Richard G. McFarland, Goutam N. Challagalla, & Tasadduq A. Shervani

Influence Tactics for Effective Adaptive Selling

The adaptive selling literature identifies effective salespeople as those who match their influence tactics to suit the characteristics of buyers. However, prior research is largely silent on the specific influence tactics that salespeople use and the effectiveness of these tactics across different types of buyers. The authors propose a theoretical model that uses Kelman's (1961) underlying influence processes of internalization, compliance, and identification to identify the seller influence tactics that salespeople use and to assess which of these tactics will resonate with three types of buyers: task-oriented buyers, interaction-oriented buyers, and self-oriented buyers. The authors test their model with data from 193 bidirectionally matched buyer–seller dyads. The results strongly support the theoretical model and suggest that buyers are more complex than originally presumed. However, salespeople seem to recognize this complexity and use the combination of influence tactics prescribed by theory for persuading these types of buyers.

Two widely accepted concepts in the sales literature are that (1) influence tactics are the mechanism through which salespeople persuade buyers in interactions (e.g., Brown 1990; Spiro and Perreault 1979) and (2) adapting sales tactics to different buyers is important for superior performance (e.g., Spiro and Weitz 1990; Sujan 1986; Weitz 1981). Notably, research at the intersection of these two notions is limited. As a consequence, little guidance is provided to salespeople regarding what influence tactics they should use with different types of buyers. This study sheds light on this important issue by proposing a theoretically grounded framework for investigating the effectiveness of sales influence tactics across groups of buyers who are dissimilar in their characteristics.

Frazier and Summers (1984) introduced the notion of influence strategies to the marketing literature. These influence strategies, or influence tactics, were developed for interorganizational, firm-to-firm channels contexts. Frazier and Summers (1984, p. 44) recognize the context for which their tactics were developed and specifically note that their tactics provide "researchers with an extended perspective on the influence process within channels of distribution. Of particular interest are boundary personnel, whose responsibilities lie in the areas of customer service and territorial management, as opposed to sales personnel." Whether Frazier and Summers's (1984) tactics are equally applicable in personal selling contexts remains in question. Thus, an objective of this study is to extend the work of these scholars and others (e.g., Boyle et al. 1992; Payan and McFarland 2005; Venkatesh, Kohli, and Zaltman 1995) and identify tactics that are especially pertinent in sales settings. We refer to these as "seller influence tactics" or, more simply, SITs.

Although identification of SITs is important, the adaptive selling literature suggests that it is insufficient unless it can be pinpointed which tactics should be used with different buyers. Sheth (1976) differentiates buyers on the basis of their "task orientation," "self orientation," and "interaction orientation."[1] Williams and Spiro (1985) validated this classification in sales settings; however, the influence tactics that will resonate with these three buyer orientations is unknown. Accordingly, a primary objective of the current study is to develop a theoretical framework for identifying the influence tactics that "work" with buyers of each of these three orientations. In addition to this theory development and its empirical testing, our study extends Sheth's work by identifying clusters of buyers on the basis of their orientations, and it examines the combinations of SITs that are used within each cluster.[2]

Our theoretical model argues that the three influence mechanisms that Kelman (1961) proposes—"internalization," "compliance," and "identification"—serve as the bridge between influence tactics and buyer orientations. We argue that influence tactics operate through one of these three underlying influence mechanisms. That is, some influence tactics operate through the mechanism of internalization, and others operate through compliance or identification. Furthermore, we argue that buyers with task, interaction, and self orientations respond differentially to

Richard G. McFarland is an assistant professor, Department of Marketing, Kansas State University (e-mail: mcfarlan@ksu.edu). Goutam N. Challagalla is an associate professor, College of Management, Georgia Institute of Technology (e-mail: gnc@gatech.edu). Tasadduq A. Shervani is an associate professor, Cox School of Business, Southern Methodist University (e-mail: tshervan@mail.cox.smu.edu).

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[1] Sheth (1976) categorizes buyers in terms of task-oriented, interaction-oriented, and self-oriented communication styles. On the basis of the insightful comment of a reviewer, we refer to these communication styles as "orientations."

[2] We thank a reviewer for suggesting that we cluster buyers on the basis of their orientation scores and identify the combinations of influence tactics that are effective for each cluster.

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ISSN: 0022-2429 (print), 1547-7185 (electronic)

these three influence mechanisms. Thus, Kelman's underlying processes provide the key for unlocking the specific influence mechanisms that buyers will respond to and for identifying the influence tactics that operate through these mechanisms.

We use matched buyer–seller dyads to test the hypotheses. The use of dyadic data is consistent with the recommendations of several researchers, who state that influence tactics must be examined from the perspective of both parties, not just one (e.g., Achrol, Reve, and Stern 1983; Kim 2000). In addition, our study design reduces the chances of capitalizing on common method biases by having salespeople report their perceptions of a specific buyer's orientation and having that buyer report his or her perception of the SITs used by the same salesperson as well as the effectiveness of these SITs (Netemeyer et al. 1997; Ross, Anderson, and Weitz 1997).

We organize the article as follows: We first discuss the identification of the influence tactics in sales settings. Next, we link Kelman's (1961) underlying influence processes to these influence tactics. We then develop the hypotheses. We describe the data collection and analytic procedures, present our results, and then conclude.

Influence Tactics

Influence tactics have been examined at the interorganizational, firm-to-firm level of analysis in the marketing channels literature and at the intraorganizational, person-to-person level of analysis in the organizational behavior and buying-center literature. The personal selling context falls into a third category that can be described as an interorganizational, person-to-person relationship in which the unit of analysis is the individual relationship. Consequently, the influence strategies identified in the channels, organizational behavior, and buying-center literature need to be assessed for their applicability in sales settings.

Frazier and Summers (1984) define influence strategies as compliance-gaining tactics that channel members use to achieve desired actions from channel partners. Influence strategies "involve the alternative means of communication available to a firm's personnel in their influence attempts" (Frazier and Rody 1991, p. 52). Frazier and Summers (1984) propose six tactics: information exchange, recommendations, requests, threats, promises, and legalistic pleas (for brief definitions of the influence strategies from the marketing channels literature, see Table 1). These six tactics have been used extensively in the channels literature (e.g., Boyle and Dwyer 1995; Frazier and Summers 1986; Kim 2000). The same six tactics have also been examined in intrafirm contexts (e.g., Venkatesh, Kohli, and Zaltman 1995).

