value = > 0.05 H <sub>0</sub> <b>Accepted</b>

For the factor “manifested objections” both sales persons (mean = 2.83) and non-sales persons (mean = 2.65) rarely experience different types of objections during the sales presentation at the exhibit stand. In Table 6.29 it is apparent that there are no significant differences between sales and non-sales persons on manifested objections experienced in sales presentations. **H<sub>05a</sub> is therefore, accepted.**

**H<sub>05b</sub>** There exist no significant differences between sales persons and non-sales persons regarding latent objections experienced.

**Table 6.30 Mean values and t-test results for latent objections experienced for sales and non-sales persons**

Factor	Sales person		Non-sales person		Total Sample (Sales & non-sales personal)
	Mean	n	Mean	n	
Latent objections	3.18	124	3.06	108	MD 0.12186 t 1.186 df 215.733 Sig. 0.237 p-value = > 0.05 H <sub>0</sub> Accepted

For the factor “Latent objection” both sales persons (mean = 3.18) and non-sales persons (mean = 3.06) sometimes experience latent objections during the sales presentation at the exhibit stand. From the findings, it is clear that there are no significant differences between sales and non-sales persons regarding latent objections during the sales presentation. **Therefore, the null hypothesis H<sub>05b</sub> is accepted.**

### Hypothesis 6

**H<sub>06</sub>** There exist no significant differences between sales persons and non-sales persons regarding dealing with objections.

The factor analysed identified two factors namely standard objection solution and product objection solution two sub-hypotheses therefore followed from Hypothesis 6.

**H<sub>06a</sub>** There exist no significant differences between sales persons and non-sales persons regarding standard objection solutions.

**Table 6.31 Mean values and t-test results on standard objection solution for sales and non-sales persons**

Factor	Sales person		Non-sales person		Total Sample (Sales & non-sales personal)
	Mean	n	Mean	n	
Standard objection solutions	2.18	124	2.11	108	MD 0.06785 t 0.630 df 22.993 Sig. 0.530 p-value = > 0.05 H <sub>0</sub> Accepted

For the factor “Standard objection solutions” both sales persons (mean = 2.18) and non-sales persons (mean = 2.11) rarely use methods to deal with objections during the sales presentation at the exhibit stand. From Table 6.31 it is evident that there is no significant differences between sales and non-sales persons in standard objection solutions during the sales presentation. **H<sub>06a</sub> is therefore, accepted.**

**H<sub>06b</sub>** There exist no significant differences between sales persons and non-sales persons regarding product objection.

**Table 6.32 Mean values and t-test results on product objection solutions for sales and non-sales persons**

Factor	Sales person		Non-sales person		Total Sample (Sales & non-sales personal)
	Mean	n	Mean	n	
Product objection solution	3.04	124	2.90	108	MD 0.14217 t 0.989 df 223.778 Sig. 0.324 p-value = > 0.05 H <sub>0</sub> Accepted

For the factor “Product objection solution”, sales persons (mean = 3.04) *sometimes* and non-sales persons (mean = 2.90) *rarely to sometimes* use product characteristics to overcome an objection during the sales presentation at the exhibit stand. From the finding it is evident that that sales and non-sales persons

do not differ for product objection solutions during the sales presentation. **Therefore, the null hypothesis is accepted.**

## Hypothesis 7

**H<sub>07</sub>** There exist no significant differences between sales persons and non-sales persons regarding closing methods.

The factor analysis identified two factors namely typical closing and product closing for this factor therefore for the hypothesis regarding closing methods two sub-hypothesis was established.

**H<sub>07a</sub>** There exist no significant differences between sales persons and non-sales persons regarding typical closing.

**Table 6.33 Mean values and t-test results for typical closing for sales and non-sales persons**

Factor	Sales person		Non-sales person		Total Sample (Sales & non-sales personal)
	Mean	n	Mean	n	
Typical closing	2.96	59	2.77	47	MD 0.18847 t 1.087 df 93.016 Sig. 0.279 p-value = > 0.05 H <sub>0</sub> Accepted

For the factor “Typical closing” both sales persons (mean = 2.96) and non-sales persons (mean = 2.77) rarely to sometimes use different methods to close the sale during the sales presentation at trade shows. Form Table 6.33 it is clear that there are no significant differences between sales and non-sales persons in typical closing used during the sales presentation. **Therefore, H<sub>07a</sub> is accepted.**

**H<sub>07b</sub>** There exist no significant differences between sales persons and non-sales persons regarding product closing.

**Table 6.34 Mean values and t-test results for product closing for sales and non-sales persons**

Factor	Sales person		Non-sales person		Total Sample (Sales & non-sales personal)
	Mean	n	Mean	n	
Product closing	3.90	59	3.40	47	MD 0.49405 t 2.518 df 89.856 Sig. 0.013 p-value = < 0.05 H <sub>a</sub> Supported

For the factor “Product closing” sales persons (mean = 3.90) *often* close the sale using product characteristics and non-sales persons (mean = 3.40) *sometimes* close the sale using product characteristics during the sales presentation at trade shows. Table 6.34 indicate that there exist significant differences (p=0.013) between sales and non-sales persons regarding the use of “product closing”. Sales persons make use of product closing more than non-sales persons. **Therefore, the null hypothesis is not accepted since there is support for H<sub>a7b</sub>.**

### 6.6.2 Summary of hypotheses for sales and non-sales persons for the sales process at trade shows.

Table 6.35 is a summary of hypotheses one to seven. The conclusions for each of the findings will be discussed in chapter 7 and recommendations will be provided.

**Table 6.35 Hypotheses for the objective sales and non-sales person’s role in the sales process at trade shows**

Alternative Hypotheses		Not supported or supported
H <sub>a1</sub>	There exist significant differences between sales persons and non-sales persons regarding business actions used.	Not supported
H <sub>a2a</sub>	There exist significant differences between sales persons and non-sales persons regarding direct communication used in pre-show marketing activities.	Not supported
H <sub>a2b</sub>	There exist significant differences between sales persons and non-sales persons regarding promotional elements used in pre-show marketing activities.	Not supported
H <sub>a3a</sub>	There exist significant differences between sales persons and non-sales persons regarding trade show sponsorship used as at-show marketing activity.	Not supported
H <sub>a3b</sub>	There exist significant differences between sales persons and non-sales persons regarding promotional tools used as an at-show marketing activity.	Supported
H <sub>a4a</sub>	There exist significant differences between sales persons and non-sales persons regarding presentation methods used during the sales presentation.	Supported

**Table 6.35 cont....**

Alternative Hypotheses		Not supported or supported
H <sub>a4b</sub>	There exist significant differences between sales persons and non-sales persons regarding presentation actions used during the sales presentation.	Supported
H <sub>a4c</sub>	There exist significant differences between sales persons and non-sales persons regarding approach methods used in the sales presentation.	Not supported
H <sub>a4d</sub>	There exist significant differences between sales persons and non-sales persons regarding question approach used in the sales presentation.	Supported
H <sub>a5a</sub>	There exist significant differences between sales persons and non-sales persons regarding manifested objections experienced.	Not supported
H <sub>a5b</sub>	There exist significant differences between sales persons and non-sales persons regarding latent objections experienced.	Not supported
H <sub>a6a</sub>	There exist significant differences between sales persons and non-sales persons regarding standard objection solutions.	Not supported
H <sub>a6b</sub>	There exist significant differences between sales persons and non-sales persons regarding product objection.	Not supported
H <sub>a7a</sub>	There exist significant differences between sales persons and non-sales persons regarding typical closing.	Not supported
H <sub>a7b</sub>	There exist significant differences between sales persons and non-sales persons regarding product closing.	Supported

Next the type of trade shows and the role it plays in the sales process of trade shows will be discussed.

### **6.6.3 Objective: To determine if the various types of trade shows influence the sales process**

Hypotheses 8 to 14 were analysed to determine if there exist significant differences between the types of trade show, whether it is regional, nationally or internationally regarding the selling process that is followed. As indicated in Chapter 3 and Chapter 5 of this study there are differences between how businesses approach the different types of trade shows. Hypotheses Ho<sub>8</sub> to Ho<sub>14</sub> were formulated for this objective. Each hypothesis will be looked at individually and in Chapter 7 an interpretation of objective will be provided. Hypothesis 8 will be analysed using a MANOVA test as motivated in Section 6.5.1 of this chapter. Hypotheses 9 to 14 will be tested using ANOVA test due to three groups being compared.

## Hypothesis 8

**H<sub>08</sub>** There exist no significant differences for the type of trade show regarding business actions used.

As indicated MANOVA testing assess the difference between groups collectively rather than individually and was used to test hypothesis **H<sub>08</sub>**. The researcher relied on a 95 % level of confidence, and a subsequent significance level of 5% ( $p$ -value  $\leq 0.05$ ) to interpret the results of the hypothesis testing. Preliminary assumptions testing was conducted to check for normality, linearity, univariate and multivariate outliers, and homogeneity of variance and no serious violations were noted.

The Wilks' Lambda value indicates that there is no significant differences between the different types of trade shows regarding business actions used  $F(44.414)=0.863$ ,  $p=0.720$ ; Wilks' Lambda=0.839; partial Eta Squared=0.084.

**The null hypothesis H<sub>08</sub> was** accepted as there is no support that there is a significant difference between the different types of trade shows regarding business actions used.

## Hypothesis 9

**H<sub>09</sub>** There exist no significant differences for the type of trade show regarding pre-show marketing activities.

The factor analysis regarding pre-show marketing activities identified two factors therefore two sub-hypotheses followed.

**H<sub>09a</sub>** There exist no significant differences for the type of trade show regarding the use of direct communication as a pre-show marketing activity.

**Table 6.36 Mean values and ANOVA results for direct communication for the type of trade show**

Factor	Mean and n values type of trade show								ANOVA
	Regional		Nationally		International		Total		
	Mean	n	Mean	n	Mean	n	Mean	n	
Direct communication	3.50	76	3.48	63	3.46	93	3.48	232	DF = 2 F value = 0.051 P-value = 0.950 H <sub>0</sub> Accepted

For the factor “Direct communication”, regional (mean = 3.50) *neither agree nor disagree to agree* while nationally (mean = 3.48) and international (mean = 3.46) *neither agree nor disagree* that direct communication is used to attract attendees to the trade show. There are no significant differences between the different types of trade shows regarding the use of direct communication as a marketing activity to attract attendees to a trade show. **Therefore, the null hypothesis H<sub>09a</sub> is accepted.**

**H<sub>09b</sub>** There exist no significant differences for the type of trade show regarding the use of promotional elements.

**Table 6.37 Mean values and ANOVA results for promotional elements for the type of trade show**

Factor	Mean and n values type of trade show								ANOVA
	Regional		Nationally		International		Total		
	Mean	n	Mean	n	Mean	n	Mean	n	
Promotional elements	3.07	76	3.23	63	3.18	93	3.16	232	DF = 2 F value = 0.521 P-value = 0.594 H <sub>0</sub> Accepted

For the factor “Promotional elements”, regional (mean = 3.07), nationally (mean = 3.27) and international (mean = 3.18) *neither agree nor disagree* that promotional tools are used to attract attendees to the trade show. From the findings it is evident that there are no significant differences regarding promotional elements as pre-show marketing activity **Therefore, the null hypothesis is accepted.**

## Hypothesis 10

$H_{o10}$  There exist no significant differences for the type of trade show regarding at-show marketing activities.

As the factor analysis identified two factors therefore for Hypothesis 10 two sub-hypotheses was established.

$H_{o10a}$  There exist no significant differences for the type of trade show regarding trade show sponsorship.

**Table 6.38 Mean values and ANOVA results for trade show sponsorship for the type of trade show**

Factor	Mean and n values type of trade show								ANOVA
	Regional		Nationally		International		Total		
	Mean	n	Mean	n	Mean	n	Mean	n	
Trade show sponsorship	2.60	76	2.66	63	2.58	93	2.61	232	DF = 2 F value = 0.521 P-value = 0.883 $H_o$ Accepted

For the factor “Trade show sponsorship” the types of trade shows regional (mean = 2.60), nationally (mean = 2.66) and international (mean = 2.58) disagree regarding the methods used to attract attendees to the exhibit stand at the trade shows. There are no significant differences for the type of trade show regarding trade show sponsorship as an at-show marketing activity. **Therefore, the null hypothesis  $H_{o10a}$  is accepted.**

$H_{o10b}$  There exist no significant differences regarding the type of trade show regarding promotional tools used.

**Table 6.39 Mean values and ANOVA results for promotional tools for the type of trade show**

Factor	Mean and n values type of trade show								ANOVA
	Regional		Nationally		International		Total		
	Mean	n	Mean	n	Mean	n	Mean	n	
Promotional tools	3.57	76	3.48	63	3.53	93	3.53	232	DF = 2 F value = 0.106 P-value = 0.899 H <sub>0</sub> Accepted

For the factor “Promotional tools” regional (mean = 3.57) and international (mean = 3.53) *neither agree nor disagree to agree* while nationally (mean = 3.48) *neither agree nor disagree* regarding the promotional tools used to attract attendees to the exhibit stand as part of marketing activities used. From Table 6.39 it is evident that there are no significant differences regarding type of trade show regarding promotional tools used as a marketing activity to attract attendees to the business exhibit stand at the trade show. **The null hypothesis H<sub>010b</sub> is therefore, accepted.**

### Hypothesis 11

**H<sub>011</sub>** There exist no significant differences for the type of trade show regarding the sales presentation.

The factor analysis identified four factors regarding sales presentation therefore four sub-hypotheses followed.

**H<sub>011a</sub>** There exist no significant differences for the type of trade show regarding presentation methods.

**Table 6.40 Mean values and ANOVA results for presentation methods for the type of trade show**

Factor	Mean and n values type of trade show								ANOVA
	Regional		Nationally		International		Total		
	Mean	n	Mean	n	Mean	n	Mean	n	
Presentation methods	2.73	76	3.08	63	3.01	93	2.94	232	DF = 2 F value = 2.949 P-value = 0.054 H <sub>0</sub> Accepted

For the factor “Presentation methods”, regional (mean = 2.73) *rarely* while nationally (mean = 3.08) and international (mean = 3.01) *sometimes to rarely* used presentation methods at the trade show exhibit stand. There are no significant differences regarding type of trade shows regarding presentation methods used. **With a p-value=0.054 of, the null hypothesis  $H_{011a}$  is accepted.**

**$H_{011b}$**  There exist no significant differences for the type of trade show regarding the presentation actions.

**Table 6.41 Mean values and ANOVA results for presentation actions for the type of trade show**

Factor	Mean and n values type of trade show								ANOVA
	Regional		Nationally		International		Total		
	Mean	n	Mean	n	Mean	n	Mean	n	
Presentation actions	3.78	76	3.74	63	3.82	93	3.78	232	DF = 2 F value = 0.174 P-value = 0.840 $H_0$ Accepted

For the factor “Presentation actions” all types of trade shows, regional (mean = 3.78), nationally (mean = 3.74) and international (mean = 3.82) often take actions in the sales presentation. In Table 6.41 it can be seen that there were no significant differences for the type of trade show regarding presentation actions. **Therefore, the null hypothesis  $H_{011b}$ , is accepted.**

**$H_{011c}$**  There exist no significant differences for the type of trade show regarding approach methods.

**Table 6.42 Mean values and ANOVA results for approach methods for the type of trade show**

Factor	Mean and n values type of trade show								ANOVA
	Regional		Nationally		International		Total		
	Mean	n	Mean	n	Mean	n	Mean	n	
Approach methods	3.25	76	3.31	63	3.23	93	3.26	232	DF = 2 F value = 0.169 P-value = 0.844 $H_0$ Accepted

For the factor “Approach method” on the all types of trade shows regional (mean = 3.25), nationally (mean = 3.31) and international (mean = 3.23) approach method is used sometimes to start the sales presentations. From Table 6.42 it is clear that there are no significant differences for the type of trade shows regarding approached methods used in the sales presentation. **The null hypothesis H<sub>011c</sub> is therefore, accepted.**

**H<sub>011d</sub>** There exist no significant differences for the type of trade show regarding question approach.

**Table 6.43 Mean values and ANOVA results for question approach for the type of trade show**

Factor	Mean and n values type of trade show								ANOVA
	Regional		Nationally		International		Total		
	Mean	n	Mean	n	Mean	n	Mean	n	
Questions approach	3.49	76	3.71	63	3.63	93	3.60	232	DF = 2 F value = 1.015 P-value = 0.364 H <sub>0</sub> Accepted

For the factor “Questions approach sales opening” regional (mean = 3.49) *sometimes*, while nationally (mean = 3.71), and international (mean = 3.63) *often* ask questions during a sales presentations. From the findings it is evident that for the type of trade shows there are no significant differences regarding question approach used in the sales presentation. **Therefore, the null hypothesis H<sub>011d</sub> is accepted.**

## Hypothesis 12

**H<sub>012</sub>** There exist no significant differences for the type of trade show regarding objections experienced.

As the factor analysis identified two factors two sub-hypotheses followed the hypothesis.

