

**HOW CAN SALES PERSON COPE WITH STRESS AND KEEP  
CALM WHILE FACING ABSURD CUSTOMER**



**A THEMATIC PAPER SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL  
FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENT FOR  
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entitled  
**HOW CAN SALES PERSON COPE WITH STRESS AND KEEP  
CALM WHILE FACING ABSURD CUSTOMER**

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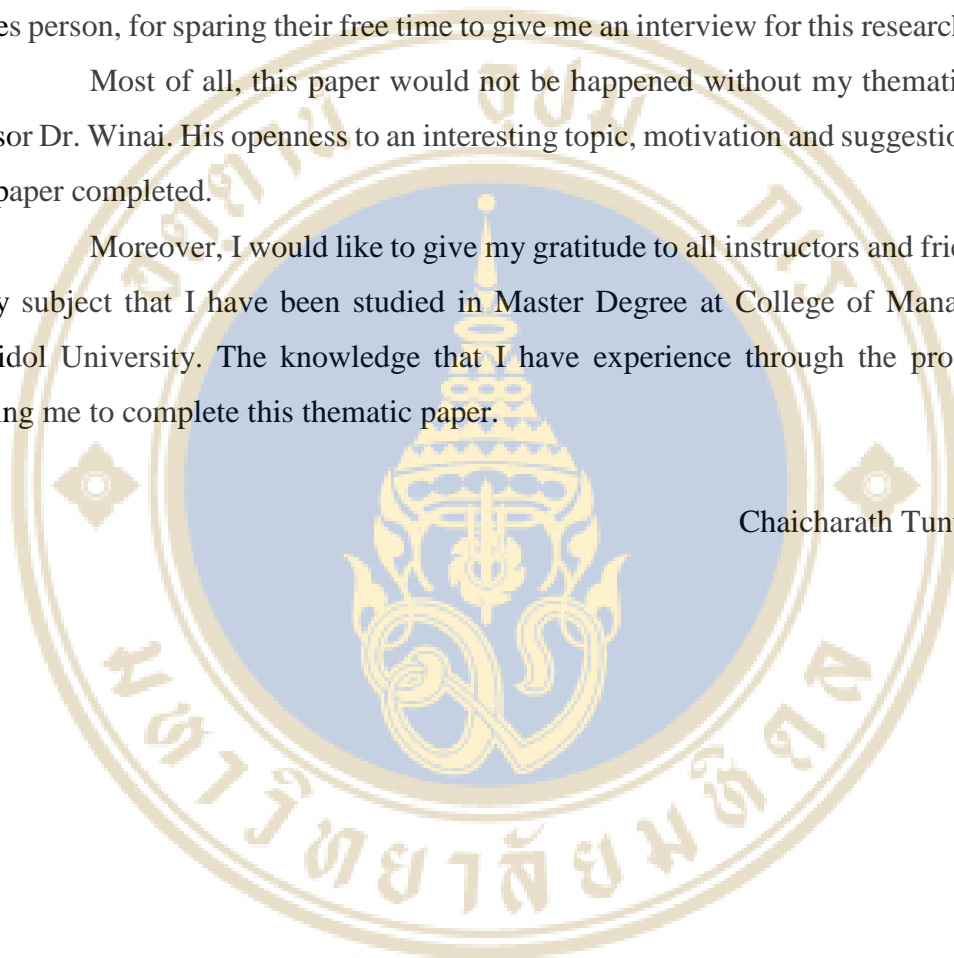
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Chaicharath Tunthagadh



## **HOW CAN SALES PERSON COPE WITH STRESS AND KEEP CALM WHILE FACING ABSURD CUSTOMER**

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M.M. (INNOVATION IN MANAGEMENT)

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### **ABSTRACT**

Sales persons are only group of people in every organization that generate the revenue for the whole organization. With the responsibility of meeting the sales target and dealing with customer as well as people inside organization as well, sales persons are burden with stress of their responsibility. This research paper will show the stress coping method that sales person in two groups; B2B (Industrial Product and Equipment) and B2C (Condominium) business type use with the method to control themselves when facing with absurd customer. This research paper is adapting the theory of Stress and General Adaptation Syndrome and Emotional Intelligence to create an interview questions with analysis that relate to most stressful situation and how each sales person coping with their stress. The finding of this research paper is difference methods of stress coping and self-control between sales persons of two business groups as well as gender.

**KEY WORDS: SALES PERSONS / STRESS / COPING METHOD / CUSTOMER**

29 pages

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

The below conversation is the actual conversation that happened to one of the interviewees.

*Beloved Customer* : *Khun A, why hasn't your product been delivered yet? What's wrong with your company? I urgently need it now!*

*Humble Sales* : *Khun B, Please calm down, could you kindly tell me when you issued your Purchase Order? So that I can track our ordering process*

*Beloved Customer* : *I haven't sent it yet! But I'm about to send it to you now!!*

*Humble Sales* : *..... (Speechless for a moment)*

Sales persons are revenue generators. They are the frontier of the company which dealing with customer as well as inside the company. Hence, the burden of being the only group of people who are generating revenue for the company, the pressure from management will be forced toward sales department. Sales persons must try their best to please the customers to get their order; no matter how absurd of demanding they are. Beside external customer, sales need to deal with people inside company to get their job done as well. If dealing with internal and external are not stressful enough, every sales persons have to achieve their sales target, if target cannot be met, many consequences will follows, ranging from losing in self-esteem or to the worst case, termination from company.

Also, imagine that you have to deal with above mentioned conversion kind of people on daily basis, 5 days a week, total for 1 year is 221 days. Sales person are normal human being, they have emotions just like anyone else, and how can they endure their stress and remain calm without losing their temper while dealing with customer and others inside the company?

From the author experiences as a Sales Executive, all of sales persons know that, we cannot let our anger and stress take place while dealing with the customer.

No matter how much anger they feel, sales person cannot show it to the customer. It would be the end for our sales career if that thing ever happens. Sales person would need to find their own way to deal with it.