The literature identifies additional tactics to those that Frazier and Summers (1986) discuss that are likely to be especially pertinent in personal selling. These tactics focus on emotional utilities, which sales researchers have long acknowledged as having an important role in influencing buyers (e.g., Brown, Cron, and Slocum 1997; Dixon, Spiro, and Jamil 2001; Evans 1963; Webster 1968; Weitz 1981). For example, several studies emphasize the importance of ingratiation in sales contexts (e.g., Spiro and Perreault 1979; Strutton, Pelton, and Tanner 1996). Ingratiation focuses on influencing buyers by getting them to like the salesperson. Likewise, Yukl and Tracey (1992) note the importance of appealing to people's emotions and ideals through the use of inspirational appeals. Ingratiation and inspirational appeals are focused primarily on satisfying the psychological needs of the target. Salespeople's use of ingratiation and inspirational appeals is consistent with literature that notes the importance of attractiveness (e.g., Ahearne, Gruen, and Jarvis 1999), similarity (e.g., Crosby, Evans, and Cowles 1990), and liking (e.g., Doney and Cannon 1997) in professional selling.

TABLE 1
Marketing Channels Influence Strategy Definitions

Influence Strategy	Traditional Channels Definition
Information exchange	The source discusses general issues and procedures to try to alter the target's general perceptions without stating a request.
Recommendations	The source predicts that the target will be more profitable if the target follows the source's suggestions.
Requests	The source simply states the actions it would like the target to take.
Threats	The source threatens the target with a future penalty if the target does not comply with a request.
Promises	The source promises the target a reward if the target complies with a request.
Legalistic pleas	The source cites a legalistic, contractual, or informal agreement that requires the target to perform a certain action.

Notes: We drew these definitions from the work of Payan and McFarland (2005). We describe the definitions for the SITs in the text.

Identifying and Defining SITs

To pinpoint which of the eight influence tactics identified previously are appropriate in personal selling, we first conducted ten in-depth personal interviews with professional buyers and industrial salespeople. The purpose of these interviews was to allow participants to describe commonly used influence tactics, determine whether other influence tactics should be included in the SITs framework, help with item generation, and determine whether any of the scales we identified from prior research could be adapted to the personal selling context. In these interviews, we asked participants open-ended questions (e.g., "What type of tactics do professional salespeople use to influence buyers?") and specific questions about whether salespeople use a specific tactic, such as promises. We also sought feedback on measurement items from prior research.

We drew two conclusions from these interviews. First, four of the six influence tactics that Frazier and Summers (1984) define in the marketing channels literature formed a solid basis in the formation of SITs. Interviewees noted using information exchange, recommendations, threats, and promises; they regarded two tactics as either implicit (requests) or simply not used (legalistic pleas). Second, buyers and salespeople identified ingratiation and inspirational appeals as common in personal selling.

On the basis of these findings and further input from domain experts, we conducted a pretest with 17 executive MBA students involved in the purchasing function in their organizations. The purpose of this pretest was to confirm which tactics we should include and to assist with item purification. We provided participants with scales for the six influence tactics identified in the channels literature (including requests and legalistic pleas) and for ingratiation and inspirational appeals. Participants confirmed that the items for requests were confusing in the personal selling context because requests are implicit in sales interactions. They also confirmed that salespeople seldom, if ever, use legalistic pleas. Finally, participants confirmed that ingratiation and inspiration appeals are common sales tactics. Next, we define each of the six SITs.

Information exchange. Information exchange involves the communication of information, including asking questions, without making any specific recommendations to influence positively the buyer's general perceptions about the benefits of the salesperson's offerings. "The source firm's boundary personnel use discussions of general business issues … to alter the target's general perceptions;… however, no specific target action is requested" (Frazier and Summers 1984, p. 45).

Recommendations. Recommendations are arguments used to convince a customer that products or services purchased from the salesperson would be beneficial to the customer's firm (Fitzsimons and Lehmann 2004; Frazier and Summers 1984; Rackham 1988). Venkatesh, Kohli, and Zaltman (1995, p. 72) define recommendations as follows: "[T]he source [of influence] suggests that following a specific course of action is likely to be beneficial."

Threats. Threats are implied or stated negative sanctions that the salesperson asserts will be applied to the buyer's firm if the buyer does not comply with the seller's request (Boyle and Dwyer 1995; Boyle et al. 1992). "The source communicates to the target that it will apply negative sanctions should the target fail to" comply with the source's request (Frazier and Summers 1984, p. 46).

Promises. With promises, the seller "pledges to provide the target with a specific reward, contingent on the target's compliance with the source's" request (Frazier and Summers 1984, p. 46). Promises are pledges of future rewards for the buyer's firm. Venkatesh, Kohli, and Zaltman (1995, p. 73) state that "the deprivation of rewards may be considered to be equivalent to the imposition of sanctions." Thus, the influence tactic of promises is similar to that of threats, though it may be more tolerable than threats because the nonmediation of rewards leaves the buyer at the status quo, whereas the mediation of sanctions leaves the buyer worse off (Venkatesh, Kohli, and Zaltman 1995).

Ingratiation. Ingratiation involves the use of "behaviors that are designed to enhance one's interpersonal attractiveness" and improve rapport with the target of influence (Kumar and Beyerlein 1991, p. 619). These actions consist primarily of praising a customer for his or her achievements (other enhancement) and expressing attitude similarity (Kipnis and Schmidt 1988; Kipnis, Schmidt, and Wilkinson 1980).

Inspirational appeal. An inspirational appeal is "a request or proposal that arouses enthusiasm by appealing to a target's [higher-order] values, ideals, and aspirations" (Yukl and Tracey 1992, p. 640). Inspirational appeals focus on arousing a positive affective response in the target, which serves to motivate the target toward a desired response. Forgas (1995) argues that positive affective arousal leads to more positive expectancies and, thus, to higher levels of compliance. Inspirational appeals may attempt to motivate people to go beyond their personal interests for the greater good by appealing to higher-order psychological needs (Yukl and Tracey 1992).

Linking Influence Processes to SITs

Kelman (1958, 1961) and others (e.g., Bearden, Netemeyer, and Teel 1989) describe three underlying processes of interpersonal influence: internalization, compliance, and identification. Each of the six SITs operates through one of these mechanisms of interpersonal influence. Specifically, we propose that information exchange and recommendations operate through the process of internalization, threats and promises operate through the mechanism of compliance, and ingratiation and inspirational appeals operate through the processes of identification.