**H<sub>012a</sub>** There exist no significant differences for the type of trade show regarding manifested objections.

**Table 6.44 Mean values and ANOVA results for manifested objections for the type of trade show**

Factor	Mean and n values type of trade show								ANOVA
	Regional		Nationally		International		Total		
	Mean	n	Mean	n	Mean	n	Mean	n	
Manifested objections	2.66	76	2.75	63	2.81	93	2.75	232	DF = 2 F value = 0.763 P-value = 0.467 H <sub>0</sub> Accepted

For the factor “Manifested objections” all types of trade shows regional (mean = 2.66), nationally (mean = 2.75) and international (mean = 2.81) rarely experience different types of objections during the sales presentation. From Table 6.44 it is evident that there are no significant differences for the type of trade show regarding manifested objections. **The null hypothesis H<sub>012a</sub> is therefore accepted.**

**H<sub>012b</sub>** There exist no significant differences for the type of trade show regarding latent objections.

**Table 6.45 Mean values and ANOVA results for latent objections for the type of trade show**

Factor	Mean and n values type of trade show								ANOVA
	Regional		Nationally		International		Total		
	Mean	n	Mean	N	Mean	n	Mean	n	
Latent objection	3.21	76	3.06	63	3.09	93	3.12	232	DF = 2 F value = 0.761 P-value = 0.469 H <sub>0</sub> Accepted

For the factor “Latent objections”, regional (mean = 3.21) *sometimes*, while nationally (mean = 3.06) and international (mean = 3.09) *rarely to sometimes* experience latent objections during the sales presentation at the exhibit stand. It is evident in Table 6.45 that there are no significant differences for the type of trade show regarding latent objection. **Therefore, the null hypothesis H<sub>012b</sub> is accepted.**

### Hypothesis 13

**H<sub>o13</sub>** There exist no significant differences for the type of trade show regarding dealing with objections.

The factor analysis revealed two factors and therefore two sub-hypotheses were formulated.

**H<sub>o13a</sub>** There exist no significant differences for the type of trade show regarding standard objection solutions.

**Table 6.46 Mean values and ANOVA results for standard objection solutions for the type of trade show**

Factor	Mean and n values type of trade show								ANOVA
	Regional		Nationally		International		Total		
	Mean	n	Mean	n	Mean	n	Mean	n	
Standard objection solutions	1.92 <sup>a</sup>	76	2.18 <sup>b</sup>	63	2.31 <sup>a</sup>	93	2.15	232	DF = 2 F value = 5.157 P-value = 0.006 H <sub>a</sub> <b>Supported</b>

The results of the Scheffé *post hoc* test are indicated with <sup>a</sup> and/or <sup>b</sup>. All mean values containing the same letters (for example, <sup>a</sup>) indicate that the groups differ significantly from one another. All mean values containing different letters (for example, <sup>a</sup> or <sup>b</sup>) indicates that these groups do not differ significantly.

For the factor “Standard objection solution” on the levels of frequency both regional (mean = 1.92) and nationally (mean = 2.18) *never to rarely* while international (mean = 2.31) *rarely* use methods to deal with objections. Furthermore the **Scheffé *post hoc*** test revealed that the factor “Standard objection solution” are used significantly more at international trade shows (mean=2.31) than regional trade shows (mean = 1.92). It should however be noted that these solutions are rarely used at any of the different types of trade shows. Table 6.46 indicates that there exist significant differences for the types of trade show for the factor “Standard objection solution”. **Therefore the null hypothesis H<sub>o13a</sub> is rejected and H<sub>a13a</sub> is supported.**

**H<sub>o13b</sub>** There exist no significant differences for the type of trade show regarding product objection solutions.

**Table 6.47 Mean values and ANOVA results for product objection solution for the type of trade show**

Factor	Mean and n values type of trade show								ANOVA
	Regional		Nationally		International		Total		
	Mean	n	Mean	n	Mean	n	Mean	n	
Product objection solution	2.89	76	2.99	63	3.03	93	2.97	232	DF = 2 F value = 0.374 P-value = 0.688 H <sub>0</sub> Accepted

For the factor “Product objection solution” all types of trade shows regional (mean = 2.89), nationally (mean = 2.99) and international (mean = 3.03) *rarely to sometimes* use product characteristics to overcome objection during sales presentation at the exhibit stand. For the factor “Product objection solution” there exist no significant differences for how objections are dealt with during sales the presentation for the type of trade show. **The null hypothesis H<sub>013b</sub> is therefore, accepted.**

#### Hypothesis 14

**H<sub>014</sub>** There exist no significant differences for the type of trade show regarding closing methods.

The factor analysis identified two factors regarding closing methods therefore two sub-hypotheses followed.

**H<sub>014a</sub>** There exist no significant differences for the type of trade show regarding typical closing.

**Table 6.48 Mean values and ANOVA results for typical closing for the type of trade show**

Factor	Mean and n values type of trade show								ANOVA
	Regional		Nationally		International		Total		
	Mean	n	Mean	n	Mean	n	Mean	n	
Typical closing	2.93	36	3.09	32	2.64	38	2.88	106	DF = 2 F value = 2.396 P-value = 0.096 H <sub>0</sub> Accepted

For the factor “Typical closing” regional (mean = 2.93) and nationally (mean = 3.09) *rarely to sometimes*, while for international (mean = 2.64) *rarely* use typical closing methods during the sales presentation. From Table 6.48 it is evident that there are no significant differences for the type of trade show regarding the use of typical closing in the sales presentation. **Therefore, the null hypothesis  $H_{014a}$  is accepted.**

**$H_{014b}$**  There exist no significant differences for the type of trade show regarding product closing.

**Table 6.49 Mean values and ANOVA results for product closing for the type of trade show**

Factor	Mean and n values type of trade show								ANOVA
	Regional		Nationally		International		Total		
	Mean	n	Mean	n	Mean	n	Mean	n	
Product closing	3.72	36	3.67	32	3.64	38	3.68	106	DF = 2 F value = 0.053 P-value = 0.949 $H_0$ Accepted

For the factor “Product closing” all types of trade shows regional (mean = 3.72), nationally (mean = 3.67) and international (mean = 3.64) *sometimes* use product characteristics when closing the sales presentation at trade shows. As indicated in Table 6.49 the factor “Product closing” used during sales presentation there exist no significant differences for types of trade shows. **The null hypothesis  $H_{014b}$  is therefore, accepted.**

#### 6.6.4 Summary of hypotheses for the type of trade shows role on the sales process

In the table below is a summary for the hypotheses for the objective the type of trade shows role on sales process. The conclusions and recommendations that that came from the findings in the table below will be discussed in Chapter 7.

**Table 6.50 Hypotheses for the objective the type of trade shows role in the sales process**

Alternative Hypotheses		Not supported or supported
H <sub>a8</sub>	There exist significant differences for the type of trade show regarding business actions used.	Not supported
H <sub>a9a</sub>	There exist significant differences for the type of trade show regarding pre-show marketing activities.	Not supported
H <sub>a9b</sub>	There exist significant differences for the type of trade show regarding the use of promotional elements.	Not supported
H <sub>a10a</sub>	There exist significant differences for the type of trade show regarding trade show sponsorship.	Not supported
H <sub>a10b</sub>	There exist significant differences regarding the type of trade show regarding promotional tools used.	Not supported
H <sub>a11a</sub>	There exist significant differences for the type of trade show regarding presentation methods.	Not supported
H <sub>a11b</sub>	There exist significant differences for the type of trade show regarding the presentation actions.	Not supported
H <sub>a11c</sub>	There exist significant differences for the type of trade show regarding approach methods..	Not supported
H <sub>a11d</sub>	There exist significant differences for the type of trade show regarding question approach.	Not supported
H <sub>a12a</sub>	There exist significant differences for the type of trade show regarding manifested objections.	Not supported
H <sub>a12b</sub>	There exist significant differences for the type of trade show regarding latent objections.	Not supported
H <sub>a13a</sub>	There exist significant differences for the type of trade show regarding standard objection solutions.	Supported
H <sub>a13b</sub>	There exist significant differences for the type of trade show regarding product objection solutions.	Not supported
H <sub>a14a</sub>	There exist significant differences for the type of trade show regarding typical closing.	Not supported
H <sub>a14b</sub>	There exist significant differences for the type of trade show regarding product closing.	Not supported

**6.6.5 Objective: To determine if the type of business operations of an exhibitor influence the sales process followed at trade shows**

As indicated in Chapter 2, Chapter 3, Chapter 4 and Chapter 5 exhibitors can be classified according their business operations that include the sales of goods, service industry / professionals, construction / manufacturing and other. In this section of the study possible differences between the business activities that an exhibitor falls within and the sales process they follow at trade shows are investigated. Seven hypotheses were set to test the objective. The hypotheses were tested through an ANOVA test except hypothesis 15 that will done by means of a MANOVA. The reason for using a MANOVA for business planning for trade shows is discussed in Section 6.5.1 of this chapter.

## Hypothesis 15

**H<sub>o15</sub>** There is no significant differences for business operations of an exhibitor regarding business actions used.

As indicated MANOVA testing assess the difference between groups collectively rather than individually and was used to test hypothesis 8. The researcher relied on a 95 % level of confidence, and a subsequent significance level of 5% ( $p$ -value  $\leq 0.05$ ) to interpret the results of the hypothesis testing. Preliminary assumptions testing was conducted to check for normality, linearity, univariate and multivariate outliers, and homogeneity of variance and no serious violations were noted.

The Wilks'Lambda value indicates that there is no significant differences between the different business activities regarding business actions used  $F(110.100)=1.110$ ,  $p=0.217$ ; Wilks'Lambda=0.570; partial Eta Squared=0.106.

**The null hypothesis H<sub>o15</sub> was** accepted as there is no support that there is a significant difference between the business operations of exhibitors regarding business actions used.

## Hypothesis 16

**H<sub>o16</sub>** There is no significant differences for business operations of an exhibitor regarding pre-show marketing activities.

As two factors were identified by the factor analysis therefore two sub-hypotheses were formulated for Hypothesis 16.

**H<sub>o16a</sub>** There is no significant differences for business operations of an exhibitor regarding direct communication used as a pre-show marketing activity.

**Table 6.51 Mean values and ANOVA results for direct communication for business operations**

Factor	Mean and n value for business operations of exhibitors										ANOVA
	Sales of goods		Service industry / Professionals		Construction / Manufacturing		Other		Total		
	Mean	n	Mean	n	Mean	n	Mean	n	Mean	n	
Direct communication	3.54	83	3.50	41	3.36	80	3.60	28	3.48	232	DF = 3 F value = 0.811 P-value = 0.489 H <sub>0</sub> Accepted

For the factor “Direct communication”, sales of goods (mean = 3.54) and service industry / professionals (mean = 3.50) *neither agree nor disagree* while construction / manufacturing (mean = 3.36) *disagree to neither agree nor disagree*, and other (mean = 3.60) *neither agree nor disagree to agree*. From the findings it is evident that there are no significant differences for the business operations of exhibitors regarding the direct communication they use as pre-show marketing activities. **Therefore, the null hypothesis H<sub>016a</sub>, is accepted.**

**H<sub>016b</sub>** There is no significant differences for business operations of an exhibitor regarding promotional elements used as a pre-show marketing activity.

**Table 6.52 Mean values and ANOVA results for promotional elements for business operations**

Factor	Mean and n value for business operations of exhibitors										ANOVA
	Sales of goods		Service industry / Professionals		Construction / Manufacturing		Other		Total		
	Mean	n	Mean	n	Mean	n	Mean	n	Mean	n	
Promotional elements	3.30	83	3.19	41	3.00	80	3.14	28	3.16	232	DF = 3 F value = 1.364 P-value = 0.255 H <sub>0</sub> Accepted

For the factor “Promotional elements”, sales of goods (mean = 3.30), service industry / professionals (mean = 3.19), construction / manufacturing (mean = 3.00) and other (mean = 3.16) *disagree to neither agree nor disagree* regarding marketing activities used to attract attendees to a trade show. From Table 6.52 it is evident that there is no difference for the businesses operations of an exhibitor

regarding promotional elements used as pre-show marketing activities. **Therefore, the null hypothesis  $H_{016b}$ , is accepted**

### Hypothesis 17

**$H_{017}$**  There is no significant differences for business operations of an exhibitor regarding at-show marketing activities.

The factor analysis identified two factors therefore two sub-hypotheses followed from Hypothesis 17.

**$H_{017a}$**  There is no significant differences for business operations of an exhibitor regarding trade show sponsorship as at-show marketing activities.

**Table 6.53 Mean values and ANOVA results for trade show sponsorship for business operations**

Factor	Mean and n value for business operations of exhibitors										ANOVA
	Sales of goods		Service industry / Professionals		Construction / Manufacturing		Other		Total		
	Mean	n	Mean	n	Mean	n	Mean	n	Mean	n	
Trade show sponsorship	2.67	83	2.84	41	2.41	80	2.63	28	2.61	232	DF = 3 F value = 1.939 P-value = 0.124 $H_0$ Accepted

For the factor “Trade show sponsorship”, sales of goods (mean = 2.67), service industry / professionals (mean = 2.84) and other (mean = 2.63) *disagree to neither agree nor disagree* while construction / manufacturing (mean = 2.41) *disagree* on the use of sponsorship to attract the attendees to the exhibit stand. From Table 6.53, it can be seen that there is no significant differences for the business operations regarding the use of trade show sponsorship as at-show marketing activity. **Therefore, the null hypothesis  $H_{017a}$  was accepted.**

**$H_{017b}$**  There is no significant differences for business operations of an exhibitor regarding promotional tools at-show marketing activities.

**Table 6.54 Mean values and ANOVA results for promotional tools for business operations**

Factor	Mean and n value for business operations of exhibitors										ANOVA
	Sales of goods		Service industry / Professionals		Construction / Manufacturing		Other		Total		
	Mean	n	Mean	n	Mean	n	Mean	n	Mean	n	
Promotional tools	3.77 <sup>a</sup>	83	3.35	41	3.23 <sup>a</sup>	80	3.68	28	3.53	232	DF = 3 F value = 3.137 P-value = 0.026 H <sub>a</sub> <b>Supported</b>

The results of the Scheffé *post hoc* test are indicated with <sup>a</sup> and/or <sup>b</sup>. All mean values containing the same letters (for example, <sup>a</sup>) indicate that the groups differ significantly from one another. All mean values containing different letters (for example, <sup>a</sup> or <sup>b</sup>) indicates that these groups do not differ significantly.

For the factor “Promotional tools” regarding business activities sales of goods (mean = 3.77) and other (mean = 3.68) *neither agree nor disagree to agree* while the service industry / professionals (mean = 3.35) and construction / manufacturing (mean = 3.23) *disagree to neither agree nor disagree* that they use of promotional tools to attract attendees to the exhibit stand. The **Scheffé *post hoc*** test further revealed that the factor “promotional tools” are used significantly more by firms selling goods (mean=3.77) than construction/manufacturing (mean = 3.23). As indicated in Table 6.54 it is clear that there are significant differences regarding promotional tools used to attract attendees to the exhibit stand. **Therefore, the null hypothesis H<sub>017b</sub> is rejected and H<sub>a17b</sub> is supported.**

### Hypothesis 18

**H<sub>018</sub>** There is no significant differences for business operations of an exhibitor regarding the sales presentation.

From the factor analysis four factors were identified therefore four sub-hypotheses followed from Hypothesis 18.

**H<sub>018a</sub>** There is no significant differences for business operations of an exhibitor regarding sales presentation methods.

**Table 6.55 Mean values and ANOVA results for sales presentation methods for business operations**

Factor	Mean and n value for business operations of exhibitors										ANOVA
	Sales of goods		Service industry / Professionals		Construction / Manufacturing		Other		Total		
	Mean	n	Mean	n	Mean	n	Mean	n	Mean	n	
Presentation methods	2.98	83	3.18	41	2.78	80	2.90	28	2.94	232	DF = 3 F value = 1.718 P-value = 0.164 H <sub>0</sub> Accepted

For the factor “Presentation methods”, goods (mean = 2.98), service industry / professionals (mean = 3.18), construction / manufacturing (mean = 2.78) and other (mean = 2.90) rarely to sometimes make use of presentation methods. As indicated in Table 6.55 there is no significant differences for the business operations regarding the sales presentation methods used. **Therefore, the null hypothesis H<sub>018a</sub> is accepted**

**H<sub>018b</sub>** There is no significant differences for business operations of an exhibitor regarding presentation activities.

**Table 6.56 Mean values and ANOVA results for presentation activities for business operations**

Factor	Mean and n value for business operations of exhibitors										ANOVA
	Sales of goods		Service industry / Professionals		Construction / Manufacturing		Other		Total		
	Mean	n	Mean	n	Mean	n	Mean	n	Mean	n	
Presentation activities	3.90	83	3.76	41	3.68	80	3.75	28	3.78	232	DF = 3 F value = 1.143 P-value = 0.333 H <sub>0</sub> Accepted

For the factor “Presentation activities”, sales of goods (mean = 3.90), service industry / professionals (mean = 3.76), construction / manufacturing (mean = 3.68) and other (mean = 3.75) sometimes too often make use of specific actions during the presentation. From the findings it is evident that for business operations there are no significant differences regarding presentation activities. **Therefore, the null hypothesis H<sub>018b</sub> is accepted.**

**H<sub>018c</sub>** There is no significant differences for business operations of an exhibitor regarding approach methods.