### **1.1 Problem Statement**

What could make each sales person tolerate with such stressful situation? There are so many methods on how to keep and control your stress, but will it work in every situation? Especially when Sales person have to face it on daily basis, not to mention about some absurd customer who demand something that it is almost impossible to be served will show up once it a while.

### **1.2 Research Question**

How can sales person coping with stress and keep calm while facing with absurd customer?

### **1.3 Research Objective**

The purpose of this thematic paper would be the finding of techniques that each sales person from different business types is using to control their emotion and stress. To obtain an answer to research question, an informal interview with sales person will be conducted which will be divided into 2 groups for broader point of view 1) Industrial Product (B2B) 2) End User product (B2C).

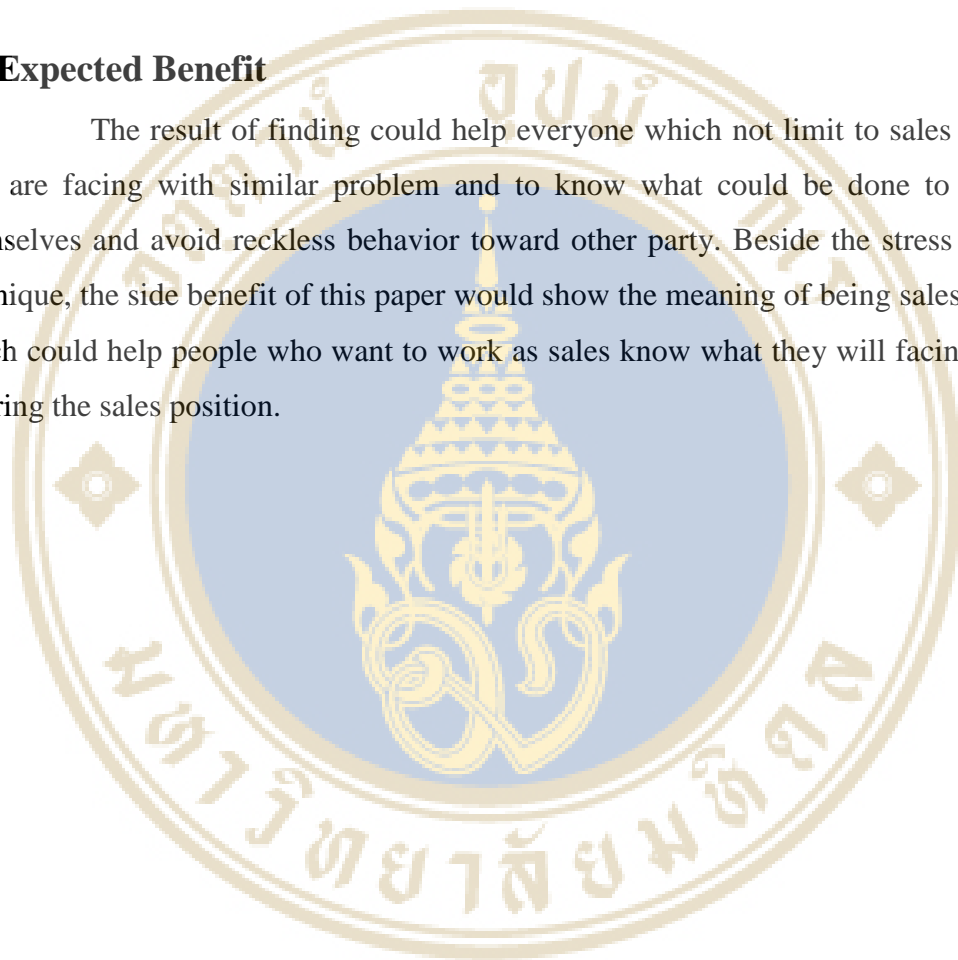
### **1.4 Research Scope**

The scope of this research would be focused on the stress coping and control that will narrows down and emphasis on 2 difference types of sales persons as follow

- 1) 3 Sales persons from Industrial Product that customer are not direct consumer, instead it will be used as raw material in final product of customer's goods. Business to Business type of customer
- 2) 3 Sales persons from Consumer product that customer are direct user, business to customer type of business

### **1.5 Expected Benefit**

The result of finding could help everyone which not limit to sales person, who are facing with similar problem and to know what could be done to control themselves and avoid reckless behavior toward other party. Beside the stress control technique, the side benefit of this paper would show the meaning of being sales person which could help people who want to work as sales know what they will facing when entering the sales position.



## **CHAPTER II**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

The literature review that showed support for this paper topic will be related to EQ, stress and sales performance. The literature review will be used to create interview questions that will be based on a framework that was interpreted from the review. Also, the literature review will be used to explain the data analysis section, to understand and analyze the data in a logical way based on previous studies.

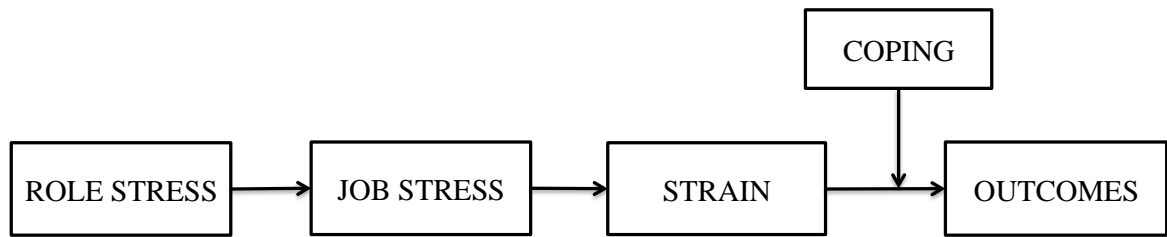
#### **2.1 Sales and Stress**

Stress, it is the word that everyone seems to be facing almost every day, despite who they are. Additionally, humans can suffer such emotional or mental stressors as the loss of a loved one, the inability to solve a problem, or even having a difficult day at work.

Especially, for sales which is considered to be a very stressful job. Sales need to deal within and outside of the company to get the job done. For inside the company; sales people will be involved in every department of the company, since he / she is the only person who links between the company and its customers. External of company, going out to sell and facing, dealing with new people from time to time with the target to meet on a daily basis. Also, with the sales target that sales need to achieve on a monthly, quarterly and yearly (depend on company policy), sales are most likely to be pressured and stressed a lot.