Information exchange and recommendations tactics attempt to alter a buyer's "perceptions regarding the inherent desirability of the intended behavior" (Frazier and Summers 1984, p. 44). We propose that these tactics operate through the influence process of internalization, which occurs when the target of influence (i.e., the buyer) does what the source of influence (i.e., the salesperson) requests because the target believes that the action is appropriate and is in his or her own best interest (Kelman 1961). A target accepts the induced behavior because it is in agreement with his or her value system or because the content of the behavior is intrinsically rewarding (Smith and Barclay 1997). In sales settings, internalization occurs when buyers accept influence because they find the content of the influence to represent a useful solution or because it is congruent with their own orientations (e.g., approach to problem solving).

In contrast, threats and promises tactics focus on changing the motivation of the customer to comply on the basis of either positive or negative source-controlled consequences (Frazier and Summers 1984; Keith, Jackson, and Crosby 1990; Venkatesh, Kohli, and Zaltman 1995). We propose that these tactics operate through the process of compliance, which occurs when people accept influence (or change their beliefs) because they hope to obtain a favorable reaction or reward from another person (Kelman 1961). The recipient may be interested in attaining certain rewards or in avoiding certain "punishments" that the influencing agent controls (Brown, Lusch, and Nicholson 1995; Gundlach and Cadotte 1994). For example, buyers may be receptive to "compliance" because they hope to obtain preferential delivery of a product or desirable credit terms. The recipient of the influence likely does not adopt the induced behavior because he or she believes in its content but rather because it is instrumental in goal accomplishment.

Ingratiation and inspirational appeals aim to satisfy a target's psychological needs by being attractive, by maintaining a fulfilling relationship with the target, and through eliciting positive emotional responses. We propose that these tactics operate through the process of identification, which occurs when a target is receptive to influence because he or she finds it attractive to maintain a satisfying or self-defining relationship with the influencer (Kelman 1961). Identification is based on satisfying psychological needs. A person can try to establish or maintain a relationship with another party through identification in different ways. For example, he or she can "identify" with another by echoing what the other person expresses, endorsing that person's views, or even behaving like that person, thus forming a satisfying or self-defining relationship with that person. In summary, ingratiation and inspirational appeals tactics operate through the process of identification because they seek to elicit enthusiasm, liking, and other positive emotive feelings toward the salesperson, the salesperson's firm, and/or his or her offerings.

Hypotheses

As we noted previously, Sheth (1976) suggests that buyers can be distinguished on the basis of their task orientation, self orientation, and interaction orientation. These buyer orientations are rooted in the literature on leadership (Bass 1960). Sales researchers examining customers' social styles propose similar conceptualizations (Comstock and Higgins 1997; Williams and Spiro 1985). For example, Blake and Mouton (1980) propose that customers may have two orientations: concern with the sale and concern about the other person. These two orientations parallel task and interaction buyer orientations. Furthermore, customers who are low on both of these orientations may be categorized as having a self orientation (Williams and Spiro 1985).

Buyer orientations have also been referred to as communication styles in the literature because they represent a person's overall communication pattern and goal expectations from social interactions (Williams and Spiro 1985). Sheth (1976, p. 382) defines these orientations as "representing the format, ritual or mannerism which a buyer" adopts in his or her interactions with salespeople. A buyer orientation is rooted in personality variables, socialization processes, personal lifestyles, and situational factors (Sheth 1976), suggesting that though a buyer's orientation is not a personality trait, it can be relatively stable. This has two important implications. First, because buyer orientations are somewhat stable, it is possible to identify a buyer's orientation and communication preferences. Second, the adaptive selling literature suggests that sellers who use the influence tactics that are most appropriate for a particular buyer orientation are likely to reap greater benefits than those who do not.

SITs' Effectiveness and Buyer Task Orientation

Buyers with a task orientation are goal oriented and purposeful (Sheth 1976). They want to accomplish the task at hand as efficiently as possible, and they are intolerant of any activity that is inefficient and non–goal oriented or that deviates from the current task on which they are focusing (Sheth 1976). Williams and Spiro (1985) suggest that people with a task orientation tend to be mechanistic in their approach to others and wish to make the best decision possible for their organization by being focused on the task. People with a task orientation are more focused on the task and less focused on relationship building than people with an interaction orientation. Similarly, those with a task orientation are more focused on achieving organizational objectives than those with a self orientation (Miles, Arnold, and Nash 1990).

Salespeople who rely on SITs that operate through the process of internalization are likely to achieve greater manifest influence with buyers with a high task orientation. This is because such buyers need to be convinced of the merit of an idea or action and observe how it meets organizational objectives. They need to believe that the solutions being proposed are appropriate and congruent with their value system. Information exchange and recommendations, which operate through the process of internalization, are likely to appeal to buyers with a high task orientation because these tactics attempt to convince the target of the inherent attractiveness of the intended action by presenting facts and logical arguments (Frazier and Summers 1984). Indeed, prior research suggests that buyers with a task orientation respond more favorably to influence attempts that are high in knowledge and information than to attempts that are low in knowledge and information (Williams and Spiro 1985).

More specifically, the higher the information exchange, the more it educates buyers about the salesperson's products and services, general business issues, and operating procedures. Furthermore, when information exchange is high, it enhances buyers' knowledge and enables them to evaluate different solutions. Buyers with a high task orientation will value such information because it helps them achieve organizational goals. Similarly, recommendations are likely to appeal to such buyers. Influence tactics laden with recommendations provide specific suggestions and arguments to the buyer for making purchase decisions (Frazier and Summers 1984). They even suggest the behaviors that the target should follow to accomplish organizational objectives. Thus, recommendations help buyers with a high task orientation compare and contrast different solutions efficiently, enabling them to make decisions more expeditiously.

H_1: The higher a buyer's task orientation, the stronger is the positive effect of salesperson (a) information exchange and (b) recommendations on buyer manifest influence.

SITs' Effectiveness and Buyer Self Orientation

Buyers with a self orientation are concerned almost entirely with their own welfare. For them, the sales interaction is "merely the theater in which … needs can be satisfied" (Bass 1960, p. 149). They view the interaction from a selfish point of view (Sheth 1976). They are preoccupied with themselves during interactions with others and are less empathetic toward other people (Miles, Arnold, and Nash 1990). Success in meeting personal needs outweighs the needs for task effectiveness and for accomplishing organizational objectives. Neither interaction nor task effectiveness is rewarding to the self-oriented individual, unless such effectiveness contributes to his or her self-esteem, status, or other personal gains (Bass 1960).

Because buyers with a self orientation are keen on promoting their own agenda and interests, they are likely to be most responsive to the influence process of compliance. Influence processes based on compliance aim to obtain a change in behavior not by altering perceptions about the desirability of the intended action but through the use of rewards or sanctions. Such processes are effective in obtaining behavioral change when targets are either reluctant to act or will not act unless they personally benefit from taking an action (Kelman 1961). Threats and promises, which operate through the process of compliance, are likely to be most effective with buyers with a high self orientation because they provide inducements for a necessary behavior.