**Table 6.57 Mean values and ANOVA results for approach methods for business operations**

Factor	Mean and n value for business operations of exhibitors										ANOVA
	Sales of goods		Service industry / Professionals		Construction / Manufacturing		Other		Total		
	Mean	n	Mean	n	Mean	n	Mean	n	Mean	n	
Approach methods	3.34	83	3.36	41	3.10	80	3.30	28	3.26	232	DF = 3 F value = 1.446 P-value = 0.230 H <sub>0</sub> Accepted

For the factor “Approach methods” sales of goods (mean = 3.34), service industry / professionals (mean = 3.36), construction / manufacturing (mean = 3.10) and other (mean = 3.30) rarely to sometimes use methods to start a presentation. From Table 6.57, it can be seen that there is no significant differences for business operations regarding approach method used in the sales presentation. **Therefore, the null hypothesis H<sub>018c</sub> is accepted.**

**H<sub>018d</sub>** There is no significant differences for business operations of an exhibitor regarding question approach.

**Table 6.58 Mean values and ANOVA results for question approach for business operations**

Factor	Mean and n value for business operations of exhibitors										ANOVA
	Sales of goods		Service industry / Professionals		Construction / Manufacturing		Other		Total		
	Mean	n	Mean	n	Mean	n	Mean	n	Mean	n	
Question approach	3.81 <sup>a</sup>	83	3.66 <sup>b</sup>	41	3.42 <sup>a</sup>	80	3.43 <sup>c</sup>	28	3.60	232	DF = 3 F value = 2.739 P-value = 0.044 H <sub>a</sub> Supported

The results of the Scheffé *post hoc* test are indicated with <sup>a</sup> and/or <sup>b</sup>. All mean values containing the same letters (for example, <sup>a</sup>) indicate that the groups differ significantly from one another. All mean values containing different letters (for example, <sup>a</sup> or <sup>b</sup>) indicates that these groups do not differ significantly.

For the factor “Question approach” sales of goods (mean = 3.81) and service industry / professionals (mean = 3.66) *sometimes to often* use questions during a presentation while construction / manufacturing (mean = 3.43) and other (mean =

3.43) *sometimes* ask questions during a presentation. The **Scheffé post hoc** test further revealed that the factor “question approach” are used more significantly by exhibitors selling goods (mean=3.81) than manufacturing (mean = 3.43). As indicated in Table 6.58 there is evidence that significant differences exist for question approach used in the sales presentation. **The null hypothesis  $H_{o18d}$  is therefore, rejected and the alternative hypothesis  $H_{a18d}$  supported.**

### Hypothesis 19

**$H_{o19}$**  There is no significant differences for business operations of an exhibitor regarding objections experienced.

The factor analysis identified two factors therefore two sub-hypotheses followed the hypothesis.

**$H_{o19a}$**  There is no significant differences for business operations of an exhibitor regarding manifested objections.

**Table 6.59 Mean values and ANOVA results for manifested objections for business operations**

Factor	Mean and n value for business operations of exhibitors										ANOVA
	Sales of goods		Service industry / Professionals		Construction / Manufacturing		Other		Total		
	Mean	n	Mean	n	Mean	n	Mean	n	Mean	n	
Manifested objections	2.70	83	2.90	41	2.82	80	2.48	28	2.45	232	DF = 3 F value = 1.780 P-value = 0.152 $H_o$ Accepted

For the factor “Manifested objections” for sales of goods (mean = 2.70), service industry / professionals (mean = 2.90) and construction / manufacturing (mean = 2.82) *sometimes to rarely* while other (mean = 2.48) *rarely* experience different manifested objections during the sales presentation regarding business operations. No significant differences exist for the business operations of an exhibitor regarding manifested objections as indicated in Table 6.59. **The null hypothesis  $H_{o19a}$  are therefore, accepted.**

**H<sub>019b</sub>** There is no significant differences for business operations of an exhibitor regarding latent objections.

**Table 6.60 Mean values and ANOVA results for latent objections for business operations**

Factor	Mean and n value for business operations of exhibitors										ANOVA
	Sales of goods		Service industry / Professionals		Construction / Manufacturing		Other		Total		
	Mean	n	Mean	n	Mean	n	Mean	n	Mean	n	
Latent objection	3.14	83	3.04	41	3.16	80	3.07	28	3.12	232	DF = 3 F value = 0.283 P-value = 0.837 H <sub>0</sub> Accepted

For the factor “Latent objections”, sales of goods (mean = 3.14), service industry / professionals (mean = 3.04), construction / manufacturing (mean = 3.16) and other (mean = 3.07) rarely to sometimes experience latent objections in the sales presentation. It is evident that no significant differences exist regarding the business operations of exhibitors regarding latent objections during the sales presentation. **Therefore, the null hypothesis H<sub>019b</sub> is accepted.**

### Hypothesis 20

**H<sub>020</sub>** There is no significant differences for business operations of an exhibitor regarding dealing with objections.

The factor analysis identified two factors and therefore two sub-hypotheses followed the hypothesis.

**H<sub>020a</sub>** There is no significant differences for business operations of an exhibitor regarding standard objection solutions.

**Table 6.61 Mean values and ANOVA results for standard objection solutions for business operations**

Factor	Mean and n value for business operations of exhibitors										ANOVA
	Sales of goods		Service industry / Professionals		Construction / Manufacturing		Other		Total		
	Mean	n	Mean	n	Mean	n	Mean	n	Mean	n	
Standard objection solutions	2.09	83	2.17	41	2.18	80	2.16	28	2.15	232	DF = 3 F value = 0.183 P-value = 0.908 H <sub>0</sub> Accepted

For the factor “Standard objection solution” sales of goods (mean = 2.09), service industry / professionals (mean = 2.17), construction / manufacturing (mean = 2.18) and other (mean = 2.16) rarely use methods to deal with objections. From the findings it is evident that there are no significant differences for business operations regarding the use of standard objection solutions in the sales presentation. **Therefore, the null hypothesis H<sub>020a</sub> is accepted.**

**H<sub>020b</sub>** There is no significant differences for business operations of an exhibitor regarding product objections solutions

**Table 6.62 Mean values and ANOVA results for product objections solutions for business operations**

Factor	Mean and n value for business operations of exhibitors										ANOVA
	Sales of goods		Service industry / Professionals		Construction / Manufacturing		Other		Total		
	Mean	n	Mean	n	Mean	n	Mean	n	Mean	n	
Product objection solution	2.87	83	3.01	41	3.05	80	3.02	28	2.97	232	DF = 3 F value = 0.421 P-value = 0.738 H <sub>0</sub> Accepted

For the factor “Product objection solution” sales of goods (mean = 2.87), service industry / professionals (mean = 3.01), construction / manufacturing (mean = 3.05) and other (mean = 3.02) rarely use product characteristics to overcome an objection. In Table 6.62 it can be seen that there is no significant differences for the business operations of exhibitors regarding the use of product objection solutions in the sales presentation. **The null hypothesis H<sub>020b</sub> is therefore, accepted.**

## Hypothesis 21

**H<sub>021</sub>** There is no significant differences for business operations of an exhibitor regarding closing methods.

From the factor analysis two factors were identified therefore two sub-hypotheses followed the hypothesis.

**H<sub>021a</sub>** There is no significant differences for business operations of an exhibitor regarding typical closing.

**Table 6.63 Mean values and ANOVA results for typical for business operations**

Factor	Mean and n value for business operations of exhibitors										ANOVA
	Sales of goods		Service industry / Professionals		Construction / Manufacturing		Other		Total		
	Mean	n	Mean	n	Mean	n	Mean	n	Mean	n	
Typical closing	3.16	38	2.96	14	2.67	42	2.58	12	2.87	106	DF = 3 F value = 2.668 P-value = 0.052 H <sub>0</sub> Accepted

For the factor “Typical closing”, sales of goods (mean = 3.16) and service industry / professionals (mean = 2.96) *rarely to sometimes* while construction / manufacturing (mean = 2.67) and other (mean = 2.58) *rarely* use closing methods at trade shows. From the findings it is evident that there are no significant differences regarding business operations and the use of typical closings in the sales presentation. **The null hypothesis H<sub>021a</sub> is therefore, accepted.**

**H<sub>021b</sub>** There is no significant differences for business operations of an exhibitor regarding product closing.

**Table 6.64 Mean values and ANOVA results for product closing for business operations**

Factor	Mean and n value for business operations of exhibitors										ANOVA
	Sales of goods		Service industry / Professionals		Construction / Manufacturing		Other		Total		
	Mean	n	Mean	n	Mean	n	Mean	n	Mean	n	
Product closing	3.75	38	3.68	14	3.68	42	3.46	12	3.68	106	DF = 3 F value = 0.239 P-value = 0.869 H <sub>0</sub> Accepted

For the factor “Product closing”, business operations sales of goods (mean = 3.16) and service industry / professionals (mean = 2.96) *rarely to sometimes* while construction / manufacturing (mean = 2.67) and other (mean = 2.58) *rarely* use closing methods at trade shows. From the findings it is evident that there is no significant differences for the business operations of exhibitors regarding the use of product closing used in the sales presentation. **Therefore, the null hypothesis H<sub>021b</sub> is accepted.**

### 6.6.6 Summary for hypotheses business operations of an exhibitor role on the sales process for trade shows

In the Table 6.55 is a summary for the hypotheses for the objective business operations of an exhibitor role on the sales process of trade shows. The findings of this section as indicated in the table will be used to form conclusions and recommendations in Chapter 7.

**Table 6.65 Hypotheses for the objective business activities of an exhibitor role on the sales process**

Alternative hypotheses		Not supported or supported
H <sub>a15</sub>	There is significant differences for business operations of an exhibitor regarding business actions used.	Not Supported
H <sub>a16a</sub>	There is significant differences for business operations of an exhibitor regarding direct communication used as a pre-show marketing activity.	Not Supported
H <sub>a16b</sub>	There is significant differences for business operations of an exhibitor regarding promotional elements used as a pre-show marketing activity.	Not Supported
H <sub>a17a</sub>	There is significant differences for business operations of an exhibitor regarding trade show sponsorship as at-show marketing activities.	Not Supported

**Table 6.65 cont....**

Alternative hypotheses		Not supported or supported
H <sub>a17b</sub>	There is significant differences for business operations of an exhibitor regarding promotional tools at-show marketing activities.	Supported
H <sub>a18a</sub>	There is significant differences for business operations of an exhibitor regarding sales presentation methods.	Not Supported
H <sub>a18b</sub>	There is significant differences for business operations of an exhibitor regarding presentation activities.	Not Supported
H <sub>a18C</sub>	There is significant differences for business operations of an exhibitor regarding approach methods.	Not Supported
H <sub>a18d</sub>	There is significant differences for business operations of an exhibitor regarding question approach.	Supported
H <sub>a19a</sub>	There is significant differences for business operations of an exhibitor regarding manifested objections.	Not Supported
H <sub>a19b</sub>	There is significant differences for business operations of an exhibitor regarding latent objections.	Not Supported
H <sub>a20a</sub>	There is significant differences for business operations of an exhibitor regarding standard objection solutions.	Not Supported
H <sub>a20b</sub>	There is significant differences for business operations of an exhibitor regarding product objections solutions.	Not Supported
H <sub>a21a</sub>	There is significant differences for business operations of an exhibitor regarding typical closing.	Not Supported
H <sub>a21b</sub>	There is significant differences for business operations of an exhibitor regarding product closing.	Not Supported

## 6.7 SUMMARY

This chapter reported the findings of the primary data gathered from the respondents. In the first two sections of this chapter descriptive statics was used to provide a profile of the respondents and the business that they work for. Secondly, a factor analysis was done to find the underlying factors for each section of the questionnaire that was constructed through the literature review.

After the factor analysis t-tests, ANOVAS and MANOVAS were done to address the formulated objectives and hypotheses. Each section that dealt with an objective concluded with a summary of the outcome of each hypothesis. The results from this chapter may be of importance to exhibitors in their planning of their pre and at show sales strategies. Chapter 6 can also provide trade show organisers with sales guidelines that can be provided to exhibitors. In the Chapter 7 conclusions and recommendations based on the main findings of this chapter will be given.

## CHAPTER 7

### CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

#### 7.1 INTRODUCTION

In Chapter 5, a layout of the methodology followed in this study was provided; and in Chapter 6, the results were discussed. As indicated in the previous chapters of this study, there is limited research in the field of the sales process, and more specifically at trade shows. Therefore, this study was explorative in nature. In this chapter, the main findings from Chapter 6 will be used to draw the various conclusions. The implications of these conclusions will be discussed; and some recommendations will be made. The limitations of the study, and some possible future research areas, are also looked at – in addition to the academic contribution. The chapter ends with an evaluation of the research results obtained for each of the objectives formulated in Chapter 1.

#### 7.2 IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY

Although a number of books exist on personal selling (vide section 4.2) and the sales process (vide. Section 4.6), there is a limited amount of academic research (vide. Section 5.4) that has been done on this topic. It was also indicated in Chapter 3 of this study that trade shows are also under-researched. This study is explorative in nature; and it aims to contribute to the field of the sales process at trade shows. In previous chapters, the important role that trade shows – and in particular that sales play in business-to-business (B2B) marketing – was highlighted.

This study could be a useful guide for research into other fields, such as business personal selling; B2B IMC; overall business-marketing strategies and business staff training – where sales play an important role in the success of business marketing.

Businesses could make use of the data gathered to evaluate each stage of the sales process, and to provide them with a better understanding of the role of trade shows and sales in their marketing mix.

In the first part of this chapter, the findings regarding business actions for trade shows will be discussed. Secondly, the factors that make up the different stages of the sales process will be looked at. Thereafter, there will be a discussion on sales versus non-sales persons, types of trade show, and the role of business operations in the sales process for trade shows.

### **7.3 MAIN FINDINGS RELATING TO BUSINESS ACTIONS FOR TRADE SHOWS**

As mentioned in Chapter 3 of this study, a number of business actions are part of a trade show. Although a number of the business actions relate to sales, they do not make up part of the sales process *per se*. Business actions will, therefore, be discussed separately from the other sections; although they were included in Chapter 6 as part of the sales process. This was done, in order to maintain the continuity of the findings – and also to provide a better overview of the business actions for trade shows.

These business actions consist of both sales and non-sales actions of an exhibitor who exhibits at a trade show.

#### **7.3.1 Conclusions and implications of the main findings of the business actions for trade shows**

The section on business actions for trade show dealt with a number of aspects that included elements, such as: marketing; the setting of objectives; evaluation and planning; staff at trade shows; the introduction of products, the measurement of success, and more of such issues (vide. Section 3.6.1).

Trade shows as indicated in Figure 6.8 assist in image-building and exhibitors agreed that the business image was enhanced through trade shows (m=4.08).

There were also sales-related activities, such as acquiring sales ( $m=3.86$ ) at the trade show. Furthermore, information-gathering can be done by using trade shows as a place to provide the businesses with information on their industry ( $m=3.62$ ); and they can also be used to acquire information on competitors ( $m=3.07$ ).

The afore-mentioned information-gathering done demonstrates that trades shows can be seen as a strategic marketing tool (Tafesse & Korneliussen, 2011:47). Trade shows also assist in relationship-improvement by developing new customer contacts ( $m=4.19$ ) – and also to maintain contact with the existing customers ( $m=3.66$ ). Exhibitors can also make use of trade shows to motivate their staff ( $m=3.09$ ); although this is not as important as creating new contacts or image-building (vide. Section 3.6.1.1). This is in line with other research (as indicated in Chapter 3) that one of the selling motives for exhibiting was to enhance or maintain the businesses profile (Hansen, 1996:47).

Another activity is that of the non-selling actions, as stated in Chapter 3. This includes aspects, such as the introduction of new products. In this study's findings, it was evident that the exhibitors agree that the introduction of new products ( $m=3.72$ ) and the testing of new product ideas ( $m=3.25$ ) can also be done at trade shows (vide. Section 3.6.1.1).

In Chapter 3, it was suggested that exhibitors take three actions to be successful at trade shows (vide Section 3.5.3). From the findings in this study, it was evident that exhibitors agreed that they implement these three actions. Firstly, it was indicated that they plan to exhibit to a specific target customer ( $m=3.69$ ). Secondly, they agree that trade shows assist with other marketing communication ( $m=3.82$ ); and lastly, it was agreed that trade shows are used to acquire new customers ( $m=4.19$ ), and that tracking systems are used to determine those who visited the exhibit stand ( $m=3.62$ ).

Exhibitors not only have to market the trade show; but they also need to set objectives, in order to measure their success (Kirchgeorg *et al.*, 2010a:64). In Chapter 3, it was indicated that objectives are important for measuring success. From the findings in this study, it was evident that exhibitors agreed that their

businesses have both written sales objectives ( $m=3.41$ ) and written financial objectives ( $m=3.25$ ); although these were not considered to be as important as the promotional objectives (vide. Figure 3.4 & Section 3.6.1.1).

Staff improvement was another factor, in line with other studies, where staff training is a part of the pre-show activities (Seringhouse & Rossen, 2004:156; Lee & Kim, 2008:786). In this study, it was established that businesses do emphasise the training of staff ( $m= 3.83$ ), and of providing them with product material to prepare themselves for the trade show ( $m=4.03$ ).