As mentioned in “*Clarification of the Meaning of Job stress in the Context of Sales Force Research*” by Sager J. K. and Wilson, P.H. with the critical responsibility as a revenue generator for the company, the process of stress and coping is shown as followed in figure 2.1

### Relationships between Job Stress, Strain and Outcomes



Role Stress Includes : Role Conflict, Role Ambiguity and Role Overload

Outcomes Include : Job Satisfaction, Well-Being, Performance, Burnout, Withdrawal

**Figure 2.1 Relationships between Job Stress, Strain and Outcomes**

To elaborate more detail in the relationship between each dimension of figure 1, next section would be an explanation of each dimension. The roles stress is the stress that result from mainly role responsibility, poor job description, conflict of interest or role duty between role and position, job overload for one role. When the role stress occur, it will leads to job stress where the stress occur from job related behavior. As mentioned by Jeffrey K. and Phillip H. Wilson that they combined many meaning and definition of job stress which this paper interpreted overall meaning of job stress. It is the result from overly demand or expectation from other that unconditionally possible or difficult to achieve. The resulted of job stress is the “*Strain*” which resulted from job stress. It can be a physiological and psychological effect of job stress. And before reaching outcome stage, the human behavior will create a coping strategy to deal and reduce the job strain. The coping can be both ineffective and effective methods, which will result in difference outcomes. This paper will try to capture the effective coping method from difference sales persons that they believe their method is working to coping and control their emotion and stress while dealing as well as after that stressful situation has passed.

## 2.2 STRESS in Medical point of View

As summary the medical literature review of the “Stress and the General Adaptation Syndrome” by Zenwork place is that the medical term that described the reaction to stress is called *General Adaptation Syndrome or GAS* is consisted of 3 stages as follows ;

- “ 1) *Recognition of the stressor – acknowledgement that something is wrong;*  
 2) *Resistance to the stressor – trying to alter the situation to make it go away;*  
 3) *Exhaustion – acceptance of the stressor when the body has run out of energy to fight it.*”

With the *GAS* explanation for process of reaction to stress, the paper will used *GAS* stage as the guideline to create an interview question which will be explained more in details on Data collection and Methodology section.

## 2.3 Emotional Intelligence

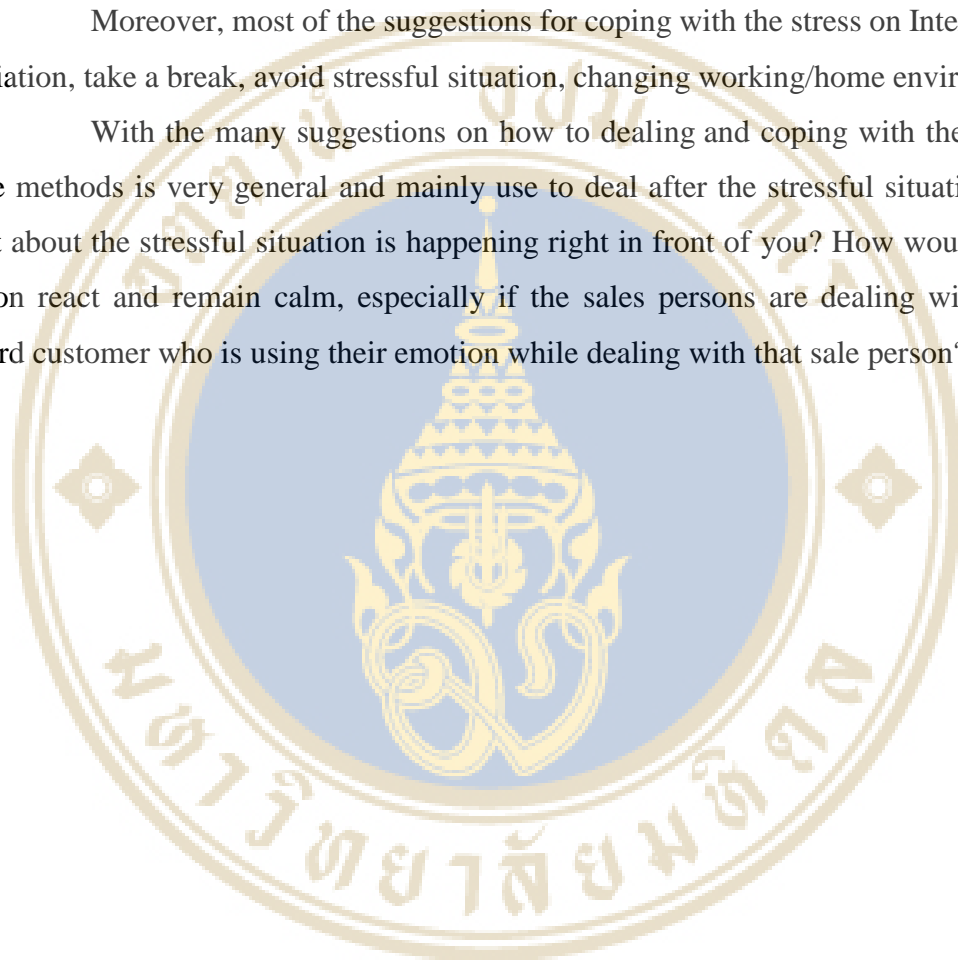
The Emotional Intelligence (EI) plays an important role in sales person job. As described by Robbins and Judge, EQ is consisted of Perceive emotion of self and other; know what self and other feeling at the moment. Understand the emotion; understand the feeling and emotion at the moment. Regulate emotion; handling our emotion, social awareness- sensing what people are feeling and social skill. To control their emotion with customer, sales need to be able to maintain their level of EQ. Supported by the study of “Developing Emotional Intelligence by Chris Watkins” which show that 10% of sales who has highest EQ score performed more than twice a normal sales person who have standard score of EQ. Moreover, *Verbeke, W.J.M.I., Belschak, F.D., Bakker, A.B., & Dietz, H.M.S.* found that sales person who has high IQ and EQ will have perform better than those who have either lower IQ or EQ.. In other words, it is better for sales person to acquire EQ along with the IQ. If sales person only performs high IQ, sales performance would not be any better than those who have similar IQ but better EQ.