When buyers go too far in preserving their own self-interest to the detriment of the buyer–seller relationship or to the detriment of the buyer's own organization, the use of threats (e.g., withdrawing preferential delivery dates or applying stringent credit terms) may be the only effective means to motivate them to act. In addition, because buyers with a high self orientation are primarily interested in their own benefits and are highly concerned with extrinsic rewards (Williams and Spiro 1985), promises are likely to appeal to these buyers because it rewards them with incentives and concessions (Kelman 1958). In addition, because such buyers often display a reluctance to act (Bass 1960), promises and threats are a powerful means for overcoming this reluctance. Collectively, these arguments indicate that buyers with a self orientation are likely to be responsive to the influence tactics of threats and promises.

We also anticipate that ingratiation influence tactics will be effective. Because buyers with a self orientation are self-absorbed, they like to receive attention and brag about their accomplishments. At the same time, they are motivated in interactions to gain esteem (Stotland and Zander 1958). They tend to display dependent and succorant behavior; in other words, they need validation and support from others (Bass 1967). A key aspect of ingratiation tactics is other enhancements. Ingratiation serves the dual role of providing buyers the validation they seek and supporting their belief of self-importance.

> H_2: The higher a buyer's self orientation, the stronger is the positive effect of salesperson (a) threats, (b) promises, and (c) ingratiation on buyer manifest influence.

SITs' Effectiveness and Buyer Interaction Orientation

Buyers with an interaction orientation believe that socializing is a critical aspect of the interaction process. They are interested in forming friendships and fostering interpersonal relationships (Bass 1960). Such buyers put more emphasis on relational elements than on the specifics of the transaction. They are "often compulsive in establishing a personal relationship" with the salesperson and only then "[get] involved in the specific content of interaction[s]" (Sheth 1976, p. 385). Developing personally satisfying relationships is paramount to such buyers. Given the focus on social interactions and relationships, buyers with an interaction orientation are likely to be most responsive to the influence process of identification. Indeed, Kelman's (1961) theory suggests that people are more likely to be influenced through the identification process when they are concerned with social anchorage.

Ingratiation and inspirational appeals, which rely on identification as an influence process, are likely to result in greater manifest influence among buyers with a high interaction orientation. Importantly, ingratiation influence tactics are aimed at building a rapport with buyers (Kumar and Beyerlein 1991). Salespeople who rely on ingratiation tactics behave affably, discuss shared interests and hobbies, and give praise and compliments (Kipnis and Schmidt 1988). These types of behaviors help forge interpersonal relationships, which are consistent with the goals of a buyer with an interaction orientation. Conversely, salespeople who hardly rely on ingratiation tend to focus less on building relationships or on appealing to the buyer's positive image. These salespeople are likely to have lower levels of manifest influence with such buyers.

Buyers with an interaction orientation prefer sales tactics that emphasize emotional utilities, which indicates that such buyers look beyond product features and product benefits and make decisions based on emotions (Williams, Spiro, and Fine 1990). This concept is consistent with recent consumer research that indicates that some people use a process in decision making known as the "how-do-I-feel-about-it" heuristic (Adaval 2001; Pham et al. 2001). Inspirational appeals rely on attaching emotional relevance to a product, independent of the product's performance or functional utility. Finally, inspirational appeals are likely to resonate with buyers with an interaction orientation because such appeals seek to elicit excitement and other positive emotions in regard to the salesperson and/or his or her offerings.

> H_3: The higher a buyer's interaction orientation, the stronger is the positive effect of salesperson (a) ingratiation and (b) inspirational appeals on buyer manifest influence.

SITs Usage Based on Buyer Orientations

Prior studies indicate that, in general, salespeople are aware of the type of sales interactions buyers prefer (Comstock and Higgins 1997) and use this knowledge when interacting with buyers (Spitzberg and Cupach 1984). Research suggests that the choice of influence tactics is likely to depend on the characteristics of the target of influence (Erez, Rim, and Keider 1986). In support of this line of reasoning, empirical evidence suggests that people use influence tactics that they believe are most effective in gaining compliance from others (Leigh and McGraw 1989; Venkatesh, Kohli, and Zaltman 1985). Collectively, these arguments suggest that salespeople will vary the frequency with which they use SITs in an attempt to conform to buyers' preferred orientations.

Consistent with the preceding logic, because buyers with an interaction orientation are likely to respond to influence attempts that rely on internalization, it follows that salespeople will use information exchange and recommendations with such buyers. Similarly, when dealing with buyers with a self orientation, salespeople will use influence attempts that rely on obtaining compliance. That is, they will use threats and promises. In addition, they will use ingratiation because such buyers also respond to influence attempts that enhance their self-image. Finally, salespeople will use ingratiation and inspirational appeals when interfacing with buyers who are high on interaction orientation because attempts that rely on identification as an influence mechanism resonate with such buyers.

> H_4: The higher the task orientation of a buyer, the greater is a salesperson's use of (a) information exchange and (b) recommendations; the higher the self orientation of a buyer, the greater is a salesperson's use of (c) threats, (d) promises, and (e) ingratiation; and the higher the interaction orientation of a buyer, the greater is the salesperson's use of (f) ingratiation and (g) inspirational appeals.

Method

Common Method Biases and Dyadic Study Design

Our methodology and sample design are consistent with Podsakoff and colleagues' (2003) recommendations for reducing common methods biases. They recommend (1) obtaining measures of the predictor and criterion variables from difference sources; (2) offering anonymity/confidentiality to reduce the chances of responses that are socially desirable, lenient, acquiescent, and consistent with how participants think researchers want them to respond; and (3) informing the respondents that there are no correct or incorrect answers and that they should respond as honestly as possible to reduce evaluation apprehension. In our study, we used bidirectionally matched dyads such that the key variables are non-self-reported. That is, we had buyers report on the influence tactics that salespeople use, and we had salespeople report on buyer orientations. In addition, we informed the respondents that their responses were confidential and that there were no right or wrong answers to the items in the survey.

Final Pretest of SITs Measures

We conducted a final pretest on the SITs measures using a convenience sample of 93 salespeople working for a *Fortune* 500 company that manufactures farm equipment. Before administering the pretest questionnaire, we asked two executives from the participating corporation to review the questionnaire and confirm that all instructions and questions were clear and unambiguous. We conducted exploratory factor analysis on the data to investigate the unidimensionality and factor structure of the sales tactics constructs (e.g., Challagalla and Shervani 1996; Singh and Rhoads 1991). Using a cutoff eigenvalue of 1.0, we found a six-factor solution, consistent with our expectations. The reliability of each measure exceeded the .70 threshold for acceptable reliability, which suggests that the measures were internally consistent (Nunnally 1978). At this stage, we determined that the measures were ready for the final study.