As indicated in Figure 3.3 of this study, at each stage of a trade show, the exhibitors have specific actions that they need to take. The different business actions include both sales and non-sales activities that provide exhibitors with aspects that are important to be successful in exhibiting. By establishing the importance of these elements, the exhibitors should be able to plan for trade shows. Through better planning, exhibitors can link their actions to sales and non-sales outcomes and better satisfy their customers.

The added advantages are that the focus can be placed on those trade-show actions on which the staff need further training. It should also provide trade-show organisers with guidelines for their exhibitors when planning to exhibit.

### **7.3.2 Recommendations on business actions for trade shows**

The business actions that take place for trade shows are numerous. It is evident from the results that trade shows are used for both sales and non-sales activities by the exhibitors. The statement that loaded the highest mean value for this section did not focus on direct sales – but rather on building customer contacts. It was also clear from the findings, that trade shows can be used to maintain contact with their current customers. Exhibitors need to invest in their staff by making sure that qualified and trained staff, man the exhibit stand.

Interaction between the attendees and the exhibit staff need to be monitored and encouraged by exhibition managers. Exhibitors should consider investing in exhibit

stands that assist in building relationships, such as creating seating areas and private discussion rooms, in order to build customer contacts.

From the findings, it was also clear that the exhibiting staff view the building of the business image as a contribution of trade shows. Another element that goes with the building of the business image was that trade shows also benefit other marketing communication functions. Exhibitors need to look at elements, such as the 'look and feel' of the exhibition stand; and they need to make use of high-quality displays and furniture for the exhibit. Smaller elements, such as staff clothing and behaviour, need to be kept at a high standard, in order to create a good image of the exhibitor's business.

It is suggested that the business should provide all the exhibiting staff with corporate clothing, so that the same image is projected at the trade show. Trade shows can also be used for public relations by writing articles for trade journals on what was achieved at the show.

The findings of this study are in line with those of Pitta *et al.* (2006:163) and Hanlon (1982:99). These studies indicate that exhibiting staff need to be well trained. The statement dealing with providing staff with product material to prepare them and business briefs, and the training of staff both had high mean values. Businesses need to consider doing training before the trade show – training that focuses on those specific products that are to be exhibited at the show. The staff also need to be shown how demonstrations work, how to deal with attendees that visit the exhibition stand, and who need to know what the exhibiting objectives are of the business.

Exhibitors also need to get sales personal and technical persons involved with the training, in order to assist the exhibiting staff in acquiring the correct information. An interesting finding was that written promotional objectives had a higher mean value than written sales and financial objectives. In other studies on the setting of objectives, it was established that about 70% of exhibitors do not set any objectives for trade shows (Pitta *et al.*, 2006:159; Stevens, 2005:50). It may be assumed that sales objectives would be an integral part of the planning process of

trade shows. Exhibitors need to establish specific objectives for sales, and more importantly on how many leads they want to generate from the trade show. This information needs to then be disseminated to the exhibit staff through training and manuals, in order to prepare them for the trade show. This is an important aspect; since the findings also indicate that the success of a trade show is measured by the number of new prospects gained at the trade show.

Exhibitors should consider the implementation of daily briefings to indicate to the exhibiting staff whether they are on-track regarding the objectives that were set for the trade show.

What is concerning is that when looking at the findings, for tracking those attendees that visited the exhibit stand the mean value was not high. Business must make use of technology, such as scanners that scan attendees' visiting cards to get information on who visited the exhibit stand, so that they can follow-up after the trade show. Exhibitors can also make use of competitions that motivate attendees to fill in visitor books, or leave their business cards.

It must, however, be kept in mind that the measurement of success is not just sales at the trade show, but the conversion that leads into sales after the show (Herbig *et al.*, 1997:377). Although sales are important, other studies indicate that to measure a trade show's success, one should also look at the relationships that have been established (Geigenmüller, 2010:289). Exhibitors should consider including other measuring elements in their pre-show activities, in order to include other aspects, such as relationship-building.

It must, however, be noted that it is difficult to measure non-financial or non-sales related activities at trade shows. Exhibitors should think about looking at other aspects, such as the number of attendees at the exhibition stand, or the interaction with current customers that might not lead to more sales, but could possibly improve relationships.

It was also found that trade shows provide an exhibitor with a great opportunity to introduce and test product concepts with the clients. Exhibitors should make use of

trade shows for new product testing; since the attendees are frequently from those industries, where the products would most probably be used. Through the interaction with the attendees, exhibitors would be able to determine whether their products are likely to be successful or not.

Many trade shows also allow for discussion sessions, where the exhibitors can test and discuss new developments from their products. It is suggested that marketing research be done at the trade shows; since most of the attendees are from a specific industry and can provide valuable information. Businesses should make use of trade shows to introduce new products, because of the possible publicity of opportunities that are available. Trade shows are in the majority of cases covered by industrial journals and other media outlets that provide a business with valuable media coverage.

Exhibitors should also consider writing articles for the social media or magazines in their industry.

The trade show can also be used as a method to gather information on competitors in the market; and it is, therefore, advisable that staff not only man the exhibition stand, but also move around the show to gain knowledge.

Businesses that exhibit at trade shows should not only focus on the financial or sales aspect in measuring their success at trade shows; but they should include non-financial measuring. In this study, it was indicated that although businesses make use of other measuring elements; they should also make use of non-financial aspects to measure their trade shows. Businesses that exhibit should include other elements, such as relationship-building; since many of the attendees at a trade show are not there to buy, but merely to gain knowledge of those who could be their future customers.

With the current customers, trade shows can be a good place to socialise in a more informal way.

The majority of trade shows have coffee areas, as well as luncheons that provide a place, where customers and exhibitors can talk and further expand their business relationships. These areas can also be used for publicity and image-building. Business should consider exhibiting their branding coffee mugs, banners and other promotional material.

#### **7.4 MAIN FINDINGS RELATING THE SUB-STAGES IN THE STAGES OF THE SALES PROCESS AT TRADE SHOWS**

As indicated in Chapter 1 and Chapter 3 of this study trade, shows and sales play an important part in B2B marketing. All the indications are that the amount of money spent on trade shows will increase in the next few years (Viviers, 2013:210). For B2B enterprises to remain competitive, they would have to re-evaluate their participation in trade shows – in order to gain an edge over their competitors. At trade shows, the exhibitor goes through a number of stages in the sales process when exhibiting.

The main findings of the Principal axis factor analysis that is an explorative factor analysis on the sales process provide useful information to assist business in B2B markets, and in developing strategies for exhibiting at trade shows. Exhibiting strategies for exhibitors is based on a better understanding of the role of the sales process at trade shows.

##### **7.4.1 Conclusions and implications of the main findings for the sub-stages in the stages of the sales process at trade shows**

The objective of this study was to determine the role of the sales process at trade shows. Through the literature review in this study, a number of elements were identified, which together comprise the stages of the sales process at a trade show, as discussed in Chapter 3 and Chapter 4 of this study. Seven sections were identified: the first section was general in nature dealing with the business actions taken regarding trade shows. This section was discussed separate from the stages; since it consists of sales and non-sales activities.

The following six sections dealt with the sub-stages in each of the stages in the sales process for trade shows. It was, however, not clear what the different sub-stages are in each of the sections; therefore, a Principal-axis factor analysis with varimax rotation, which is explorative in nature, was done. For each of the sections, sub-stages were identified through the factor analysis, as discussed in Chapter 6.

The **first stage** dealt with the pre-show marketing activities used to attract attendees; and here two factors were identified: direct communication and promotional elements. This is in line with other research, which indicates that communication is important in the pre-show stage of trade shows (Seringhause & Rossen, 2004:156). In this study, one of the facets found to be part of pre-show marketing was direct communication. Exhibitors mostly make use of direct communication; since they are in direct contact with their clients; and the attendees invited by them personally ( $m=3.58$ ) would be more likely to attend a trade show (Tanner, 2002:236; Kirchgeorg *et al.*, 2010b:683-684).

The other sub-stages at the first stage comprised the promotional elements. This finding on promotional elements is supported by other research done by Tanner (2002:231), and Lee and Kim (2008:786). This included a combination of advertising in trade journals ( $m=3.13$ ), personal selling, word-of-mouth, or any other tool, in order to gain attention and create awareness (Pitta *et al.*, 2006:156; Livera, 2003:4). Other promotional elements included that mass media ( $m=3.02$ ) that are being used. This is interesting to see; since it is not associated with B2B marketing that relies more on direct communication methods.

Two sub-stages were identified for the **second stage** of at-show marketing activities. The two factors were trade-show sponsorship and promotional tools. Sponsorship at trade shows can include refreshment, meals, events, luncheons, speeches etc. It is, however, interesting to see that exhibitors indicate that they disagree that they use the sponsorship of social activities ( $m=2.50$ ) and the co-sponsorship of coffee courts, luncheons etc. ( $m=2.28$ ).

It is concerning to see that sponsorships are not used; since they could provide exhibitors with more exposure at a trade show; and this could help with image-building.

Some of the promotional tools include: brochures; electronic communication; giveaways; information kits – or a combination of all the different promotional elements (Summers, 1992:46; Brewer, 1996:39). Promotional elements include the use of video or computer screens at the exhibit stand ( $m=3.34$ ). These are positive to see; since it has been found that these are a good way to attract attendees (Spiro *et al.*, 2007:66). It was found in other studies that although exhibitors make use of promotional tools, they are starting to rely more on sponsorship; since it provides better value for money (Suh, 2003:47-49).

However in this study, there was disagreement on the use of co-sponsorship of events at trade shows ( $m=2.28$ ). This provides an interesting perspective on South African exhibitors, who are not placing the emphasis on sponsorship as part of their trade show strategies; but their emphasis is rather on the promotional elements.

The **third stage** deals with the sales-presentation at trade shows; and here, four sub-stages were identified, namely: presentation methods; presentation activities; approach method; and question approach. The sales presentations play an important role at trade shows; since they provide the exhibitor with the opportunity to communicate one-on-one with the qualified prospects (Gosztonyi, 1997:13; Kirchgeorg *et al.*, 2010a:68).

Different presentation methods can be applied by the exhibiting staff to sell their products to their customers (as indicated in Table 6.11). It seems that most of the exhibitors' preferences were to use the formula-selling ( $m=3.22$ ) method, followed by the need-analysis ( $m=3.13$ ), group presentations ( $m=2.82$ ); and lastly, memorised presentation ( $m=2.58$ ). It is interesting that the memorised method is not more frequently used; due to the time constraints for interaction; and that it is easy to train the exhibiting staff in this method.

During the sales presentation exhibition, the exhibit staff undertake certain activities. In Chapter 3, it was pointed out that finding sales leads is one of the main aims of exhibiting at a trade show. It is a good sign to see that exhibitors in this study indicated that they keep a record ( $m=3.97$ ); since this information is used in the follow-up after a trade show (Pitta *et al.*, 2006:159). Another activity is that of using demonstrations ( $m=3.72$ ). This is seen as an integral part of exhibiting (Brennan *et al.*, 2014:195).

It is also encouraging to see that demonstrations are used as part of the presentation activities at trade shows – to promote and sell products – since they improve the interaction between the buyer and the seller (Kirchgeorg *et al.*, 2005:863).

In approaching the attendees, the exhibiting staff can make use of different methods. Although different approach methods can be used – starting with a statement ( $m=3.30$ ) was the preferred option. Other methods, such as using a compliment ( $m= 2.97$ ) or giving an opinion ( $m=2.92$ ) were not necessarily preferred by the exhibiting staff. This is most likely due to attendees meeting the exhibiting staff for the first time at the trade show; and because there is not yet any personal connection.

Another useful approach is to make use of questions. Questions can be used to start the presentation ( $m=3.57$ ), or to help in finding out what the attendees needs are ( $m=3.64$ ). It is encouraging to see that questions are used; since they could guide the exhibiting staff on what the next step should be in the sales presentation – or whether there are any objections that still need to be answered.

The **fourth stage** dealt with the objections experienced during the sales presentation; and two sub-stages were identified: manifested objections; and latent objections. A number of the objections are experienced; since many attendees would not want to commit; while they are at the trade show (Jones *et al.*, 2005:297). Unfortunately, the actions of the exhibiting staff during the sales presentation can also impact the types of objections experienced.

In this study, it was found that the manifested objections for product/service ( $m=2.87$ ), about the business ( $m=2.53$ ), and money ( $m=2.69$ ), are not experienced to any extent by the exhibiting staff. The reason for this is that many attendees do not make buying decisions at the trade shows – due to the extended decision-making process that takes place in businesses. It could, therefore, be possible that the manifested objections are only discussed in post-show follow-up negotiations (vide Section 2.5.2); and this is positive – since it provides more time to deal with it.

The attendees might also object; because they want to stall decision-making ( $m=3.25$ ); or they are possibly not willing to buy at the trade show. Latent objections occur because the attendees are unwilling to indicate to the exhibiting staff why they do not want to buy ( $m=3.00$ ). This is the most experienced type of objection; and it means that the exhibitors can take positive actions by preparing for it by training the exhibiting staff.

The exhibiting staff can, for example, be trained on what questions to ask to determine any latent objections, and how to deal with them.

The **fifth stage** deals with how objections are dealt with in sales presentations. The sub-stages identified included standard-objection solutions and product-objection solutions. What is a matter of concern is that standard-objection solutions are not used by the exhibiting staff. A method, such as letting other staff answer any objections ( $m=2.17$ ) is not necessarily used; although a number of studies have indicated that experts at trade shows are the best people to assist in such situations (Tafesse & Korneliussen, 2011:47; Whitfield & Webber, 2011:446).

The exhibiting staff also do not directly ( $m=1.87$ ) or indirectly ( $m=2.06$ ) deny any objections. There is a concern that the exhibiting staff might not know how to deal with objections.

What is interesting is illustrated in Table 6.13. It is clear here that product-objection solutions loaded the highest mean values. The use of product benefits ( $m=3.19$ ) or advantages ( $m=2.76$ ) to overcome objections can be used by the exhibiting staff.

This is encouraging to see; since the nature of B2B markets makes product features important in any decision to buy or not.

The **sixth stage** dealt with the methods used to close the sale. Here, two sub-stages were identified: typical closing and product closing. Typical closing includes a number of closing methods. What is noteworthy is that the exhibiting staff compliment (m=3.26) the attendees, before closing the sale; while compliments are not used when opening the sale. It is also worthwhile for exhibitors to take note that negotiation (m=3.10) takes place to close the sale; but this is not expected to happen at trade shows.

However, it is excellent to see many exhibiting staff only close the sale in the follow-up (m=3.08); and that helps in building a long-term relationship with the customers (Reychav, 2009:154). It is also interesting that a number of exhibiting staff indicated that they do not use a direct close (m=2.58), or a standing-room close (m=2.49).

What is positive is that similar to dealing with objections in closing the sale, the preferred method is the use of the product features. The benefit (m=3.75) and T-account (m=3.58) closure are the preferred closing methods used by the exhibiting staff.

In the beginning of the study, it was pointed out to the researcher by the trade show organisers that exhibitors do not always know what to do; and the stages in the sales process could help them improve their service. The identified stages and their factors for trade shows provide exhibitors with guidelines on what to do – since the function of trade shows is to provide exhibitors with the opportunity to improve their sales and to get more sales leads.

By also linking the stages of the sales process and their factors to the stages of the trade show, the exhibitors should be able to establish what their actions should be at the pre-, at- and post-show stages of the trade show. This means that exhibitors can look at the sales presentation activities, and the objections

experienced, how they are dealt with, and the method of closure, in order to help the exhibiting staff.

The findings of this study also contribute to the expansions of the current knowledge on the sales process and that of trade shows.

#### **7.4.2 Recommendations based on the main findings for the sub-stages in the sales process at trade shows**

The purpose of this study was to establish the role of the sales-process at trade shows. Selling plays an important part in B2B markets – due to its nature. At each of the stages, clear activities were identified. This means that training can be developed for the exhibiting staff. Almost half (47%) of the exhibiting staff are not in sales, as indicated; and they may lack the requisite skill or knowledge to move through the sales process at the trade show.

Taking the above into consideration on the sales process, the following recommendations can be made for the stages of the sales process at trade shows.

##### **7.4.2.1 Recommendations for the sub-stages for pre-show marketing activities**

- **Direct communication**

The exhibiting staff identified the different types of direct communication used to attract attendees to the trade show. Direct communication includes the different methods that a business can use to get the attendees to come to a trade show. This includes inviting them, direct mail, invitation or electronic communication, such as electronic mails. It must be noted that not all direct communication methods are successful, and that direct mail is slowly being replaced by electronic communication methods. Exhibitors should focus more on personal invitation and on long-term awareness programs, such as regular electronic communication.

In this study, it was indicated that exhibitors ranked electronic communication as their top choice for communicating. Electronic communication should be used,

because of its advantages, such as cost-effectiveness and being able to communicate with a large number of customers. Exhibitors should also consider expanding their links to the trade shows official website in their electronic communications that allow their customers to pre-register. With the growth of the social media, exhibitors should consider using Facebook pages to promote their exhibits at a trade show. They can also consider creating a Twitter account for the specific trade shows; so that they can “tweet” about what is happening at the show.