## 2.4 Coping with the Stress

There are many suggestion to coping with the stress, both from website as well as academic research journal. From “The Relationship Between Optimism and Coping Styles of Salespeople by Strutton and Lumkin (1993) Showed that most coping method for sample are: *“Fleeing from problem, self-indulgent escapism, emotion support and avoidance of others”*

Moreover, most of the suggestions for coping with the stress on Internet are mediation, take a break, avoid stressful situation, changing working/home environment

With the many suggestions on how to dealing and coping with the stress, these methods is very general and mainly use to deal after the stressful situation, but what about the stressful situation is happening right in front of you? How would sales person react and remain calm, especially if the sales persons are dealing with very absurd customer who is using their emotion while dealing with that sale person?



## **CHAPTER III**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DATA COLLECTION**

In order to capture most of how can sales people coping with their stress while dealing with customer, the method of interview with interviewee who worked as a sales person would be used for data collection method. The interview will be conducted after work hour at the place where interviewees are convenience, to create a non-stress environment and make interviewees comfortable to share their experience.

Since there are differences between characteristic and nature of business between Business-to-Business (B2B) and Business to Consumer (B2C), the sampling group will be divided into 2 types of business because there is difference in characteristic of customer and power of sales person and how would they react toward difference group of customer as well. Also, interviewee will be both male and female in order to compare between endurance and method of stress coping between genders. To compare difference between 2 groups of business, the interviewee will be divided as follows

#### **3.1 Sampling Group**

Since all of interviewees are still working and being an representative of the company, in order to keep the interviewee from trouble of sharing the experience with absurd customer, all personal information, company and customer related information will be kept confidential and will not be mentioned in this paper.

All interviews were conducted during evening after work or weekends to allow interviewee speak freely and take as much time as needed in express their experience without interruption from work. Furthermore, to create relax environment and avoid tense emotion from the question that will bring bad experience. All interviews will be conducted in either restaurant or coffee shop where interviewee feels convenience.



During the interview, interviewee will be informed that there would be a voice recording no picture or video recording will be and the identity of interviewee will not be discreet or mention in the research paper.

The interviewee will be picked among the sampling group from experienced sales who are currently working in the company and have a personal connection with author and a willingness to be interviewed with the research topic. In order to get a confirmation and reduce the uncomfortable feeling with the question, the interview question will be shown to interviewee before the interview begins. Each interview took approximately 30 minutes to 1 hour per person.

The detail of interviewees in each sampling group is as follows:

**Group 1 :**

Type of Business: Business-to-Business  
 Characteristic of Customer: Business related user only, mostly are for production or construction, engineering, purchase department related  
 Type of Product: Industrial product (industrial heavy duty coating, anti-corrosion paint, machine equipment)  
 Sampling size: 3 persons ( 2 Males, 1 Female)  
 Age : 26-28 Years old  
 Sales Experience: 4 – 5 years

**Group 2 :**

Type of Business: Business to Consumer  
 Characteristic of Customer: Direct user of product, use in private life and living  
 Type of Product: Luxury Condominium  
 Sampling size: 3 persons ( 3 Females )  
 Age: 26 – 32 Years old  
 Sales Experience: 3 – 8 years

**Table 3.1 List of interview date**

No.	Date	Type of Sales	Year of Experiences
1	10/10/14	Industrial Product	3
2	12/10/14	Luxury Condominium	4
3	17/10/14	Luxury Condominium	8
4	17/10/14	Luxury Condominium	3
5	18/10/14	Industrial Product	5
6	18/10/14	Industrial Product	4

The interview question, despite the basic information about interviewee job description and attitude towards work, would be created based on the 3 phases of stress according to *General Adaptation Stress (GAS)* which will be explained in the following section.

### 3.2 Interview Questions

#### Job Description

- Please explain your job description / industry / type of customer you're dealing with
- How long have you working as sales?
- Why would you work as sales? Why not other position?
- In your opinion, what are sales?

#### Stress Phase I

[Recognition of Stressor] - acknowledgement that something is wrong.

The question on this phase will emphasis on the experiences that interviewee faced with most stressful situation with their customer

- Please explain the worst customer experience that you faced?
- Could you try to explain why he/she acted like that?

### Stress Phase II

[Resistance to the Stressor] - trying to alter the situation to make it go away; The questions on this phase will emphasize on the tips and reaction toward explained situation on phase II answers, how to control and deal with the stress.

- How would you react to that situation?
- According to your reaction do you think you reacted well enough?
- If you on the same situation like your customer, would you do the same? How and Why?
- If you can travel back through time, would you repeat your action like what you did with that absurd customer? Why?
- Have you ever snap or losing control while dealing with your customer? Why so?

### Stress Phase III

[Exhaustion] – acceptance of the stressor when the body has run out of energy to fight it. The question on this last phase on GAS would emphasize on after this situation that each interviewee has experienced, how would they do when they tired or fatigue from stress.

- After that situation, what did you do? Do you express your anger with some one? Or do you keep it by yourself?
- Beside that customer, what about your manager?
- Since Sales job is very stressful, day-by-day, what are the activities that help you calm your mind the most?
- Do your work stress affect your personal life? If yes, how do you deal with it?
- Do you think it's working from time to time, or it's getting worse?

### Ending Question

These question will be asked before complete an interview, to capture whether or not, the interviewee satisfied with their position as attitude toward being sales person.

- Beside the absurd customer, please tell me the best experience with your customer
- After what you have been through from your experiences as a sales, would you still work as sales or recommend anyone you know to work as sales?



## CHAPTER IV

### RESEARCH FINDING AND ANALYSIS

As per described in the research methodology section, this research will conduct an interview with 2 groups of sales person that are Industrial (B2B) and Consumer (B2C) sales person. The question for the sampling group was constructed into 3 phases of stages to capture and explain stress coping method from each interviewee.