Dyadic Sample and Data Collection Procedure

The unit of analysis in this study is the individual dyadic relationship between buyers and sellers. We chose an industrial retail setting in which a dealer salesperson sells to end users. The dealers in the study were resellers of agricultural equipment for a *Fortune* 500 company. These dealers represent the manufacturer's products exclusively. The dealers operate in a competitive environment in which customers can choose from multiple brands. Most customers are small-business operators. The customer's purchase decision is most often made by an individual rather than by a committee.

We first approached the vice president of dealer operations at the agricultural equipment manufacturer. This company divided its market into 100 regions and had multiple dealers in each region. Our sample frame consisted of 400 salespeople, one from each of 400 dealerships (4 dealerships per region). Thus, the maximum number of independent, bidirectionally matched dyads that could be achieved was 400. Following the procedure we describe subsequently, we collected 193 independent, bidirectionally matched, usable dyads, thus yielding a 48% achieved dyadic response rate.

We used a two-phase process to obtain this dyadic data. In the first phase, we obtained a customer list for each dealership from the dealers' parent organization. This list included the names of three customers per dealership. These customers were chosen at random from each dealership's customer database. We eliminated 12 because of inaccurate addresses, missing or incorrect customer names, and duplicate entries. To ensure accurate responses, we guaranteed respondents confidentiality and informed them that there were no correct or incorrect responses. We asked customers to write the name of the salesperson they had primary contact with at the dealership on their questionnaire and to respond to all questions with that salesperson in mind. After three waves of mailings, we received 459 responses, for a response rate of 39%. In some cases, we received multiple responses for each dealership. The 459 customers who responded to the survey mentioned a total of 290 unique dealer salespeople.

In the second phase, we mailed questionnaires to the 290 salespeople that customers in the first phase identified. To ensure that we obtained matched dyads, we provided each salesperson with the name of the customer who identified him or her and asked the salesperson to respond to all questions with that specific customer in mind (we did not reveal customer responses). When two or more customers identified the same salesperson as their primary contact, we selected one customer response on the basis of an assigned number chosen at random, using a random-number generator. This ensured that each salesperson responded to just one questionnaire in which a specific customer was identified. This also ensured that each dyad was independent in the final analysis.

We eliminated seven salespeople from the sample frame because of incorrect addresses and turnover. This left an effective sample of 283 salespeople. We received 199 responses, for a 70% response rate within this sample. Of these, we eliminated 6 responses because of missing data, for a total of 193 full-data salesperson responses and, consequently, 193 individually matched independent pairs of buyer–seller dyads, each from a different dealership. We tested nonresponse bias with the procedure that Armstrong and Overton (1977) outline, using a median split between early and late responders for each sample. There were no significant differences between early and late responders in either sample.

Measures

The items and scale anchors for the measures appear in the Appendix. The summary statistics for all variables used in hypotheses testing appear in Table 2. Because of the likely response bias in salespeople's self-reported influence tactics, buyers responded to the influence tactics items. Following the procedures we discussed in detail previously, we modified Schriesheim and Hinkin's (1990), Venkatesh, Kohli, and Zaltman's (1995), and Yukl and Tracey's (1992) scales for context and unit of analysis. We used Kohli and Zaltman's (1988) manifest influence scale to measure the effectiveness of each influence tactic. Again, we modified the items for context. To eliminate the possibility of social desirability bias, buyers responded on this scale.

We used William and Spiro's (1985) multi-item scales for task orientation, self orientation, and interaction orientation. Salespeople were the respondents for these measures because their perceptions of the buyer's orientation drive their selection and use of SITs.

Analytic Procedures and Results

Construct Validity

We analyzed the SITs, buyer orientations, and manifest influence measures simultaneously in a single confirmatory factor analysis using LISREL 8.54 (Jöreskog and Sörbom 1996). Fit exceeded the standard cutoff criteria: $\chi^2 = 505$, d.f. = 419; root mean square error of approximation = .033; comparative fit index = .99; and standardized root mean square residual = .045. The composite trait reliabilities of each factor exceeded the recommended cutoff criteria of .70 (except for buyer interaction orientation, which was .68), and the variance extracted for each factor exceeded the .50 cutoff criteria (Fornell and Larcker 1981; Hair et al. 1998). Together, this provides strong evidence that the measures are internally consistent. All indicators loaded significantly on their corresponding latent factor, indicating convergent validity. Using the procedure that Fornell and Larcker (1981) recommend, we obtained discriminant validity for all pairs of measures.

Testing the Effectiveness of SITs

H_1–H_3 predicted that the effectiveness of each SIT would vary with each buyer orientation. To test these moderator effects, we split the sample along the median of the moderator for each of the three orientation variables to obtain "high" and "low" subgroups (Johnston 1984; Kohli 1989). For each of the three orientations, we then regressed manifest influence on the six SITs using cases from both subgroups (restricted run). Next, we ran a second regression in which we allowed the regression coefficients of the six influence tactics to take different values in the high and low subgroups. By including all six influence tactics, we were able to examine not only whether the hypothesized relationships were in the expected direction but also whether the nonhypothesized relationships were nonsignificant.

We performed a Chow test (see Johnston 1984) to assess whether the difference in the sum of squared residuals in the restricted and unrestricted run was significant. The Chow test results indicate that task orientation ($F_{(6, 189)}$ =

TABLE 2
Correlation Matrix and Summary Statistics

Measure	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. Buyer task orientation	(.87)									
2. Buyer interaction orientation	.31	(.67)								
3. Buyer self orientation	–.39	–.20	(.89)							
4. Information exchange	.13	.17	–.15	(.87)						
5. Recommendations	.04	.15	–.07	.70	(.90)					
6. Threats	–.26	–.24	.20	–.21	–.16	(.96)				
7. Promises	–.32	–.19	.27	.02	.12	.40	(.82)			
8. Ingratiation	–.04	.18	.05	.53	.51	–.06	.22	(.78)		
9. Inspirational appeals	.03	.26	–.05	.49	.58	–.13	.16	.66	(.80)	
10. Manifest influence	–.10	.10	.00	.54	.53	–.04	.20	.47	.42	(.92)
M	4.00	3.52	1.90	3.74	3.31	1.18	1.55	3.31	3.56	3.40
SD	.72	.90	.88	1.05	1.19	.59	.81	1.03	1.04	.98
Composite reliability	.87	.68	.89	.87	.90	.97	.83	.77	.81	.92
Variance extracted	.68	.52	.72	.69	.75	.88	.62	.53	.58	.70

Notes: Cronbach's alphas appear on the diagonal of the correlation matrix. Correlations ≥ ±.14 are significant at $p < .05$.