- **Promotional elements**

Exhibitors can also make use of other promotional-mix elements to attract attendees to trade shows at which they are exhibiting. Mass media, trade journals and free entry are ways whereby attendees can be attracted. It must, however, be noted that in this study, mass media had the lowest mean value for the section dealing with pre-show marketing. Exhibitors should rather rely on promotional elements that fit in with their industry, such as advertising their presence at trade shows in trade journals, and handing out free entry vouchers to possible prospects. Trade shows occur in the domain of B2B marketing that lends itself to more one-on-one promotional activities. It is, therefore, advisable for exhibitors to move away from the mass media.

#### **7.4.2.2 Recommendations for at-show marketing activities**

- **Trade-show sponsorship**

Once the attendees are at the trade shows, an exhibitor would have to attract them to their exhibit stand, and make them aware of their presence. This can be done through sponsorships. An example of this is companies like NEC, which was a major sponsor for the 2014 IFSEC trade show. However, not all businesses that exhibit have the financial capacity to sponsor a whole trade show; and they can, therefore, make use of other methods. Exhibitors could, for example, sponsor luncheons, coffee courts etc. as part of their marketing at trade shows.

It was earlier indicated in this study that exhibitors do not make use of co-sponsoring informal events often – in which information can be shared with the

attendees. This is an opportunity for exhibitors to use sponsorship as a way to build publicity and create awareness with possible customers. It is, therefore, recommended that exhibitors should consider informal functions as a way to distribute information to attendees by sponsoring such events and getting their exhibiting staff to attend them.

Another method that is used with success is competitions, which could also be used by the exhibitors to get information on when they complete their entry cards. Exhibitors should consider making sure that their exhibiting staff are dressed in corporate clothing; and that they then move around the trade show – to invite possible customers to their stand.

Exhibiting staff can also provide attendees with free vouchers for coffee, food etc. at the trade show.

- **Promotional tools**

Numerous studies point to promotional attractions at trade shows, and specifically at the handing out of promotional material (Alessandra *et al.*, 2009:94; Pitta *et al.*, 2006:158; Milner, 2009:9). In the last few years, more and more research has been done pointing out the ineffectiveness of free promotional material at trade shows. In the majority of cases, free promotional material is thrown away by attendees at trade shows – and especially brochures. What is of a concern is that the findings of this study found that the majority of the attendees indicated that they still make use of handing out free promotional material. This means that exhibitors would have to come up with better ways to attract attendees through their promotional attractions.

Exhibitors should consider having more high-priced branded promotional material, such as coffee mugs, calculators, and electronics, such as memory sticks that are given to prospects that show any real interest in the business offerings.

Exhibitors should, therefore, develop more creative ways to attract attendees to their stand that do not include the traditional promotional methods. Newer

methods, such as an interactive kiosk at stands, should be developed to get the attention of the attendees, and to ensure that they attend a business-exhibit stand. The use of more visual methods, such as screens that demonstrate products, should also be considered. Using screens has the additional benefit that the exhibiting staff can use them for their sales presentations.

#### **7.4.2.3 Recommendations for the sales-presentation**

- **Presentation methods**

At trade shows, time is limited; and the number of attendees at an exhibition stand can turn out to be more than the staff can handle. Keeping this in mind, what was interesting in this study is that although the best presentation method would be group or memorised presentations, the exhibiting staff ranked questions and in-depth analysis, as methods that are used more frequently. It is recommended that memorised and group presentations are used, in order to improve their interaction with attendees. Although memorised presentation is not much used; it provides the advantage that it can be taught quickly; all customers receive the same message; and it can be aligned with other marketing communication.

Exhibitors need to consider looking at the training that they provide and the manuals that are given to their staff. Exhibit-stand lay-outs are also something that can be improved to facilitate sales-presentation methods – with the use of technology to guide the attendees through the presentation – such as computer screens or television screens.

It must also be remembered that exhibitors can control the knowledge of the exhibiting staff. Exhibitors should consider using salespeople at the exhibition stand, in order to improve the presentation methods; since they would probably have more product knowledge than other staff members. Since salespeople's work is to interact with customers on a daily basis; they are more likely to have worked out routines of presentations; since they know what information the customers need.

- **Presentation actions**

In this section, the findings are in line with what was established by Seringhaus and Rosson (2004:161) and Gopalakrishna and Williams (1992:220). These authors found that the exhibiting staff gathers information from attendees as part of lead generation. Therefore, exhibiting staff should take note of their interest in the product by asking questions. Exhibitors can use different methods to keep a record of who has visited their exhibition stand – by using methods, such as business cards, or more updated methods, like scanning their attendance passes.

Another option is to install a self-service kiosk that can capture information on the attendees, as they move through the exhibition stand.

Exhibitors should also make use of demonstrations in their sales activities, and make the products available at the trade show. Innovative methods, such as interactive computers that show the different stages in the production of the products that are sold could be applied. From the findings, it is evident that information technology is not used to its full potential with the exhibitors still indicating that product demonstrations are generally preferred. Exhibitors should consider using laptops and tablets; since detailed information can be provided: for example, on how machinery work internally, or on how the production process works etc.

- **The approach method**

It is encouraging that most exhibiting staff indicated that they start the sales presentation by introducing themselves; and this is followed by using a product benefit. It is important that exhibitors should use product benefits to a greater extent; since attendees at trade shows are in many cases knowledgeable of the products on the market. Exhibiting staff would have to make sure that their method of starting their presentation would lead them to use the available resources, such as demonstration material, hand-outs etc.

The use of compliments to start a presentation is not recommended or preferred by the exhibiting staff – as indicated in the findings. At trade shows, compliments are not always possible for a sales presentation; since the exhibiting staff have no prior knowledge of the attendees.

If the exhibiting staff use compliments, these might come across as being false. In starting the sales presentation, expressing an opinion might not be as effective as indicating what the product can do – unless a question is asked by the attendee. As pointed out in Chapter 2 of this study, the decision-makers attending trade shows are in many cases professional buyers that want products that will solve their problems; and they want to see as many suppliers as possible. Exhibitors should instruct their exhibiting staff to provide the attendees with the most important information – right from the start of the presentation. It is, therefore, advisable that the exhibiting staff should be trained on using the features, the advantages and the benefits of the product in the sales presentation.

- **Question approach**

There is an important link in B2B markets between what the customers want and how the exhibiting business could solve their problems. By starting the sales presentation at the exhibit stand by asking the correct questions, the staff member should be able to identify whether the attendee is a possible prospect for their products. Staff should be trained to ask questions that would help establish the attendee's needs; so that they can move them into a sales-presentation method and suggest possible solutions for their problems through the advantages and benefits of the product. By asking the correct questions, the exhibiting staff can also determine who at the exhibit stand would be the best person to talk to the attendee.

The information that an engineer requires would, for example, differ from that of a person who is only interested in procurement.

By asking questions, the role of the person in the buying team can be established; and this can then be catered for at the exhibition stand by having different staff members available to continue the sales presentation.

#### **7.4.2.4 Recommendations for the objections experienced**

- **Manifested objections**

The best way for exhibitors to deal with objections is to plan for them, and then to overcome them before they arise. In the sales presentation at a trade show, a number of objections can be expected, such as product, financial, the need to know, or the exhibiting business. The best way in which exhibitors can deal with manifested objections is to try and move the sales presentation to the final stage; where they follow up after the trade show by varying their techniques. If the exhibiting staff anticipate that the attendee would have any of the afore-mentioned objections, they should try and move the sales presentation along, and get a follow-up sales meeting, where more time would be available to explain the product to the customer.

The researcher established that there is no literature that deals with price-setting at trade shows, or on how it influences pricing strategies (Zimmerman & Blyth, 2013:232). Exhibitors should, however, consider consulting with sales and marketing staff to determine what price objections occur in normal B2B selling. This could be used to plan for possible price objections that might occur.

- **Latent objections**

Since latent objections are difficult to establish, this is the most difficult type of objection to deal with; and unfortunately this is the most frequently occurring type of objection at trade shows. The only option available to the exhibiting staff is to ask as many questions as possible, to establish the reasons why the attendee is not interested. It was indicated in the findings that attendees often stall decision-making at trade shows. This could be due to time constraints at trade shows; but the exhibiting staff still need to develop questions that can be asked during the

sales presentation, in order to determine these types of objections. Exhibiting staff should also, in this case, try and get a follow-up meeting with the attendees.

Another method is to move the discussion to a social event at the trade show, such as a coffee court or other type of function at the trade show; where more time would be available to explain the product. This again points to the importance of trade-show sponsorship and its optional benefit in interacting with the attendees to gather more information from them. Sales presentations should also be evaluated, in order to determine whether they can provide information that makes the products more attractive to the attendees, thereby by-passing any possible objections.

#### **7.4.2.5 Recommendations for dealing with objections**

- **Standard objection solution**

Although standard objection solutions are indicated as not being as frequently used as product-objection solutions, they can still help the exhibiting staff to overcome any sales resistance. Exhibitors should try and stay away from either directly or indirectly denying any objections. The exhibiting staff should find more creative ways for dealing with objections, such as letting other staff members answer any questions, or indicating that this will be dealt with in the follow-up. As pointed out, time is of the essence at trade shows. Exhibiting staff, in many cases, move through the sales presentation to get as much of the information across as quickly as possible; and they should rather stop at the objections, in order to deal with them.

Since a number of objections are not outspoken, this makes it difficult to handle; but methods such as, asking questions, keeping quiet or re-phrasing a sentence, could be prove to be valuable.

- **Product-objection solutions**

The most-used objection solutions are to state the benefits of the product, in order to overcome any objections during the sales presentation. Exhibiting staff also indicated that they use the advantages of the product or service to overcome any objections. The best method, therefore, is to use both the advantages and benefits of the product to overcome the objections. This is a very valuable technique. Exhibitors should train the exhibiting staff on all the advantages and benefits of the product. Exhibiting staff should also receive product literature to gain all the knowledge on the benefits that the product can provide. A positive aspect from the findings of this study is that exhibitors provide their exhibiting staff with material on the products that they sell as part of their preparation. It would, however, be a good idea to work through the material with the exhibiting staff, or to do role-playing activities to emphasise the information. Furthermore, demonstration methods that indicate how the product works could also be used by the exhibiting staff. Similar to knowing the material regarding the products, it is suggested that demonstrations should be rehearsed with the exhibiting staff to ensure that they know how the product works.

#### **7.4.2.6 Recommendations closing methods**

- **Typical closing**

Exhibitors have a number of methods that they can apply to close a sale. It must be noted that not all the exhibitors aim to sell at trade shows; and they frequently focus on lead generation. The exhibiting staff should build their closure into their sales presentation; so that they know when to close the sale. If the attendee is not ready to close, the exhibiting staff must get the follow-up details. Due to the nature of trade shows, exhibitors need to develop closing techniques that would allow them to close the sale in a short space of time. At international trade shows, this becomes even more important; since the time that attendees and exhibitors have with one another is limited to the duration of the trade show.

If failures ensue, the exhibitors should consider reconstructing their exhibiting stand, to allow for a place that is more private, for discussions to take place. It is encouraging to see that the staff make use of a number of typical closing methods. Unfortunately, directly asking for the sale is not generally used; although it could save time and determine whether the attendee has any objections.

- **Product closing**

Using the product's benefits or advantages is a preferred method used by trade show exhibiting staff; and it links with the information that attendees want and the way in which the exhibiting staff present it. Exhibitors can provide the exhibiting staff with the necessary product information, such as the features; and then they could train them on how to switch to the advantages and benefits. It is important that the exhibiting staff be well-trained on how to turn product features into benefits and advantages. It is advisable that in the product-training literature, the exhibiting staff should be equipped with this information. The product closure can also be combined with a demonstration of the product, and then closing the sale.

Or, it can be used with asking the customer directly if s/he want to purchase the product.

## **7.5 MAIN FINDINGS RELATING TO THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN SALES AND NON-SALES PERSONS REGARDING THE SALES PROCESS USED AT TRADE SHOWS**

It was indicated in Section 3.6.2.4 that the persons who should man the exhibition stands should be salespersons. Trade shows are seen as a place where buyer and seller meet in a central location, in order to have one-on-one interaction with one another. In this study, salespersons made up just more than half (53%) of the exhibiting staff. Many exhibitors see trade shows as a place to do public relations, rather than selling (Liu *et al.*, 2011:449). However, salespeople are still in the majority; this gives an indication that salespeople do play an important role in trade shows. It is, however, interesting that there are no major differences between how

exhibiting staff move through the sales process: be they employed as salespersons, or not.

It would be assumed that salespeople would have different approaches to the sales process: for example, how they present, how they deal with objections, or how they close the sale. Dwyer and Tanner (2009:332) agree with the aforementioned statement; and these authors postulate that salespeople must be involved with trade shows; since they are personal; and they can result in sales leads.

In this study a few, differences were established; although in the majority of the stages, there were no differences between the salespeople and the non-salespeople in regard to the sales process at trade shows. This needs to be further investigated; although it could be speculated that non-sales staff through training are just as well-equipped to man the exhibit stand. Another reason could be that the same staff members are used by the exhibitor for a number of trade shows – where they gained the necessary knowledge.

It should also be noted that a number of the non-salespersons have a marketing background; and that could be another reason.

Next, the main conclusions, implications and recommendations will be discussed for salespersons and non-salespersons on the stages of the sales process at trade shows.

#### **7.5.1 Conclusions of and implications on the findings of the differences between salespersons and non-salespersons regarding the sales process at trade shows**

In selecting exhibiting staff, the exhibitor must ensure that they have the interpersonal skills, knowledge and communication capabilities (Li *et al.*, 2011:442); since they would have a direct impact on the success of the trade show (Seringhaus & Rosson, 2004:161). Due to the nature of the capabilities required of

exhibiting staff, one would assume that the logical choice for such a person would be in sales (vide Section 3.6.2.3).

In this study, 53% of the exhibiting staff interviewed were in sales; while 47% were not employed as salespeople. Although most of the exhibiting staff are salespeople, they are not much more than non-salespeople; and it must be stated that they make up more than half of the respondents. Salespeople attend trade shows to promote communication between the organisation and the clients (Alessandra *et al.*, 2009:69; Dwyer & Tanner, 2009:332). Therefore, seven hypotheses was proposed in this study to determine whether there are any differences between salespeople and non-salespeople, as they move through the stages of the sales process at trade shows.

It was established that there exist no differences between sales and non-sales people regarding business actions used. It could be speculated that due to the various business actions included that did not all strictly relate to sales, could be the reason that no differences exist between sales and non-sales people. Research by Lee and Kim (2008:793) that concluded that exhibit stand staff training did not have a significant influence on sales-related performance, could also be an possible explanation of our results. This is also in contradiction to Blyth (2002:630) findings pointing to selling objectives as being more important than non-selling objectives at trade shows.

The reasons for the similarities could be due to staff training; since the majority of the respondents indicated the importance of the different variables. This is in line with the research done by Pitta *et al.* (2006:163) and Hanlon (1982:99), which pointed to the importance of staff training before a trade show.

No significant differences between sales persons and non-sales persons regarding direct communication and promotional elements used in pre-show marketing activities were found. This is an interesting finding since, Ling-yee (2008:39) found that the training of exhibit staff to have a positive effective on pre-show promotions. It would be assumed that since not only sales staff gets training - both sales and non-sales will be able to be effective in direct communications. It is also

be assumed that sales people make use of direct communication like inviting customers due to the nature of selling were they have direct contact with customers (Kirchgeorg *et al.*, 2010b:683-684, Herbig & O'Hara, 1998:431)..

For at-show marketing activities to attract attendees to the exhibition stand and closing, there were both similarities and a few differences between salespeople and non-salespeople. On the activities used to attract the attendees to the exhibition stand for the factor “trade-show sponsorship” salespeople ( $m=2.70$ ) and non-salespeople ( $m=2.50$ ), there were no differences. The reason is that, generally, all staff could be involved in social activities, such as going to luncheons, coffee courts or moving around at the trade show. Therefore, there were no clear differences between salespeople and non-salespeople. There were, however, differences in the “promotional tools” used between salespeople ( $m=3.66$ ) and non-sales staff ( $m=3.37$ ).

Promotional tools include the use of technology, such as video screens; but this mostly falls under the planning done by salespeople (Johnston & Marshall, 2010:153-154); and this could be the reason why there is a difference.

There were differences between sales and non-sales persons for “presentation methods”, “presentation actions” and “question approaches”. As pointed out before in this study (vide Chapter 3 & Chapter 4), salespeople have unique communication skills; and are more likely to differ in the way that they interact with the attendees. Due to these differences in communication and experience in dealing with customers, salespeople who man the exhibition stand are more likely to be able to adapt their interaction with the attendees. Salespeople are, for example, more aware of the AIDA and FAB models (Johnston & Marshall, 2013:171;Rix, 2006:212; Futrell, 2011:285) that they need to apply in their sales presentations to ensure such.

It could be argued that non-salespeople are unaware of the different methods. There are also different sales-presentation methods that can be applied, depending on the sales situation; and salespeople would probably be aware of which method to use (Havaladar & Cavale, 2007:213).

There were no differences between the type of objections experienced at trade shows by salespeople and non-sales staff. Objections can occur for a number of different reasons; and frequently, they are not real; since the person does not want to commit at that moment. Sales staff that deal with objections in their sales presentations on a daily basis and prepare for them, would most probably be able to deal with such objections – before they even arise. Liu *et al.* (2011:449), also indicate that at Chinese trade shows that most exhibitors were at the show as part of public relations and not for selling or getting contracts – thus the lack of experiencing objections could be a possible explanation for the lack of any differences.