To recapture the 3 stress phases that interview question was followed, each data finding and analysis will include brief definition of each stage under the topic

#### **4.1 Example Case Study taken from the experiences of an interviewee**

To give a clearer view and understand what the sales, an interviewee has faced from their absurd customer that they encountered, this section would give 2 example of an interesting experience case study that interviewee has faced. The purpose of following case study would help reader understand more about what sales person has to faces the stress from their job.

##### **4.1.1 First Case Study**

*A story of customer who blames everything on sales person –an experience from industrial product sales person who is facing with utterly demanding customer.*

This is an experience from one of an interviewee who worked in Industrial Product sales person. The interviewee has worked in the sales field since graduated from Master Degree. It is now his 4<sup>th</sup> year of working as sales. The incident started when the product user called an interviewee about what product he would like to use, with specific name and description, our interviewee followed that description and created a quotation

based on what he received information from the user. Within no time, the purchase department of that customer issued PO according to received quotation, which followed the user description.

With rush and urgently needed, our interviewee need to beg the logistic department so badly, to deliver this so called “Urgently Needed” order. Phone call after phone call, the order has arrived on time. But when the order has arrived, the user called an interviewee and complaint that this product is not what he wanted. The user demand new product for exchange and of course, urgently needed as before. With the ordered that followed user description, the interviewee confused and refused to exchange what was delivered. Soon, the purchase department called and demand product exchange, blaming everything is an interviewee’s fault.

Without admit that the fault is on them, all pressure was putted under an interviewee. The call was made so many times to an interviewee, both user and purchase department. If too many calls were not enough to created stress for an interviewee, the sarcastic, criticism, aggressive tones and threat of switching to competitor have been used during telephone conversation.

Able to know himself during the phone conversation, he managed to know himself that if the conversation still keeps continues, he would lose his temper. His method of keeping himself together is that, he cut the conversation as fast as he can, and hang up to calm him down. Not only for this particular customer, but also for many conversations that he felt he would lose his temper, he will hang up as fast as he can to calm his mind. In other words, he would get away from the stressful situation to calm his mind. When his mind is calm, in this case, he called his supervisor and asked for advice.

Eventually, he ended up to follows customer demanded due to permission from his supervisor to end this issue and soon as possible. When he called the purchase department and inform that the product exchange was approved, he thought the issue is going to end, unfortunately, it is not. Same issue as before, urgently deliver was requested. The rest of story is repeated itself, begging logistic department all over again.

*“But what I can say? They are the customer and I am here to do my job as a sales”* said, an interviewee, with a little grudge on his face.

#### **4.1.2 Second Case Study**

*Mysterious customer and a girl who almost lose her temper – an experience from a condominium sales person who are dealing with end user, business to consumer who almost lose her temper while dealing with customer.*

This experience is a summary of the story from one of an interviewee in End-user sales person sampling group. The characteristic of customer in this group is difference from Industrial product's customer since the user of product; condominium is the case, is the buyer itself. As stated from B2C interviewee group, they believe that B2C customer is more difficult to dealing with due to buyer are direct consumer. And in their case, the high-end segment, which particularly are wealthy, *“I pay so much, I must get what I paid attitude”* is what an interviewee describe the attitude of some customer. The interviewee for this case study worked as a sales person for B2C industry almost 2 years. Prior to this current job, she worked in B2B industry.

The sales routine of what an interviewee believe that is most absurd customer for her is started as regular routine. The routine is ; customer came to the *Show Suite* (mock up room), asking for description, sales proposing quotation, payment plan and close the deal when customer pay the down payment. But in her case, the problem started as soon as process of down payment begins.

Same as everywhere else, when dealing with real-estate asset, a lot of documents need to be processed. It should not be difficult if a person, the customer is easy to contact and willing to give contact information. Unfortunately, this is not the case for an interviewee. *“He only gave a postal box number for his contacting address, never pick up the call nor return the call”* or *“I think he is working underground business or something illegal, that's why he is making it so mysterious and so hard to contact”* said an interviewee with a high pitch of her tones, indicating that she still feel unbelievable for what her customer action until today even this experience happened almost a year.

The difficulty of contact this mysterious customer did not stop her from closing the deal. Thanks to the customer database of her company, she found out that son of this mysterious customer is also bought a room from difference sales site as well. Since it is so difficult to contact the father, she contacts the son instead. Unlike the father, the son is easier to contact which gave her a relief, but life is not that easy. The son is not willing to answer questions regards about his father and feel irritating which he actually show his irradiation through his wording and tones of voice when she contacted him.

Contacting the customer and received attitude of unwillingness to shares information from customer seems to be difficult and created a mental stress for her already. Her boss also joined in the circle of stress for her. Since the process of closing deal and documents is taken longer than usual, her boss jumps into the situation and rush her to close the deal as soon as possible. Eventually, with help of her senior, she is finally able to contact with her mysterious customer. But to make things getting worst, the mysterious customer denied that he never received the document that an interviewee sent to him and complaint back to her that she worked very slow and never send any document to him to complete the process. Stunted from complaint that she never did such things, she felt very angry, so angry that she almost loses her control.

But just like every interviewee, she can control her emotion, she know if will lose her temper it if she keep on going. What she did is that she called her senior who also acted as her mentor, to express and release her anger through a conversation. It could be said that for her case, the best way to control her anger is to express and let it out with someone who she feel trust worthy. In this case, it would be her senior who later on, helped her closed the deal with this customer. *“At that moment, I don’t care whether I can close the deal or not, I just want to throw away this customer as possible”* said an interviewee before the end of an interview.



## 4.2 Research Analysis

### 4.2.1 General Adaptation Stress Framework

**Stress Phase I Recognition of Stressor;** acknowledgement that something is wrong. The question on this phase will emphasis on the experiences that interviewee faced with most stressful situation with their customer.

From an interview, all interviewees agree that the worst experience that they have faced while dealing with customer that can be counted as an absurd customer would have similar behavior. The behavior that both group of sales person; Industrial product and Condominium sales person made their customer counted as absurd customer when they are dealing with customer who make an impossible to achieve or very difficult to achieve.