2.93, $p < .01$; adjusted $R^2 = .44$), self orientation ($F_{(6, 189)}$ = 2.20, $p < .05$; adjusted $R^2 = .47$), and interaction orientation ($F_{(6, 188)}$ = 2.68, $p < .01$; adjusted $R^2 = .46$) moderate the relationship between the six influence tactics and manifest influence. This finding lends overall support to the notion that buyer orientations matter when influence tactics usage is considered. The significant standardized regression coefficients from these analyses appear in Table 3.

As H_{1b} predicted, recommendations have a positive relationship to manifest influence when buyer task orientation is high (b = .54, $p < .01$), but recommendations are unrelated to manifest influence when buyers have a low task orientation. Contrary to H_{1a}, information exchange is positively related to manifest influence both when buyer task orientation is low (b = .78, $p < .001$) and when it is high (b = .44, $p < .05$), suggesting a main effect for this tactic. Thus, H_1 receives partial support. Notably, promises, ingratiation, and inspirational appeals are unrelated to manifest influence when buyer task orientation is high, whereas threats have a negative effect (b = –.39, $p < .05$). Overall, these findings indicate reasonable support for our theoretical model.

As H_{2b} and H_{2c} predicted, promises (b = .21, $p < .05$) and ingratiation (b = .74, $p < .001$) are positively related to manifest influence for buyers with a high self orientation, but they are unrelated to it for buyers with a low self orientation. Threats are unrelated to manifest influence for high–self orientation buyers, as H_{2a} predicted, but threats are negatively related to it for low–self orientation buyers (b = –.30, $p < .05$). The other influence tactics, except for recommendations, are unrelated to manifest influence when buyer self orientation is high. In general, these findings support H_2 and are consistent with our theoretical model.

Finally, H_3 receives strong support; both ingratiation (b = .46, $p < .01$) and inspirational appeals (b = .39, $p < .01$) are positively related to manifest influence when buyer interaction orientation is high. Notably, inspirational appeals are negatively related to manifest influence (b = –.43, $p < .05$) for buyers who are low in interaction orientation. We also find strong support for our theoretical model because none of the other influence tactics are related to manifest influence when buyer interaction orientation is high.

Buyer Orientation Clusters and SITs Usage

We used a two-stage analytical procedure to test H_4. In the first step, rather than assume that buyers exhibit only one orientation, we clustered the buyers using their scores on the three buyer orientations as input.[3] We employed hierarchical clustering using Wards method to cluster the buyers initially. We uncovered a three-cluster solution using the procedures that Milligan and Cooper (1985) recommend for determining the number of clusters. Next, as Punj and Stewart (1983) recommend, we used the cluster seeds from the hierarchical cluster analysis as starting values in a k-means cluster analysis. We eliminated four outliers on the basis of their distance from the cluster seeds.

Figure 1 depicts the plot of the cluster means. The results of the cluster analysis are interesting and suggest that buyers are more complex than originally presumed.

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[3] Again, we thank a knowledgeable reviewer for recommending that we cluster the buyers on the basis of their orientations.

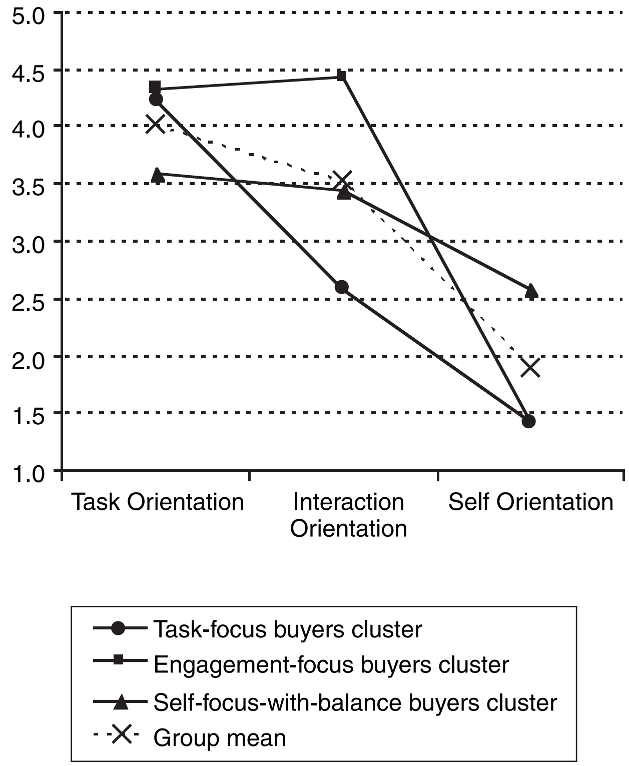
TABLE 3
Regression Coefficients Across High and Low Levels of the Buyer Orientations (Dependent Variable: Manifest Influence)

			Moderator Level			
Moderator Variable	**Independent Variables**	**Hypothesis**	**High**	**Low**	**Adjusted R^2**	**Chow Test**
Buyer Task Orientation	Information exchange	H_{1a}	.44*	.78***	.44	$F_{(6, 189)}$ = 2.93**
	Recommendations	H_{1b}	.54**	—		
	Threats		–.39*	—		
	Promises		—	.17*		
	Ingratiation		—	.34*		
	Inspirational appeals		—	—		
Buyer Self Orientation	Information exchange		—	.75***	.47	$F_{(6, 189)}$ = 2.20*
	Recommendations		.51**	.50**		
	Threats	H_{2a}	—	–.30*		
	Promises	H_{2b}	.21*	—		
	Ingratiation	H_{2c}	.74***	—		
	Inspirational appeals		—	—		
Buyer Interaction Orientation	Information exchange		—	1.05***	.46	$F_{(6, 188)}$ = 2.68*
	Recommendations		—	—		
	Threats		—	—		
	Promises		—	—		
	Ingratiation	H_{3a}	.46**	—		
	Inspirational appeals	H_{3b}	.39*	–.43*		

*$p < .05$.
**$p < .01$.
***$p < .001$.
Notes: Dash indicates coefficient is not significant at the .05 level.