Although in this study, the findings indicated that there were no differences between sales and non-sales persons in the objections experienced, or in dealing with them. As indicated, a number of exhibiting staff come from the sales\marketing (70%) department, which means that they know their products that are on the exhibition; and they would most probably be able to deal with such objections.

In regard to closing the sale for the factor “typical closing”, there were no differences between salespeople ( $m=2.96$ ) and non-salespeople ( $m=2.77$ ). “Typical closing” includes a number of closing methods, such as direct closure, assumptive closure, alternative closure, complimentary closure, minor-point closure, or standing-room closure. What is of concern is that none of these methods are used by sales or non-sales persons; although they could be an effective way to close the sale.

Salespeople are more likely ( $m=3.90$ ) to use product closing – due to their knowledge and the sales experience that they have (Miller, 1999:89-91; O`Connor, 2001:152-154). Typical closing methods do not rely on product knowledge; and they are more general in nature; therefore, it is more likely that both salespeople and non-salespeople would apply this knowledge when closing a sale.

### **7.5.2 Recommendations for findings on the differences between salespersons and non-salespersons regarding the sale process at trade shows**

The role that sales play at a trade show is very important, with salespeople having the knowledge and skills in many sale situations. Exhibitors need to take note that there are differences in certain stages. For the business actions of the show, it is important that for both salespeople and non-sales staff, the written objectives are provided; they are instructed on how the show will be assessed; and what the non-financial aims of the organisation are. It might be necessary to provide non-sales staff with more sales training; since they do not have the same level of product knowledge as do salespeople.

For new products, both salespeople and non-sales staff need to be instructed on how they should be introduced, and on how product-testing would take place at the trade show.

For promotional tools as a marketing activity to attract attendees to the trade show, there are differences between salespeople and non-salespeople. Exhibitors should rely more on salespeople, when it comes to personally delivering the invitations to attendees. This is due to the existing relationship that many salespeople would have with the customers. Many non-salespeople do not interact with customers or prospects on a daily basis; and more traditional promotional mix elements, such as electronic communication, trade journals, and suchlike, should be used to attract the attendees.

In attracting attendees to the exhibition stand, both salespeople and non-salespeople need to move around the trade shows and interact with the customers. Due to their training and the nature of personal selling, it could be assumed that salespeople would be the better choice in dealing with attendees in social situations, such as luncheons, talks etc. For non-salespeople, promotional material could help to get the attendees to the exhibit stand; since this can be handed out by any staff member.

It is essential that non-sales staff receive training on the presentation of sales activities in which they are to participate at the trade show. For non-salespeople, business must provide more standardised sales methods, such as formula-selling or memorised selling techniques. In many cases, non-sales staff are not involved in demonstrations; and they would have to be shown how to utilise these. Both salespeople and non-salespeople would have to be instructed on how the company wants to keep a record of the attendees who visit the exhibition stand.

Non-sales staff would also have to be shown on what and how to ask questions from attendees; since the sales staff would probably do it out of habit. Non-sales staff might need to be provided with a list of questions to ask the attendees.

Non-sales staff would have to be trained on how to identify objections. This is important; since they might also need to deal with objections as part of the sales presentation. Exhibition staff members that are not from the sales department might need to hand the sales presentation over to an experienced person, in order to deal with any objections. Sales staff would have to be made aware that at trade shows different objections might arise; and they should keep the impact of time constraints in mind.

In the training that is provided, non-sales staff might need to be instructed on how to overcome objections. Exhibitors should also consider having salespeople or technical experts at the exhibition stand, to assist non-sales people when dealing with objections. It might also be true that non-salespeople that need to be at the exhibition stand might be engineers that would be able to specify the advantages and benefits of the product better than salespeople can.

With the standard closing, salespeople and non-sales staff would most probably be similar on how they close. On the other hand, non-sales staff might need more training and better guidelines on how to finalise a product closure. Sales staff deal with the exhibition of business products – not just at the trade shows; and they would probably know better how to achieve product closure. The exhibitor should use sales staff and product literature to train non-sales staff on how to close the sale, making use of the product's advantages and benefits.

## **7.6 MAIN FINDINGS RELATING TO THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE TYPE OF TRADE SHOW AND THE SALES PROCESS USED**

In Chapter 3 of this study, it was indicated that trade shows can be divided into different types of shows (international, national or regional). The approach followed in many of the different types of trade shows is very similar; only for international trade shows, this might differ. In this section, the main findings on the type of trade show, and how exhibiting staff implement the stages of the sales process, will be discussed.

### **7.6.1 Conclusions and implications of the main findings for the different types of trade show for the sales process**

Seven hypotheses were set to determine whether there are any differences regarding the type of trade show. There were no significant differences in the business actions of the trade show. This is an interesting finding since the type of trade shows will influence the objectives, for example with national shows focusing more on new product and market segments, regional shows supporting sales activities and international shows on identifying new distributors (Kijewski, *et al.*, (1993:291-292). It may be that in the South African context regardless of the type of trade show businesses exhibit at, they follow a more standardised approach.

Furthermore, for the pre-show marketing activities, at-show marketing activities, the sales presentation and the closing method used for the stages of the sales process, there were no differences. These issues are very interesting; since for elements, such as the marketing activities before and at the trade show, one would assume that different approaches would be applied. International trade shows would, for example, rely more on electronic and mass-promotional mix elements; since it is not possible for their sales staff to visit all the possible prospects. It was also strange that closure was not different; since the decision-makers who attend trade shows differ. For example, one would expect that for international trade shows that attract high-level decision-makers, the focus would

be more on selling; since they are more inclined to do this (Cateora & Graham, 1999:394).

For the various types of trade shows, there were differences in the objections experienced during the sales presentation for both manifested and latent objections. One of the reasons for these differences in objections experienced could be that the objectives of the trade shows differ. For example, with international trade shows, the aim is not focused specifically on selling, but rather on building relationships (Robbe, 2000:14-15; O'Hara, Palumbo & Herbig, 1993:234).

If an exhibitor is not focused on selling *per se* they might not experience any objections. At international trade shows, the focus is on building partnerships that are not necessarily getting sales; and therefore, they might not experience any objections. Another reason could be that the exhibition staff in regional and national trade shows rely on different staff members; whereas with international trade shows, the top management is usually present.

Exhibitors are more likely to send experienced and higher-ranking staff to international trade shows. On how objections are dealt with, there is no difference in using solutions for product objections; since the staff are trained on their products; and it would not matter what type of trade show it is.

#### **7.6.2 Recommendations on the main findings for the different types of trade show for the sales process**

For business actions, the exhibitors of international trade shows would have to focus more on marketing and the introduction of new products. In marketing, the trade-show international exhibitors would have to follow a different approach; if they have not yet been established in a country. The products introduced might be new to the market; and more emphasis would have to be placed on how they work, and what they can do. For the testing of new products, international exhibitors could determine whether there is a market for their product in a country at the trade show. Exhibitors would also have to select their exhibiting staff very

carefully; since they might use part-time staff members that need to be educated on the products of the organisation.

It seems that the majority of stages in the sales process are implemented similarly in the different types of trade shows. This is good news; as this means that exhibitors exhibiting at regional trade shows can easily move to national or international shows without any major adjustment to their sales strategy. This could streamline the process, and lead to cost reduction in, for example, staff training etc.

In the marketing of the trade show for businesses participating in regional or national trade shows, direct marketing can be applied. When dealing with international trade shows, more promotional mix elements should be applied, such as electronic communication that can be sent to prospective customers anywhere in the world – without any additional cost to the exhibitor.

Exhibitors who participate in international trade shows should make use of sponsorships as a way to create brand awareness. Because of a large amount of promotional material being discarded, new innovative ways of succeeding at trade shows must be used. Exhibitors at international trade shows can make sponsorship material that relates back to their country.

Regarding sales presentation methods, there should not be many differences. Exhibitors at international trade shows, however, should familiarise themselves with the local culture of the country. In the data-gathering stage of this study, the researcher observed that exhibiting staff from countries, such as China, do not interact with all the attendees; and they expect them to start the sales presentations. It is, therefore, essential that the presentation methods and activities be adapted, in order to have greater success.

Exhibitors at international trade shows would have to establish possible objections more quickly than at other types of trade shows. At international trade shows, the exhibitors might not see the attendee after the show; and they would have to deal with objections as speedily as possible. International trade shows might also have

more product and business objections; since the attendees are not familiar with the business or their product offerings. Exhibitors at international trade shows would have to establish their companies' reputation via testimonials and product research – and by demonstrating what they can do.

At international trade shows, the exhibitors would have to try and close the sales at the trade show; since follow-up might not be possible. Also, with objections at international trade shows, this would have to be done in many cases at the trade show, in order to ensure that they get the deal.

## **7.7 MAIN FINDINGS FOR THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN BUSINESS OPERATIONS AND THE SALES PROCESS USED**

The findings on business operations – and whether there are any differences in how they move through the stages of the sales process – must be briefly discussed. A number of the recommendations might link up with the discussions above that deal with sales and non-salespersons and the type of trade shows. However, there are differences for certain aspects of the business operations as they relate to the sales process.

### **7.7.1 Conclusions and implications of the main findings for the different business operations for the sales process**

To determine whether there are any differences between business operations (sales of goods or service industry/professionals or construction/manufacturing or others) of exhibitors, and how they implement the stages of the sales process, seven hypotheses were set. For the business actions for the trade show, there were no significant differences evident.

In the first stage of the sales process for the pre-show marketing activities, there were also no differences. For the second stage at-show marketing activities, the trade show sponsorship had no differences; while for promotional tools, there were differences identified. It was found that firms selling goods ( $m=3.77$ ) use promotional tools more than does the construction/manufacturing ( $m=3.23$ )

business. These differences are most likely due to the nature of the products that are being sold, with firms being able to hand out samples of their products, and being able to demonstrate the workings of the product on video screens.

In the sales presentation, there are no differences regarding the business operations of the exhibitors, except for the factor-question approach. An interesting part of the findings is that exhibitors who sell goods ( $m=3.81$ ) use the question approach more frequently than do construction/manufacturers ( $m=3.42$ ). Since goods are sold to a wide variety of business markets, be they government, initiations or commercial enterprises; it might be easier to create questions on where they would use the product being sold. Manufacturers are more technical in nature; and they would rather rely on an in-depth analysis of the attendees' needs, or rather dealing with their requirements by means of setting up a sales proposal.

For the objections experienced, and how they were dealt with, there were no differences in the business operations of the exhibitors. There were also no differences for the closure used in the sales process. From the above, it is evident that there are not many differences in the sales process for the business operations of the different exhibitors. This is good news for exhibitors and trade shows organisers; since a standard framework can be developed when training the exhibiting staff.

### **7.7.2 Recommendations for the main findings on the differences between the business actions for the sales process**

Construction businesses might need to revisit their promotional tools that are used at trade shows. They could consider making use of branded material that can be related back to their business – for example, the construction company making a key ring or memory stick that looks like a bridge. Construction businesses can also make video recordings of bridges, roads or buildings constructed and show these in video screens at the exhibition stand.

Manufacturers need to develop questions to start the presentation. By asking questions, manufacturers can get more detailed information from the attendees. This can assist them in planning their presentation, in order to provide product-specific solutions for attendees, and to get more sales and leads.

Exhibitors that sell a service would have to train their staff better in the planning of trade show activities. Such services are unique; since they cannot be shown to the attendees. This means that exhibitors should have their staff trained on how to deal with the tangible aspects. When it comes to promotional-material services that are exhibited, they would have to spend more on promoting their brand name; since there is no physical product that can be associated with the business. Service exhibitors can make use of visual material to attract the attendees to the trade show.

Exhibitors should plan their sales presentations carefully; since asking question is important to build rapport with the attendees and establish their needs. Exhibitors of products should rely on demonstrations where possible, to show what products they have. Exhibitors that are in the service industry must have video clips, visuals etc. for illustrating their services to the attendees.

Service-industry exhibitors should prepare for financial objections; since these are more likely to occur; and by pointing to what their services can do, they would be able to handle any objections. Unlike product services, they cannot easily make use of product solutions. They can, however, illustrate the benefits and the advantages that attendees would receive by emphasising what they do well.

In the closing of the sale, exhibitors must note that for industries, such as manufacturing, negotiations might need to be undertaken. Exhibitors should, therefore, ensure that a good relationship exists through their interactions at the trade show. Exhibitors from product industries can rely more on standing room and the double-bind close were two or more small points of the product is used to close the sale.

## 7.8 LIMITATIONS

This study has attempted to contribute to the body of knowledge on trade shows and the sales process. While doing the study, specific limitations were evident in both the literature review and the empirical phase of the study; and these will be discussed below.

### 7.8.1 The literature review

In this study, a number of limitations, based on the review of the literature, were identified:

- It was noted in Chapter 3 of this study that a limited amount of new and relevant literature is available on trade shows (Pitta *et al.*, 2006:160). Academic research literature on personal selling and the selling process was even more limited; and the research had to rely on textbooks. This resulted in dependence on older sources in this study.
- It was the aim in this study to include all the relevant literature on the topics covered. It is, however, possible that some important empirical research, which has not yet been documented, was not accessible; and this was, therefore, inevitably excluded.
- The literature on sales at trade shows was extremely limited; and it only focused on certain stages of the sales process. Trade-show literature focuses broadly on the individual stages, and not the sales process *per se*, which means that the research had to use a combination of different information sources.
- Due to the lack of information on the sales process and trade shows in South Africa, the researcher had to rely largely on the literature from other countries.

## 7.8.2 Empirical study

A number of limitations should be highlighted, following the empirical research part of this study.

- The study was only done in two provinces in South Africa, namely Gauteng and the Western Cape – due to cost constraints in gathering the data from a trade show.
- The study was limited to trade shows that were organised by members of EXSA; and it did not include those of other organisations.
- A number of the trade shows were international, which meant that regional and national trade shows accounted for a small number of trade shows investigated.
- Due to an extremely limited number of previous studies on the sales process at trade shows, the questionnaire was constructed using multiple sources; and therefore, it was explorative in nature, which limited the statistical analysis that could be applied.

Despite the limitations, the study has provided a layout of a possible sales process that can be applied at trade shows. The research could also be used to build on the current models of trade shows, in order to provide a sales perspective to the exhibitors. Next, some recommendations will be made for future research.

## 7.9 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The following recommendations are made for future research:

- This study could be used to conduct research on specific parts of the sales process at various trade shows.

- The most important part of this research – due to its explorative nature – could be used to test the different factors that have been identified for each of the stages in the sales process.
- It would be of value to expand the research of this study to other countries, in order to establish whether the factors would remain the same as in South Africa.
- Other issues, such as the cultural differences of the exhibiting staff might bring new insights, when dealing with international trade shows.
- Research on exhibit stands and their impact on the sales process might also provide clues on what sales presentation methods would be the most applicable for use in different situations.
- Future studies should include determining the main buyer, in order to correlate between the exhibitors and the attendees of trade shows.
- Sales could be included as a measure of effectiveness – instead of just obtaining opinions and agreements.

## 7.10 ACADEMIC CONTRIBUTIONS OF THIS STUDY

In Figure 7.1, an illustration is provided of the contributions that this study has made to the field of trade shows. The figure was divided into three groupings that consisted of pre-, at- and post-show that make up the three stages of a trade show. Furthermore, four columns were added that consisted of the business decision-making process, the sales process at trade shows, trade-show performance and trade-show activities.

This study investigated the second column that deals with the role of the sales process at trade shows. The section on **business actions** was not included in the stages of the sales process; since it measures overall trade show aspects, and not any specific stage. However, certain elements in the business action section relate

to the post-show stage; and these are therefore included, as part of the follow-up in the sales process of trade shows. It was established that there are six sections before and at a show. Each of the three stages of a trade show is indicated on the far right-hand side of Figure 7.1. In the **pre-show stage**, pre-show marketing activities (direct communication and promotional elements) are done.

In the **at-show stage**, there are five sections, namely: at-show marketing activities (trade show sponsorship and promotional tools); sales presentations (presentation methods, presentation actions, approach methods and question approach); objections experienced (manifested and latent objections); dealing with objections (standard-objection solution and product-objection solutions); and lastly, closing methods (typical closing and product closing).

The last stage, namely, the **post-show stage**, was not directly investigated; however, certain of the business actions were identified for this stage. It was established that exhibitors measure their show success both in terms of financial and non-financial gains; and that they have a tracking system in place to follow up after the trade show.

Each of these identified sections links up the stages in a normal sales process. The pre-show marketing activities and the at-show marketing activities comprise the **prospecting step**; while during the at-show marketing sections, the **pre-approach** step is found. The **approach** and **sales presentation** stages take place in the sales presentation section. The stage for **determining the objections** takes place in the objections-experienced section; while the section **dealing with the objections** takes place thereafter. The **closing** stage in the sales process takes place in the sales section; and lastly, there is the follow-up stage in the post-show business action section.