Also, the two groups of sales agreed that customer who speaks to them in a very bad manner (tones of voice, calling frequency, wording that was spoken, flirting with sales person) is something that turned acceptable situation as worst experiences that interviewees has faced. But in this similarity, there is little difference between 2 groups of customer.

The sales person who is dealing with Industrial Product customers faced the stress-triggered and agree that it is most absurd demanding customer experience when customer required almost impossible shipping date, which not directly related to product, but rather on service. For example, the customer wants the product to be delivered within one week where normal process will take around one month. Since the product that was sold in industrial usage is mass-produced, the degree of demanding on product is almost impossible to happen. From the interview, there is no demand on the product aspect. Instead, for industrial product sales, all the interviewees told that the demand that was made is the product delivery leads time is the request that made them feels most stressful.

While End-user sales person, a condominium product faced the stress-triggered situation when customer required some adjustment in the room, furniture or parking or space with utterly absurd demanding. Not only the demand in product but also during the process of document as well. Since the document will be involved a lot, ranged from banking to detail in the deed where some customer requested so many changes that came from suggestion of their personal lawyer. In other words, anything that related to product itself is something that make normal customer become absurd customer. Since the interviewees in End-user product sales person are working in Sole Agent company, all the requested from customer will need to have an approval from Condominium's developer (owner of the condominium). If the requested have not been approving from developer, sales person will be the one who have to inform the rejection of request to the customer. If they are lucky, customer will understand and give up for the requested. But some are not. When customer who got rejected is not give up, they will try everything to get their requested. Throwing a lot of harsh words and express anger to sales are the most ways that they do.

It might be the nature of product that they are selling that each customer from difference industry and business type required differently. Each interviewee from different industry faced different stress situation and requirement. But as mentioned earlier in this section, the triggered that made normal customer become absurd customer are not only the requirement but it is the behavior of customers itself. How they talked, reaction and expression towards the interviewee are the triggered that will lead customer into absurd or normal customers for interviewee point of view. With the combination of requirement and customer bad attitude, it became a stressor for sales person.

#### **4.2.2 Stress Phase II**

**Resistance to the Stressor :** alter the situation to make it go away;

This sector will be an analysis on resistance to stressor, how interviewee coping with their stress when facing with absurd customers with an analysis on why they would react like that

After what interviewees have been facing with the stress situation of absurd customer, all the interviewees agree that, as sales responsibilities, they cannot let the

anger or losing control while dealing with customer. All of them believe that it will be a disaster if they express their anger to the customer, so to protect their job, as a representative and as a professional action, everything will be kept and control when facing with customer, even how much anger they are inside. As mentioned earlier in Literature Review section, a successful sales person has higher Emotional Intelligence compare to regular performance sales person. To elaborate the action that interviewee resist to the stress and control it, the component of Emotion Intelligence will be used to explain and analyze the behavior of interviewee that has been through the stressful experiences.

#### **4.2.3 Emotion Intelligence with Sales Person**

**4.2.3.1 Perceive emotion of self / other (Self and Social Awareness)** interestingly, all of interviewees both male and female are able to know their feeling at the moment when they are dealing with absurd customer. All interviewee has described that they know what is inside their mind during their conversation with customer. The acknowledge of their emotion is not actually on purpose or acknowledge all the time, but rather they sense it when conversation is getting carry on for a while.

**4.2.3.2 Understanding the meaning of emotion** at one point, when the conversation from both interviewee and customer is become more emotional and increased in stress, it is the moment when interviewees realize that emotion is getting more aggressive through the tone of voice, which slightly difference from normal tone. It is the time that interviewees understand that they are getting tenser and it would mean that they are getting more emotional.

**4.2.3.3 Regulate the Emotion (Self-Management)** when the interviewees sense that their mood and emotion is getting stir, they would try to stop the conversation as fast as they can. Knowing that if the conversation keep getting carry on, they can have possibility of breaking down their clam to customer who is giving them a harsh and stressful situation. The method that was mentioned from an interview is that, they will cut the conversation as quick as possible by letting the customer know that they have to hang up in order to consult with their superior first in

order to follow the demanded from customer. Even in their mind, they would know that it is most likely not going to happen since the demand is very absurd and difficult to follow.

After hanged up the phone, an interviewees would immediately let their anger and moody feeling out as fast as possible in order to continue doing their work; getting back to customer. What this paper found is that, there is a different method of dealing with the stress of interviewees between male and female sales person.

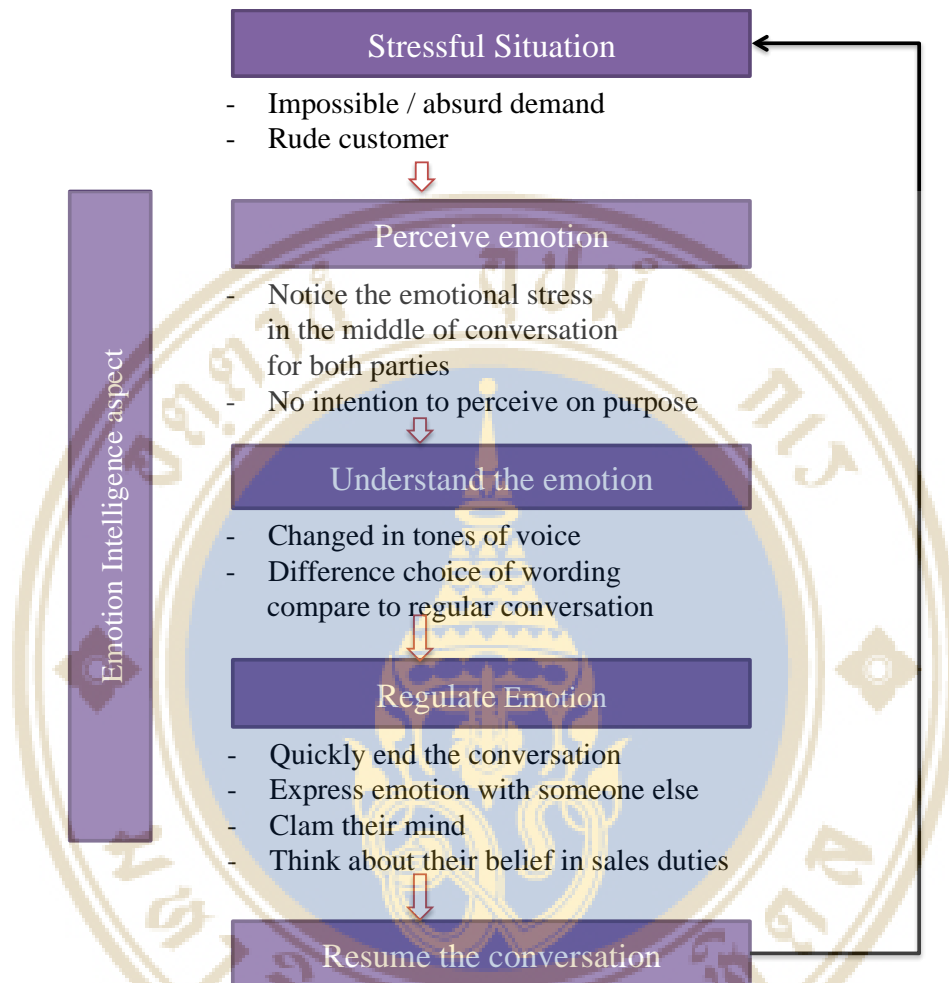
Male interviewees who are working in the industrial product field, what they described for their emotional management is that they would letting themselves calm by stopping the conversation with customer and waiting themselves to be calm. Other method from male interviewee is that he implant the concept of "*customer is customer, it is our responsibility to serve them no matter what*" and with this concept of his, he try to recall it whenever he faced with absurd customer and he never lose his control.