Only one of the clusters aligns on a single orientation; the remaining clusters align on multiple orientations. About one-third of the buyers fell into each of the clusters, which we named "task-focus buyers," "engagement-focus buyers,"[4] and "self-focus-with-balance buyers" (see Table 4). Task-focus buyers have a much higher task orientation score (4.2) than interaction (2.7) and self (1.4) orientation scores. Engagement-focus buyers are high on both task (4.3) and interaction (4.4) orientations but are low on self orientation (1.4). Self-focus-with-balance buyers have higher scores on self orientation (2.6) than the other two clusters (i.e., task-focus buyers = 1.4 and engagement-focus buyers = 1.4). However, no orientation seems to be high within this third cluster (i.e., task orientation = 3.6, interaction orientation = 3.4, and self orientation = 2.6).

FIGURE 1
Plot of Mean Scores for Buyer Orientation Clusters



In the second step of the analysis, we used the three buyer clusters as the multicategory variable in a multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA); the six SITs served as the independent variables. Table 4 depicts the mean scores of the SITs from the MANOVA. Wilks' lambda is .82 (F = 3.13, $p < .001$), Hotelling's T is .21 (F = 3.17, $p < .001$), and Roy's largest root is .17 (F = 5.20, $p < .001$) for the MANOVA, indicating that the mean values for the SITs vary significantly across groups. As Table 4 depicts, the univariate one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) results indicate that the means for all SITs, except for that of recommendations, are significantly different across the clusters.

Helmert contrasts indicate that information exchange is in the significantly higher range for both the task-focus and the engagement-focus buyers and is in the lower range for the self-focus-with-balance buyers, which is consistent with H_{4a}. There are no differences in the use of recommendations across the clusters, which is not supportive of H_{4b}. The use of threats and promises is significantly higher for the self-focus-with-balance cluster than for the other two clusters, which is consistent with H_{4c} and H_{4d}. The use of ingratiation and inspirational appeals is significantly higher for the engagement-focus cluster than for the other two clusters, which is consistent with H_{4f} and H_{4g} but is inconsistent with H_{4e}. Overall, these findings indicate that salespeople use the influence tactics recommended by theory in their interactions with buyers.

Table 4 also points to the specific combination of SITs used in each cluster. For example, when dealing with engagement-focus buyers, salespeople use information exchange, recommendations, ingratiation, and inspirational appeals at a higher level, and the use of the latter two tactics is significantly higher than in the other clusters. Likewise, with self-focus-with-balance buyers, it might be expected

TABLE 4
Means for Buyer Orientation Clusters (MANOVA)

	Buyer Orientation Clusters[a]			ANOVA Results[b]	
	Task-Focus Buyers	Engagement-Focus Buyers	Self-Focus-with-Balance Buyers	F Statistic	*p* Value
Information exchange	**3.8**	**4.0**	3.5	3.40	< .05
Recommendations	3.4	3.5	3.2	.89	n.s.
Threats	1.2	1.0	**1.3**	4.32	< .05
Promises	1.5	1.2	**1.8**	7.44	< .001
Ingratiation	3.1	**3.6**	3.2	3.28	< .05
Inspirational appeals	3.4	**3.8**	3.4	3.42	< .05
Number of Observations	59	63	67		

[a] Mean values in bold are significantly higher than the other mean values along the same row, based on the Helmert comparison procedure ($p < .05$).
[b] These are the results from a one-way ANOVA with the clusters as the grouping variable.
Notes: The abbreviation "n.s." indicates that the ANOVA is not significant at the .05 level.

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[4] We thank one of the reviewers for alluding to this term.

that *all* influence tactics are used at moderate levels. This is indeed the case, except for threats and promises, which do not seem to be used much across the board. Nevertheless, the use of threats and promises in this cluster is higher than in the other clusters. Thus, overall, salespeople appear to use the combinations of tactics that would be expected on the basis of theory. The overall pattern of results from the MANOVA leads to two important conclusions: First, salespeople use combinations of tactics, and second, in general, the tactics they use follow the theoretical prescriptions of our model.

Post Hoc Analysis

To validate that the SITs effectiveness results (i.e., H_1–H_3) we obtained previously for each buyer orientation factor also hold true for the buyer clusters, we conducted a multigroup analysis using LISREL 8.54. Table 5 depicts these results. To assess whether the differences among groups are significant, we compared this model with a null model in which the gamma paths were fixed across each group. The chi-square difference ($\Delta\chi^2 = 55.89$, d.f. = 12) between these two models is significant at $p < .0001$, indicating that the null model should be rejected and that group differences are significant.

As we discussed previously, we find general support for H_1–H_3, which suggests that matching sales tactics to buyer orientations positively affects manifest influence. We find additional support for this notion, even when we examine buyer clusters (see Table 5). Indeed, seven of the nine paths are significant and in the expected direction. For example, consistent with H_1, we find that information exchange and recommendations resonate with clusters that include buyers with a task orientation (i.e., task-focus buyers and engagement-focus buyers). The two exceptions were inspirational appeals and threats, which had no impact on manifest influence for engagement-focus buyers and self-focus-with-balance buyers, respectively. In addition, unexpectedly, information exchange had an impact on the manifest influence of self-focus-with-balance buyers. Overall, for the hypothesized paths, with the exception of inspirational appeals, the results from the buyer clusters analysis are consistent with the Chow test results we present in Table 3.

Discussion

This study advances our knowledge of the use of influence tactics in buyer–seller interactions. It identifies the specific influence tactics that salespeople use with buyers and the relative effectiveness of these tactics across different buyers. Importantly, it demonstrates that salespeople match their use of SITs to different buyer orientations in a theoretically prescribed manner and, by doing so, that salespeople are able to influence positively the buyers' decision making.

Contributions to Theory

The importance of adaptive selling is widely recognized in the sales literature. This literature suggests that rather than use the same tactics, salespeople should adapt their tactics and that these adaptations should "suit" the buyers with whom they are dealing (Szymanski 1988; Weitz, Sujan, and Sujan 1986). After all, merely changing tactics is insufficient if the adaptations do not appeal to buyers. Notably, prior research is largely focused on the degree to which salespeople change their tactics and not on whether the adaptations are suitable. Our study makes a contribution to the literature by developing a theoretically grounded framework for understanding the suitability of each SIT for different types of buyers. Our theoretical model uses Kelman's (1961) influence processes to identify the influence tactics that will resonate with buyers on the basis of their orientations. By using theory to pinpoint the appropriate tactics for different buyers, we add to the stream of research on adaptive selling.