It is apparent from Figure 7.1, that the stages in the sales process and the sections in the sales process at trade shows overlap in certain aspects. For example, prospecting, as well as the approach and sales presentation are distributed in two sections; or they can be combined into one. Therefore, it is clear that the sales process that is applied at trade shows differs from the normal

business-sales process. Exhibitors at trade shows must take note of this and implement it in their sales strategies for exhibiting at trade shows.

Also included in the figure below is the model of Lee and Kim (2008:786) and Hansen (2004:4) that includes the trade show performance and trade show activities. Trade show performance includes five measures, namely: image-building, sales-related activities, information-gathering, relationship-improvement and motivation. These activities not only relate to the trade show activities, but also to the sales process. Trade show activities include the different show activities that take place in each stage (pre-, at- and post-show). These were included in the figure to show that trade show activities are not only focused on sales, but are more general in nature. This indicates the differences between trade show activities and the sales process.

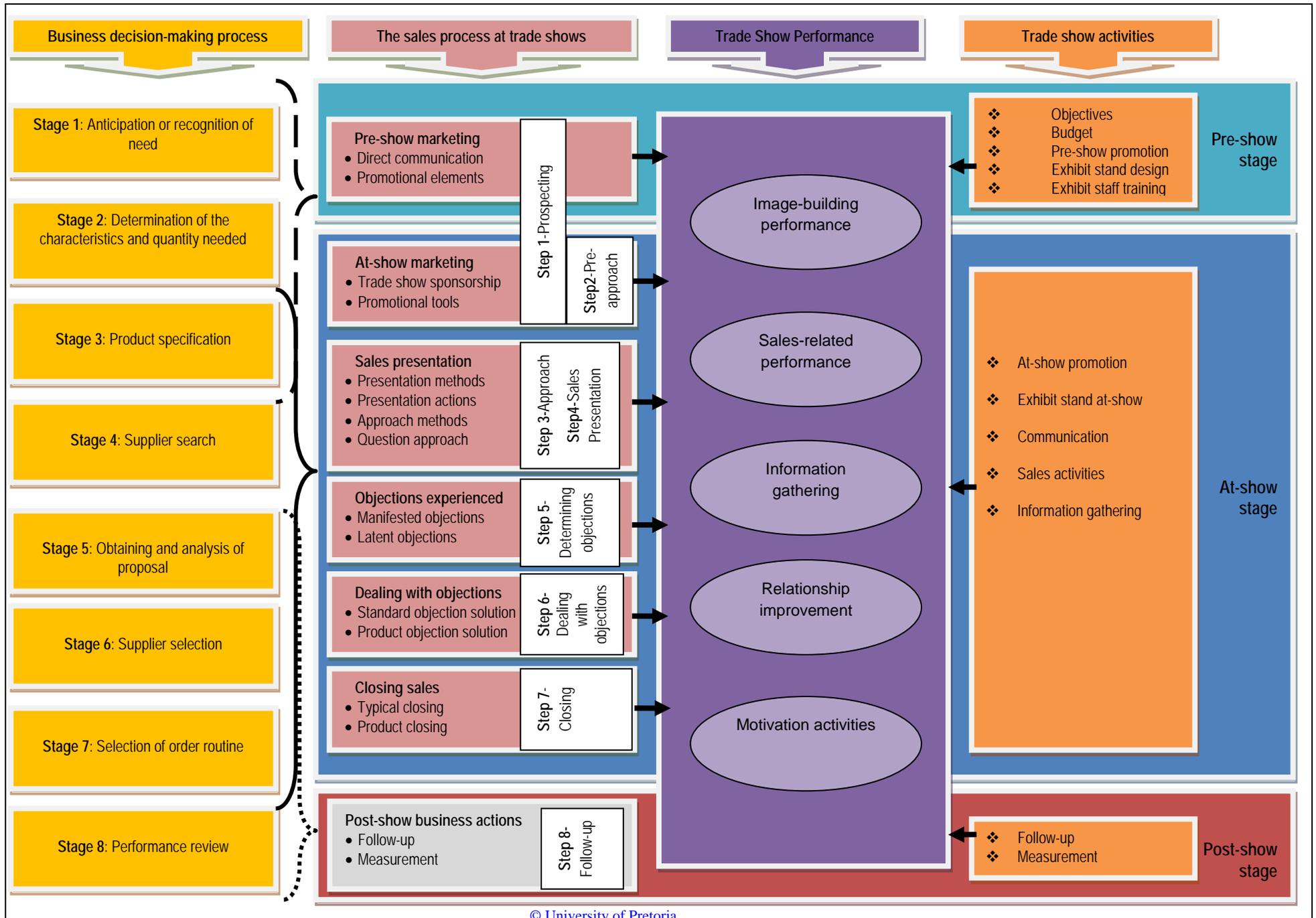
This information can be used to see where the two are the same, and where an exhibitor might need to expand on their sales process at trade shows.

In the figure, it was also pointed out that the sales process at trade shows enhances and contributes to the trade-show performance; since many of the sales activities help with image-building, information-gathering, relationship-improvement etc.

The column on the left indicates the decision-making process that trade show attendees go through. Each stage of the attendee's decision-making process links up with the stages of a trade show, and therefore indirectly with the sales process. Due to the nature of trade shows, it is important to note that there are multiple stages compared with the normal consumer decision-making process. By using the decision-making process together with the sales process at trade shows, it is possible to determine what stages would have to be dealt with at each stage.

This study not only contributes to the sales process at trade shows; but it indicates how it can be used with current trade show activities and business decision-making.

**Figure 7.1 Academic contribution of study**



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## 7.11 EVALUATION OF THE OBJECTIVES AND HYPOTHESES SET VERSUS THE RESEARCH RESULTS

In Chapter 6 of this study, the research results were presented; and this allowed the researcher to address the objectives and hypotheses. In this section, the five objectives that were set for this study are compared with the outcomes of the research findings. The objectives, as set out in Chapter 1 and Section 5.5, will be stated, after which the research results are summarised – to indicate whether the objectives have been met, or not.

The main objective of this study was to explore the sales process at trade shows; and it was established through an explorative analysis that at each of the stages of the sales process, different activities had occurred. As indicated in Figure 7.1, each section has specific activities that are implemented in the sales process. Therefore, the main objectives of this study have been met by identifying these activities.

The second objective was to determine the profile of the exhibitors at trade shows and the exhibit staff. In Section 6.2 and Section 6.3 of this study, a profile is provided of the exhibitors that exhibit at trade shows. This information was important; since it was used in the future analysis of the data. This objective has also been met.

The third objective determined whether there are any differences between the salespersons and the non-salespersons who man the exhibition stand, regarding the stages in the sales process for trade shows. It was indicated in Chapter 3 and Chapter 5, that there should, according to the literature, be differences why salespeople are the better choice for the exhibition staff. Through the hypothesis testing, it was revealed that there are both differences – and no differences – for certain factors that make up the stages of the sales process at trade shows. In Section 7.5 of this chapter, the differences were discussed; and this objective has therefore also been met.

The fourth objective was to determine whether there exist any differences between the type of trade show and the way in which the exhibition staff implement the different stages of the sales process for trade shows. In Section 7.6, the differences that exist and those that do not exist are discussed and highlighted. For each of these objectives, seven hypotheses were set. These objectives have, consequently, also been met.

The fifth objective was to determine whether the business actions of an exhibitor have any significant influence on the stages of the sales process for trade shows in regard to the exhibition staff. It was established that there are almost no differences between the different business actions and the sales process that exhibition staff implement. In Section 7.7, the differences that were identified are discussed. The fifth objective has, therefore, also been met.

## **7.12 SUMMARY**

The findings of this study have contributed to the amplification of the sales process at trade shows – by highlighting the sales activities that occur at each of the stages identified. Exhibitors and trade-show organisers can use the information obtained to guide them in what sales activities should take place at the exhibit stand. From the findings, training material can be developed to assist in the training of exhibition staff, to ensure greater success at trade shows. The study has also contributed to the amplification of the research done by Lee and Kim (2008:786), and Hansen (2004:4) on the various activities at trade shows.

It was established that there are not many differences regarding sales versus non-sales staff, the type of trade show, and the business actions of the exhibitors. This indicates that the sales process at trade shows has a tendency to be standardised. This means that trade-show organisers can develop standardised instructional material for exhibitors to assist them in exhibiting. This is a great benefit for businesses that decide to exhibit at trade; shows since they now have an opportunity to exhibit at different types of trade shows, and not only to make use of salespersons when exhibiting.

The research findings are also valuable for trade-show organisers; and they could provide exhibitors with standardised information that does not have to be adapted to training material, or to provide different information for different exhibitors.

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# APPENDIX A QUESTIONNAIRE



UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA  
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA  
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA

Faculty of Economic and  
Management Sciences

## Informed consent for participation in an academic research study

**Dept. of Marketing and Communication Management**

### **THE SALES PROCESS AT TRADE SHOWS**

Research conducted by:  
Mr. G.A.P. Drotsky (10676555)  
Cell: 082 4714 973

Dear Respondent

You are invited to participate in an academic research study conducted by Antonie Drotsky, a Doctoral student from the Department Marketing and Communication Management at the University of Pretoria.

The purpose of the study is to establish the role of the selling process at trade show.

Please note the following:

- This study involves an anonymous survey. Your name will not appear on the questionnaire and the answers you give will be treated as strictly confidential. You cannot be identified in person based on the answers you give.
- Your participation in this study is very important to us. You may, however, choose not to participate and you may also stop participating at any time without any negative consequences.
- Please answer the questions in the attached questionnaire as completely and honestly as possible. This should not take more than 15 minutes of your time.
- The results of the study will be used for academic purposes only and may be published in an academic journal. We will provide you with a summary of our findings on request.
- Please contact my supervisor, Dr. M Wiese at [Melanie.Wiese@up.ac.za](mailto:Melanie.Wiese@up.ac.za) if you have any questions or comments regarding the study.

Please sign the form to indicate that:

- You have read and understand the information provided above.
- You give your consent to participate in the study on a voluntary basis.

---

Respondent's signature

---

Date



**SECTION A**

1. Type of trade of trade show your business exhibit at the majority of times:

Regional	1	
Nationally	2	
International	3	V2

2. What is your position in the business? [Only select one]:

Owner, Partner/ Member/ Managing Member	1	
Director/MD – Non-owner/partner/member	2	
Marketing	3	
Trade show coordinator	4	
Sales	5	
Purchasing	6	
Brand manager	7	
Other Specify	8	V3

3. Years of service at business:

Up to 15	1	
15 years or more	2	V4

4. Which do you regard as the (a) primary economic sector that your business operates in? (Select only one) (b) In what other economic sector do you operate (secondary)? (Select only one)

	(a) Primary	(b) Secondary	
Manufacturing	1	1	
Construction	2	2	
Wholesale & Retail	3	3	
Repair & Maintenance Services	4	4	
Accommodation, Restaurants, Catering & Conference	5	5	
Transport, Storage and Communication	6	6	
Financial Intermediation & Insurance	7	7	
Business Services – Professional (attorneys, accountants, consulting engineers, architects, quantity surveyor)	8	8	
Business Services – Other	9	9	
Real Estate	10	10	
Community, Social & Personal Services – Professional (medical practitioners, dentists, psychologists, veterinarians)	11	11	
Community, Social & Personal Services – Other	12	12	V5

5. Please tell me what your (a) primary (select only one) and (b) secondary business operations are.

	(a) Primary	(b) Secondary	
Sales of goods (e.g. street trader, general dealer, car dealership, tavern or shebeen, butchery, supermarket, IT consulting firms, etc.)	1	1	
Service industry (e.g. transport - taxi, repair services, dry cleaners, panel beater, bookkeepers, computer repair companies, etc.)	2	2	
Construction (e.g. builder, painter, plumber, electrician, etc.)	3	3	
Manufacturing (food & beverage, furniture, car assembly, chemicals, engineering, etc.)	4	4	
Professionals with own consulting practice (eg medical practitioners, lawyers, occupational therapists, dentists, consulting engineers, architects)	5	5	
Other (specify)	6	6	V6



6. Number of products or service lines exhibited:

1	1	
2	2	
3	3	
4	4	
5	5	
6	6	
7	7	
8 or more	8	V7

7. Number of exhibit staff that will be working during the full duration of the show:

1-2	1	
3-4	2	
5-6	3	
7-8	4	
9+	5	V8

8. Number of exhibit staff that will be working per session for duration of the show:

1-2	1	
3-4	2	
5-6	3	
7-8	4	
9+	5	V9

9. Estimated annual turnover for the past financial year:

Less than R12 000	1	
R12 001 – R25 000	2	
R25 001 – R100 000	3	
R100 001 – R250 000	4	
R250 001 – R400 000	5	
R400 001 – R600 000	6	
R600 001 – R1 million	7	
R1 million – R2 million	8	
R2 million – R4 million	9	
R4 million – R10 million	10	
R10 million – R20 million	11	
R20 million – R40 million	12	
R40 million – R200 million	13	
R200 million – R400 million	14	
R400+ million	15	
Don't know/ Refused	99	V10

10. How many times did your business exhibit at trade shows in the last three years including this show:

1-2	1	
3-4	2	
5-6	3	
7-8	4	
9+	5	
Do not know	6	V11

11. Is your business operating on a regional, national or international level? **[INTERVIEWER: Multiple answers allowed]:**

Local/Regional (clients are located within your metro area)	1	
National (have clients on a national level)	2	
International (have clients on an international level)	3	V12

**SECTION B**

**The following statements are aimed to determine businesses' actions with regard to trade shows**

Please indicate to what extent you agree or disagree with the statements below, using the five point scale 1 (Strongly disagree), 5 (Strongly agree) by marking the number of your choice with an X on the scale.

Example of the scale

<b>Strongly disagree</b>	Disagree	Neither disagree nor agree	Agree	<b>Strongly agree</b>
<b>1</b>	2	3	4	<b>5</b>

1. Our business train and brief booth staff before the trade show	1	2	3	4	5	V13.1
2. Our business provided booth staff with product/service material to prepare them self for the trade show	1	2	3	4	5	V13.2
3. Our business have written financial objectives for the trade show	1	2	3	4	5	V13.3
4. Our business have written promotional objectives for the trade show	1	2	3	4	5	V13.4
5. Our business have written sales objectives for the trade show	1	2	3	4	5	V13.5
6. Our business exhibit at trade shows to get sales	1	2	3	4	5	V13.6
7. Our business planned before the trade show to exhibit to specific target customers	1	2	3	4	5	V13.7
8. Our business measures success at the trade show in terms of financial gains	1	2	3	4	5	V13.8
9. Our business measure trade show success by the number of new prospects	1	2	3	4	5	V13.9
10. Non-financial aspects is used to measure trade show success	1	2	3	4	5	V13.10
11. Our business use trade shows to introduce new products	1	2	3	4	5	V13.11
12. Trade shows are used to as platform to test new product concepts	1	2	3	4	5	V13.12
13. The business I work for use trade shows to collect information about competitors	1	2	3	4	5	V13.13
14. Trade shows provide our business with information on my industry	1	2	3	4	5	V13.14
15. Trade shows are used to maintain contact with exciting customers	1	2	3	4	5	V13.15
16. Trade shows are applied to develop new customer contacts	1	2	3	4	5	V13.16
17. Trade shows are used to get a competitive advantage over non-exhibiting competitors	1	2	3	4	5	V13.17
18. Trade shows are applied to enhance the business image	1	2	3	4	5	V13.18
19. Trade shows assist our business with other marketing communication functions	1	2	3	4	5	V13.19
20. Trade shows assist our business in the training of staff	1	2	3	4	5	V13.20
21. Trade shows assist our business to motivate staff	1	2	3	4	5	V13.21
22. Our business have a tracking system to keep information on attendees that visited our exhibit stand	1	2	3	4	5	V13.22

**SECTION C**

**The following statements are aimed to determine the marketing activities used to attract attendees to attend the trade show**

Please indicate to what extent you agree or disagree with the statements below, using the five point scale 1 (Strongly disagree), 5 (Strongly agree) by marking the number of your choice with an **X** on the scale.

Example of the scale

<b>Strongly disagree</b>	Disagree	Neither disagree nor agree	Agree	<b>Strongly agree</b>
<b>1</b>	2	3	4	<b>5</b>

1. Invitations to attend the trade show is personally delivered to customers	1	2	3	4	5	V14.1
2. Our business apply electronic communication e.g. internet, e-mail to inform customer about a trade show	1	2	3	4	5	V14.2
3. I personally invite customers to a trade show	1	2	3	4	5	V14.3
4. Our business use mass media to attract attendees	1	2	3	4	5	V14.4
5. Sending direct mail gets attendees to visit a trade show	1	2	3	4	5	V14.5
6. Trade journals are used to attract customers to trade shows	1	2	3	4	5	V14.6
7. Our business provide customers with free entry vouchers to attract them to trade shows	1	2	3	4	5	V14.7

**SECTION D**

**The following statements are aimed to determine marketing activities used to attract attendees to the business exhibit stand at the show**

Please indicate to what extent you agree or disagree with the statements below, using the five point scale 1 (Strongly disagree), 5 (Strongly agree) by marking the number of your choice with an **X** on the scale.