In contrast from male interviewee, female interviewee, from both industrial and consumer sales persons are having different method of controlling their emotion while dealing with absurd customer. At first, same as male interviewee, they would try to end conversation as soon as possible but the different is following afterward. All of female interviewee express their emotion and let their anger out with their friends, senior or anyone who are around them. They said that the best way to let their anger away is to express with someone, then they can get back to work or resume the conversation with customer that they are dealing with.

Apart from able to manage themselves with customers, one of interviewee admitted that she once lost control while dealing with customer, but that happened back when she worked as internal sales (industrial product, before switched to consumer industry) that dealing with other subsidiary which report to same Head Quarter as well as her company.

When comparing between two industries, both group of interviewee are similar in term of how they would handle with absurd customer. But the difference is the method of how they are dealing with themselves. The factor that creates difference in self-management method is gender. Male interviewee decided not to talk to anyone else, instead they stay with themselves and trying to calm down by themselves. While

female interviewee is more on socialization method, by chatting and express their emotion with someone who, whether or not willing to listen to their complaint.



**Figure 4.1 Summary of the process for Emotion Intelligence with Sales Persons**

#### 4.2.4 Stress Phase III

**Exhaustion – acceptance of the stressor when the body has run out of energy to fight it**

This sector will be an analysis on how they are dealing with themselves after explained situation, how would they keep themselves together.

After the interviewees have been through the stressful situation while dealing with absurd customer, the energy of their mind and body has worn out. In other words, they feel exhausted from the stress that they have faced. Like any human beings,

the sales people would need to re-charge in order to heal themselves both mentally and physically from the stress. From the interview, this paper found that difference industry does not have an effect on the method of stress relieve, instead, same as the factor that separate self-management aspect is the gender. Both industrial and consumer product sales person are similar in term of stress relieve activities. For female when the question of what is the method of stress relief was asked, all of female interviewee response to this question, even without asking to prioritize, the answer that was first to response to such question from every female interviewee is that, to express what they have been through with their boyfriend or someone else. It is similar method to how they coping with the stressful situation when they are facing with absurd customer. It might be the nature of female as can be seen in the office environment that most of female like to chat, gossip or having a conversation with group of friends.

Other method from female interviewee, again, both industrial and consumer sales person are having similar method of stress relief. Shopping is the method that they describe for stress relief method. The reason that shopping can relief the stress is might be that their minds are focusing on the shopping only. The shopping is taking them away and blocking their mind to think about stressful situation that they have been through. Adding more to the focusing on shopping, the shopping would make interviewee look better, improve their self-esteem and make them feels more confident about them.

Apart from mood expression and shopping, the only method that one female interviewee mentioned is eating. Same as shopping, eating could take our interviewee away from stress and make her less focus on what she been from stressful situation.

Different from female interviewees that have at least one similar method for stress relief, the male interviewees are having totally different method. First method that was mentioned from an interviewee is he would play a sport, like soccer. The sport activity will make interviewee tired and would not think about stressful situation. Other than sport, interviewee explained that reading a comic book and watching animation is also make him less thinking about stress and relief from such stressful job. From both methods, it would make an interviewee away from the stressful situation, while playing sport, the interviewee would have to focus on sporting activity that in front of him, leaving no time to think about stress. Also, by reading comic and watching animation,

when interviewee is actually into the story, it would move him away from the real world to fantasy world that he is reading or watching.

Apart from two methods from one interviewee, another interviewee explained that he is not actually stress by the customer. It is his attitude toward that the customer, “customer *is* customer, it is the duty of sales to response to such request”. With this attitude, the interviewee said that he would not become stress from the customer. Instead, it would be the boss who gives more tough and stressful situation than customer.

What would interviewee do if from time to time, the stress were getting more and more? When this question was asked. Some interviewee oppose to this question that their stress relief method is going to work whether the stress is getting more and more tense. When asked back why it would still work, interviewee could not answer specifically but they rather give an answer that it still just work. This might because that the method that they are doing is actually work and they just do not keep thinking about the absurd situation that they have been through, just like they mentioned that, “it’s just work”.

Travel is also another method of stress relief that was mentioned when question of if stress become more accumulated, what to do? The result is travel and the reason that travel is the last method that it would use because it cannot be conducted as easy as shopping or express emotion; instead, it required more plan than any other method. But travel is a activity that will be used at least a once or twice for a year, which should help interviewee relax and relief when their stress is accumulating and become more and more tense, it recharge their energy

## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUSION

#### 5.1 Conclusion

From research finding and analysis, this paper found that no matter which industry that sales person who is working in, the coping method is still the same. What differentiates the coping method is gender. Different gender tends to have different stress coping method in some degree. The summary of coping method for each gender is shown in below Table 5.1. Most of methods are similar in term of objective for each method. But what differentiates is the activity of stress coping.