Example of the scale

<b>Strongly disagree</b>	Disagree	Neither disagree nor agree	Agree	<b>Strongly agree</b>
<b>1</b>	2	3	4	<b>5</b>

1. Our business use video screens to attract attendees to our exhibit stand	1	2	3	4	5	V15.1
2. Our business hand out free promotional material to attendees to attract them to our exhibit stand	1	2	3	4	5	V15.2
3. Our booth staff move around the trade show to attract attendees	1	2	3	4	5	V15.3
4. Our business use competitions to attract attendees to our exhibit stand	1	2	3	4	5	V15.4
5. Our business co-sponsor coffee courts, luncheons etc. to attract attendees to our exhibit stand	1	2	3	4	5	V15.5
6. Our exhibit staff invite attendees at social activities (luncheons, gala dinners etc.) at the trade show to visit our exhibit stand	1	2	3	4	5	V15.6

**SECTION E**

**The following statements are aimed to determine sales presentation activities at the trade show exhibit stand**

Please indicate the frequency applicable to the statements below using the five point scale 1 (Never), 5 (Always) by marking the number of your choice with an **X** on the scale.

Example of the scale

Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
1	2	3	4	5

1. I introduce myself to start the sales presentation	1	2	3	4	5	V16.1
2. I use a benefit of the product or service to start the sales presentation	1	2	3	4	5	V16.2
3. I start the sales presentation with a statement	1	2	3	4	5	V16.3
4. I use a compliment to start the sales presentation	1	2	3	4	5	V16.4
5. I start the sales presentation by asking questions to the attendees	1	2	3	4	5	V16.5
6. I use demonstrations to start the sales presentation	1	2	3	4	5	V16.6
7. I express an opinion to begin the sales presentation	1	2	3	4	5	V16.7
8. I use a memorised sales presentation at the trade show	1	2	3	4	5	V16.8
9. I use a sales presentation that follows a general outline to determine attendees' needs	1	2	3	4	5	V16.9
10. I start the sales presentation with questions to determine attendees' needs	1	2	3	4	5	V16.10
11. I use an in-depth analysis of attendees' needs during the sales presentation	1	2	3	4	5	V16.11
12. I use the group sales presentation method	1	2	3	4	5	V16.12
13. I ask questions during the sales presentation to establish the customers' interest in the product/service	1	2	3	4	5	V16.13
14. I use product/service demonstrations during the sales presentation	1	2	3	4	5	V16.14
15. I use information technology (e.g. a computer, PDA etc.) to demonstrate the product/service features	1	2	3	4	5	V16.15
16. I keep a note of the attendees' interest in the product/service during the sales presentation	1	2	3	4	5	V16.16
17. I keep a record of attendee's names that visit our exhibit stand	1	2	3	4	5	V16.17

**SECTION F**

**The following statements are aimed to determine the type of objections that are raised during the sales presentation**

Please indicate the frequency applicable to the statements below using the five point scale 1 (Never), 5 (Always) by marking the number of your choice with an **X** on the scale.

Example of the scale

Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
1	2	3	4	5



1. Attendees do not openly state reasons for not being interested in the product/service	1	2	3	4	5	V17.1
2. Attendees stall decision-making at trade shows	1	2	3	4	5	V17.2
3. Attendees indicate that they do not need the product/service, as a way to stop the sales presentation	1	2	3	4	5	V17.3
4. Money objections occur during the sales presentation	1	2	3	4	5	V17.4
5. Product/service related objections occur during the sales presentation	1	2	3	4	5	V17.5
6. Objections about our business occur during the sales presentation	1	2	3	4	5	V17.6

**SECTION G**

**The following statements are aimed to determine how objections is dealt with during the sales presentation**

Please indicate the frequency applicable to the statements below using the five point scale 1 (Never), 5 (Always) by marking the number of your choice with an **X** on the scale.

Example of the scale

<b>Never</b>	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	<b>Always</b>
<b>1</b>	2	3	4	<b>5</b>

1. I deal with objection by directly denying it	1	2	3	4	5	V18.1
2. I deal with objections by indirectly denying it	1	2	3	4	5	V18.2
3. If there is an objection I let it go and continue with the sales presentation	1	2	3	4	5	V18.3
4. I compensate with another benefit of the product/service to overcome an objection during the sales presentation	1	2	3	4	5	V18.4
5. I use a disadvantage of my product/service as an advantage to overcome the objections	1	2	3	4	5	V18.5
6. If there is an objection, I let another staff member present, answer it	1	2	3	4	5	V18.6

IS PART OF YOUR SALES PROPOSALS' PURPOSE TO SELL AND CLOSE THE SALE AT THE TRADE SHOW?			
YES	<input type="checkbox"/>	IF YES PLEASE COMPLETE THE <b>SECTION I &amp; J</b>	
NO	<input type="checkbox"/>	IF NO PLEASE COMPLETE <b>SECTION J</b>	V19

**SECTION I**

**The following statements are aimed to determine closing methods used during the sales presentation at the trade show exhibit stand**

Please indicate the frequency applicable to the statements below using the five point scale 1 (Never), 5 (Always) by marking the number of your choice with an **X** on the scale.

Example of the scale

<b>Never</b>	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	<b>Always</b>
<b>1</b>	2	3	4	<b>5</b>



1. I ask directly for a sale during the sales presentation	1	2	3	4	5	V20.1
2. I list the benefits of the product/service to close the sales presentation	1	2	3	4	5	V20.2
3. I list the advantages of the product against the disadvantages and to close the sales presentation	1	2	3	4	5	V20.3
4. Once I assume a customer will buy I start closing the sales presentation	1	2	3	4	5	V20.4
5. I provide the attendee with two options regarding the product/service and then close the sales presentation	1	2	3	4	5	V20.5
6. I close the sales presentation on a minor point	1	2	3	4	5	V20.6
7. I compliment the attendee and close the sales presentation	1	2	3	4	5	V20.7
8. I get the attendee to say yes all the time and then close the sales presentation	1	2	3	4	5	V20.8
9. I indicate to the attendee to act now otherwise something in the sale will change (e.g. price, availability) to close the sales presentation	1	2	3	4	5	V20.9
10. I use the negotiation technique to close the sales presentation	1	2	3	4	5	V20.10
11. I leave the close of the sale until after the trade show in the follow-up visit	1	2	3	4	5	V20.11

**SECTION J**

21. Gender of respondent:

Male	1	
Female	2	V21

22. Indicate if you work in:

Sales/ Marketing department	1	
Another department	2	V22

23. Are you employed as a sales person:

Yes	1	
No	2	V23

24. Age of respondent:

35 years and younger	1	
36 years and older	2	V24

25. Highest educational qualification:

No schooling	1	
Some primary school completed	2	
Primary school completed	3	
Some high school completed	4	
Matric (Grade 12)	5	
Artisans certificate obtained	6	
Tertiary – Certificate/Diploma	7	
Tertiary – Degree	8	
Refused	9	V25

**Thank you for your cooperation.**

## APPENDIX B

### TYPES OF CLASSIFICATION OF ATTENDEES AT TRADE SHOWS

In Chapter 3 of this study the different types of attendees that attend trade shows are illustrated in Table 3.2. In this study attendees are not investigated but to provide the reader with a better understanding each is discussed in greater detail in this appendix due to the impact it may have on the sales process at trade shows.

According to Tanner *et al.* (2001:4), the classification of attendees consists of three dimensions namely: career, aware and shop. Each of the dimensions will impact on the buying behaviour of the attendees and therefore influence how sales people will sell to them.

- The **career dimension** includes attendees that attends seminars and do most of their buying from the seminar content at a trade show and secondary the trade floor. Seminars at trade shows are mostly done by experts in specific field or exhibiting business demonstrating or launching new products. Elements that is important to attendees that fall within the career dimension is new technology, hands on experience, networking with other users and to observe what other organisations are doing.
- The **aware dimension** focuses on long-term relationships that attendees want to build with exhibiting organisations. In the aware dimension key relationships is develop for the future.
- The **shop dimension** is product oriented. With the shop dimension elements such as new products, examination of products and brand comparison is the main focus.

Pitta *et al.* (2006:162) provide another way to classify attendees according to their interest showed towards the exhibition booth:

- **Aggressive** attendees that is really interested in the products and made the effort to get to the exhibit booth.
- **Curious** attendees that stand on the outside of booth but show interest.

- **Passive** attendees that stays in the aisles and sort of stopped and looked. Golpalakrishna *et al.* (2010:245) make use of retail classification of shoppers to classify attendees at trade shows and divide them into five segments:
  - The **basic shopper** that makes about seven “serious” visits to different exhibits while at a trade show. A basic shopper prefers larger and open plan exhibits that can be accessed from all sides where they can meet their objectives of attending the trade show while getting exposure to new goods.
  - The **enthusiast** makes an average of 24 visits to different exhibits while at a trade show. The majority of the enthusiast visits is related to their objectives for visiting the trade show and they have high involvement with the product categories. Enthusiast tends to move where there is a lot of movement and therefore prefer larger exhibits where there is a variety of products.
  - The **niche shopper** makes an average of 9.2 visits to different exhibits. What makes the niche shopper different than the basic shopper and enthusiast is that 40 percent of their visits are to smaller size exhibit. The niche shopper are not influenced by the size or limited access to exhibits and are willing to seek out speciality vendors that will meet their objectives of visiting the trade show.
  - The **brand shopper** makes an average of ten visits to different exhibits. Brand shoppers prefer to visit larger, more popular exhibits and focus on booths that they are interested.
  - The **apathetic shopper** visits an average of seven exhibits and tends to have no clear objectives when visiting a trade show. Apathetic shopper tends to visit open booths that is open on three sides (peninsula booths) which is situated to the sides of an exhibition hall indicating a preference toward easy movement between exhibits. The apathetic shopper is attendees that find it difficult to navigate the trade show floor or newcomers or someone that does not know the trade show environment.

According to Lin (2010:3926), attendees at trade shows can be clustered into four different groups regarding what they are aware of when attending a show.

- The **pleasure-conscious** attendee that focus the enjoyment that they will receive from a trade show. In dealing with this type of attendee elements such as catering and merchandise is important.
- The **price-conscious** this type of attendee seeks self esteem and decisions is the majority of time influenced by price considerations.
- The **adventurous-conscious** attendees that want to have experiences at the trade show. This is expressed in the impulsive course of buying and adventurous-conscious attendees make a lot of social contacts at a trade show. In dealing with this type of attendee adequate catering services is important.
- The **target-conscious** attendees want to gain new information and knowledge. This attendee pursue their professional goals and it is important for them to work while trade show shopping. In dealing with this the target-conscious attendee new and diversified products must be offered.

Blythe (2010:58) provides yet another classification of trade show attendees based on their communication:

- **Tyre kickers.** These attendees have no buying power although they will act if they do. Tyre kickers do not have any intentions on buying and is more focused on entertainment or information seeking.
- **Wheeler-dealers.** Are attendees that have the authority to make purchases and are intend on buying. They will however negotiate for the best deals and visit more than one supplier.
- **Techocrats.** This is attendees that are seeking information on the products and are often engineers or technicians. They are interested in the technical aspects of the product.
- **Foxes.** Are attendees that are at the trade show with ulterior motives this can include selling to exhibitors, meet customers, or to seek information. They can be either exhibitor or attendee.
- **Day-trippers.** They attend the trade show for entertainment purposes or to gain information. This is mostly attendees that have an interest in the industry and/or are there to enjoy a day out.

## APPENDIX C

### EXHIBIT STAND DESIGN

Different booth designs elements can be considered by exhibitors. Each of the booth designs will shortly be discussed (Robb, 2000:72-73; O`Conner, 2001:117-120; Stevens, 2005: 89-90):

- **Standard or Inline booth designs** consists of one or more booths that is placed in a straight line. The booths are in a straight line facing an aisle with exhibits on the two sides visible and a tall curtain or wall in the back. This type of booth is not ideal when an organisation have demonstrations, or equipments in the back of the booth. It can therefore be assumed that this booth is not ideal for sales people due to difficulty in attracting customers in.
- **A perimeter wall booth** is a situated at the outer perimeter wall of the exhibit floor. This booth can provide a backdrop space higher than normal.
- **Peninsula booths** are exhibits stands with one or more display levels in four or more standard units back to back with an aisle on three sides and is situated at the end of an aisle.
- **A island booth** is the same as a peninsula booth but have aisle on four sides not only three. This type of booth has the advantage that it is provides for extra banners that is more visible to attendees. With both the island and peninsula booth the design must be done carefully to ensure that attendees enter from one side and move through the booth receiving the correct information and marketing material. This type of booth is important to less know or smaller exhibitors since they can attract attendees more easily that is passing by (Rinallo *et al.* 2010:256).
- **Cross aisle booth** is where an organisation rent two booths across from each other.
- **Double Decker booth** is a multiple level booth that consists of two levels. At the ground level attendees are met and qualified. If attendees are qualified they are moved up stairs where they are provided with more information on the company. The top level is mostly manned by senior executives and sales closers.

- **Demonstration area** is the space in which product demonstrations and presentations take place between exhibit staff and attendees interacts any tables and samples should not be places to close to the aisle.
- **Tower displays** that consist of detached exhibit components set apart from the main exhibit and used for recognition and display purposes only.

Another aspect that can influence the layout of the exhibit space is whether an organisation decided to use a joint or individual booth. Skallerud (2010:264) argues that organisations that have individual boots provide more resources, plan better and have more support from top management. Individual boots are manned by more staff than joint boots that increases the interaction between the exhibitors and the visitors at the trade show. As part of the before mentioned, Robb (2000:73) indicates that is of the up importance that the sales and marketing departments is consulted before a booth is designed for a trade show this will ensure congruency with the cooperate vision. Rice (1992:43) further indicates that an organisations resources and previous experience can have an impact on the type of exhibition booth selected.

## APPENDIX D

### Interview agenda

Interviewer: Antonie Drotsky

Person interviewed: Mr. G Corin

Organisations represented: Montgomery Specialised Exhibition

Position: Marketing Director

Place: Midrand

Date: 3 July 2009

Welcoming and general discussions.

Background to the interview is provided.

#### Questions asked:

What do you think is the role that trade shows play in business marketing?

Do you think that exhibitors get value for inputs from trade shows?

Do exhibitors sell at trade shows?

Is the traditional sales process followed at trade shows?

Do exhibitors have clear objectives for trade shows?

What future will trade shows have in South Africa?

Conclusion and closing.

Person interviewed is thanked for their time.

\*Permission was obtained to record the conversation that was then transcribed to be used as input to clarify the research problem, general understanding of the South African trade show industry as well as for input into the questionnaire development.

## APPENDIX E

### PILOT STUDY

According to Malhotra *et al.* (2012:476) pilot testing is the process of testing a questionnaire on a small sample of participants to identify and eliminate potential problems. It is suggested that a sample size of 10-20% of the actual study is a reasonable number of respondents to enrol in the pilot study (Simon, 2011). The pilot study for this study was done at the Afrimold trade show. Afrimold was selected since it provided a smaller trade show that made access to the respondents easier, while still reflecting the typical tradeshow identified for the main study. A total of 42 respondents participated in the pilot study that is deemed sufficient according to Malholtra *et al.* (2012:476).

Saunders *et al.* (2009:394) indicate that the starting point for a pilot study is to talk to experts to comment on the representativeness and suitability of the questions asked. In this study the questionnaire was discussed with the promoter of the study Prof. M Wiese, Mr. Corin from Montgomery Specialised exhibitions a trade show organiser, EXSA and the organiser of the Afrimold organisers. The comments from the experts were used to make corrections and changes before the pilot testing was done.

Through the use of the pilot study a number of factors that can have an impact on the data gathering can be established (Saunders *et al.*, 2009:394):

- How long does it take to complete the questionnaire;
- Is the instructions clear on completing the questionnaire;
- Was there unclear or ambiguous questions;
- Which questions was respondents not comfortable in answering;
- Did the respondents indicate that there is any omissions in the questionnaire;
- Is the layout correct;
- Was there any other comments regarding the questionnaire.

As indicated above the pilot study was done at the Afrimold trade show. The researcher and two trained fieldworkers did the pilot study. The researcher was present to conduct the pilot study. This was done to get a feel of possible problems and get an idea of what data will be obtained from the questionnaire (Malhotra *et al.*, 2012:477). The researcher also observed the trained fieldworkers to determine if they needed any more training or assistance before commencing the fieldwork of the main study. At the trade show 42 questionnaires was completed as part of the pilot study.

It was established in the pilot that the average time to complete the questionnaire was between 14 and 20 minutes, with the majority of the respondents completing it within 15 minutes. There was no other indication that the respondents experienced any difficult in completing or understanding the questionnaire.

Saunders *et al.* (2009:394) postulate that part of the pilot study is to also test the reliability of the data that will be obtained. Scale reliability is the extent to which a scale can produce the same measurement results in repeated trials (Hair *et al.*, 2000:390-391). Once the questionnaires were inspected to ensure that they were complete and useable, the data was captured in a Microsoft Excel spread sheet and the reliability tested using the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient. Cronbach's Alpha coefficient is the measurement of reliability that ranges from 0 to 1, with values of 0.60 to 0.70 deemed to be acceptable (Hair *et al.*, 2010b:89 & 118). All the Cronbach's Alpha values were above 0.60, with the majority being above 0.70, thus indicating acceptable reliability. The factor analysis indicated that the individual questions items did indeed load onto various factors resembling the proposed sales process. Once the pilot study was completed and the questionnaire finalised, it was decided to continue with the data collection for the final study.