To summarize the method to cope with the stress when dealing with absurd customer, below table is summary of coping method and its objective for each stress coping activity.

**Table 5.1 Table of Coping methods**

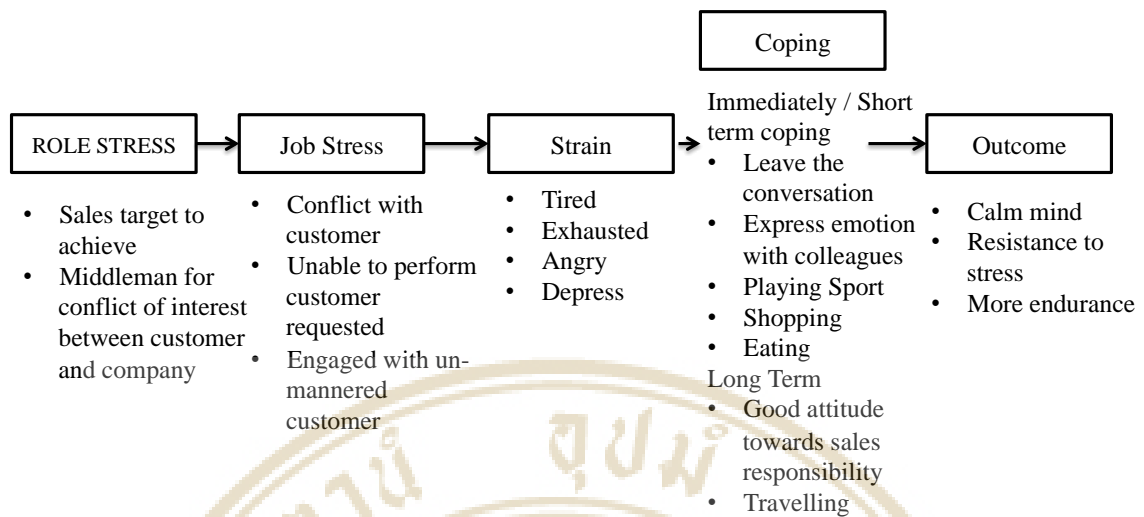
	<b>Male</b>	<b>Method Objective</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Method Objective</b>
<b>Immediately Coping with stress</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quickly end the conversation</li> <li>• Stay calm</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cut off from stressor</li> <li>• Endure and keep calm</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quickly end the conversation</li> <li>• Express feeling and emotion with colleagues</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cut off from stressor</li> <li>• Let the anger out</li> </ul>



**Table 5.1 Table of Coping methods( cont.)**

	<b>Male</b>	<b>Method Objective</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Method Objective</b>
<b>After work stress coping</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Playing sport</li> <li>• Reading / Watching entertainment media</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leave away all the stress</li> <li>• Focus on something else</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Express feeling and emotion with boyfriends / colleagues</li> <li>• Eating</li> <li>• Shopping</li> <li>• Watching entertainment media</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leave the stress behind</li> <li>• Focus on something else</li> </ul>
<b>Long term stress coping</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good attitude towards job responsibilities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Positive working attitude, lessen the stressor</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Travelling</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stay away from job</li> </ul>

Moreover, since the role of sales person itself, is to act as a middleman between company and customer. From an interview with six interviewee, they believe that is normal to have conflict of interest between two parties, or even more if count both company and each customer departments such as purchasing department and production department in the customer's company(in case of industrial sales) or influencer (in case of B2C business) that sales is dealing with. The relationship and process of stress between each aspect that is the resulted from research finding analysis will be shown in Figure 5.1



**Figure 5.1 Relationship between role stress, job stress, strain, coping and outcome**

## 5.2 Recommendation

After analyze the method of coping with stress from interviewees, there is a different between gender rather than industry aspect. This paper would recommend male sales person to try the method of female person that is; express opinion and anger with friends, colleagues or someone who are willing to listen. Since all of male interviewees did not mention about feeling expression, instead they are focusing on do everything by themselves such as keep calm or try not to think because it is sales responsibilities. By not express their feeling out like what female interviewee did, for a period of times, it could have a possibilities that it would accumulate to be a chronic stress.

Apart from adapting female stress coping method for male sales person, with the adaption from relaxation tips for sales rep. by McCall, Kimberly L. this paper would recommend sales person for additional stress coping methods as follows

- 1) Organize a meal with sale colleague every month: The goal for this method is to having a meal with fellow sales person which will encourage the experience sharing from people who are facing same situation and what they have been through, to express their feeling out.

- 2) Find an activity that will shift the focus from job/stressor: Sales person should find hobby or leisure activity that they can enjoy to make them indulge in such activity.
- 3) Change field of work. Sales might not be the job for everybody since the role itself is very stressful. If the stress is getting stronger and effect sales person life, it would be better if change of role is taking into consideration.

### **5.3 Limitations**

There are several limitations in this research. The first limitation is limited of sampling group. The interview was conducted only in 3 industries regardless of business types; Industrial painting, industrial equipment and luxury condominium. Where the result of interview is only perspective from mentioned industries only. The coping methods from other industry such as service industry might have difference stress coping method since it require more customer engagement compares to mentioned industries. Second limitation is unequally of gender differentiation. From six interviewees, two were male, the less are female. And in luxury condominium sales person, only female was interviewed. This is due to the nature of that particular industry where most of sales persons are female. Difference gender has difference method of how to remain calm and coping with the stress, the variety of gender can give the research more broader point of view.

### **5.4 Further Study**

To get more coping method and how to remain calm while dealing with the absurd customer, the research should extend the range of sales person's industry and more mix of gender for broader point of view. Since difference industry has its own uniqueness characteristic, the degree of absurd customer might be difference from each industry. Also, the personality test of each interviewee could be conducted in order to find out whether the personality is create difference method of dealing with absurd customer and stress.

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