This study also contributes to the influence strategy literature by identifying the influence strategies, or tactics, that are used in sales contexts. Frazier and Summers (1984) developed what many researchers consider the most widely used taxonomy of influence strategies in marketing. However, they developed their strategies for a different context and for a different level of analysis; principally, these strategies are aimed at achieving influence within existing firm-to-firm-level relationships. In contrast, the personal selling context often deals with individual-level relationships. In this context, we find that it is necessary to add two tactics to Frazier and Summers's taxonomy, namely, ingratiation and

TABLE 5
Multigroup LISREL: The Impact of SITs on Manifest Influence by Buyer Cluster (Standardized Gamma Path Coefficients)

		Buyer Orientation Clusters		
Path from	Path to	Task-Focus Buyers	Engagement-Focus Buyers	Self-Focus-with-Balance Buyers
Information exchange	Manifest influence	.31**	.28**	.45*
Recommendations	Manifest influence	.25*	.21*	.11
Threats	Manifest influence	–.02	.09	.03
Promises	Manifest influence	.10	.09	.23**
Ingratiation	Manifest influence	.17	.32*	.37*
Inspirational appeals	Manifest influence	–.11	.03	–.12

*$p < .01$.
**$p < .001$.
Notes: $\chi^2_{(763)} = 2921.43$ for base model.

inspirational appeals. In addition, we find that Frazier and Summers's requests and legalistic pleas strategies are either implicit or uncommon in the interpersonal sales context. This updated taxonomy provides sales researchers with an appropriate context-specific set of influence tactics (i.e., SITs) for examining the salesperson influence process.

This study extends the work on buyer orientations (e.g., Sheth 1976; Williams and Spiro 1985) and helps identify clusters of buyers as they exist in industrial buying. Two interesting conclusions can be drawn from our study on this topic. First, buyers are more complex than previously believed. Our study uncovered three clusters of buyers. Although a dominant task orientation defines the first cluster of buyers, the other two clusters are not as straightforward. The second cluster of buyers, engagement-focus buyers, are high on both task *and* interaction orientation. Intriguingly, the third cluster of buyers, self-focus-with-balance buyers, is defined by moderate levels of all three orientations but with higher self orientation scores than the other two clusters. Second, the theory at the factor level (i.e., orientation level) appears to be robust. This means that salespeople can influence buyers as long as they use the tactics that theory recommends for each of the orientations a buyer reflects. Overall, our study deepens our understanding of how buyer orientations might cluster and the combinations of tactics to use with these different clusters of buyers.

Managerial Implications

Mangers are interested in knowing whether there are universally effective tactics and whether there are any tactics that should be avoided. This study provides interesting insights into this question by integrating the findings of several different analyses and perspectives on buyer orientations. If the traditional view is taken that buyers have a single dominant orientation, it would appear that *no* tactic is universally effective across all buyers. Solely on the basis of traditional analytic results, the following advice would be given: For buyers with a task orientation, sellers should use information exchange and recommendations; for buyers with an interaction orientation, sellers should rely on ingratiation and inspirational appeals; and for buyers with a self orientation, sellers should depend on promises and ingratiation. These results strongly support the key premise of the adaptive selling literature (e.g., Weitz, Sujan, and Sujan 1986) and suggest that a buyer's orientation should drive the use of influence tactics.

However, our additional analyses suggest that, more often than not, buyers align along multiple orientations. Indeed, only one-third of the buyers align along a single dominant orientation (i.e., task orientation); the other two-thirds have multiple orientations. This implies that if an orientation is ubiquitous among buyers, it is possible to uncover universally effective tactics. Notably, we find that buyers in all three clusters have moderate to high levels of task orientation. Perhaps buyers who have solely an interaction orientation or solely a self orientation may not be able to survive in an organization if they cannot fulfill task obligations. Given the omnipresence of task orientation, it is not surprising that information exchange resonates with all buyers. Recommendations come close to having universal appeal, with two of three buyer clusters responding to this tactic. Overall, these findings indicate that the quest for unearthing universally effective tactics is not a futile one.

This study also provides insights into tactics that should be avoided. Threats fall into this category. Although theory suggests that threats may be effective with buyers who have a self orientation, we do not find that to be the case. However, two points are noteworthy to put this finding into perspective. First, salespeople may have limited opportunities to use threats because few buyers exhibit a high level of self orientation. Second, the overall use of threats by salespeople in this sample is low, thus raising the possibility that the nonsignificant finding is because of range restriction. A reason for the lack of reliance on threats may have to do with our context. Unlike channels contexts (e.g., Frazier and Summers 1986), in industrial retail settings, dealers and manufacturers often have little power over customers. Any form of threats (e.g., tighter credit terms, delayed delivery) is likely to misfire because customers can turn to other suppliers. Nevertheless, we advocate future studies to retain this tactic because in other selling contexts, customer options may be more limited, and threats may be a viable tactic when dealing with buyers who have a self orientation (McFarland 2003).

Our findings emphasize the importance of the two tactics that we add to Frazier and Summers's (1984) taxonomy and also call into question the comprehensiveness of many sales training programs. We find that ingratiation plays a crucial role in affecting manifest influence of buyers with an interaction orientation and self orientation, whereas inspirational appeals seem to work with buyers with an interaction orientation. With two-thirds of the buyers falling into clusters that exhibit two orientations (i.e., engagement-focus and self-focus-with-balance clusters), these tactics can be used frequently to persuade buyers. Notably, however, several of the best-selling sales training programs in the United States underscore a selling approach that is particularly suited for buyers with a task orientation. The focus of these training programs is on asking a sequence of questions to develop fully the "implications and need payoff" (as in SPIN selling [Rackham 1988]) or in "analyzing current position" and "thinking through alternative positions" (as in Miller, Heiman, and Tuleja's [1985] program strategic selling). Although this is correct given the universal benefit of using information exchange across all clusters of buyers, influence tactics with an affective basis should find a greater voice in the prominent sales training programs.

Overall, when buyers have several orientations, salespeople might be better off using a combination of tactics rather than only one or two tactics. The encouraging news for sales managers is that salespeople's choice of influence tactics appears to be largely governed by buyers' orientations, even when they align along multiple orientations. This suggests that if salespeople can identify buyer cues, they are likely to respond to them.

Limitations and Directions for Further Research

We note the importance of contextual differences. Although the salespeople who participated in this study are geographically dispersed across the United States and work at independently owned dealerships, the salesperson data are nevertheless from a single industry. Thus, there is a need for further research that examines a variety of industries and firms to expand the generalizability of the empirical results. For example, an examination of industries in which buyers are highly dependent on sellers would advance the understanding of the appropriateness and effectiveness of the threats tactic under these circumstances. In the same spirit, it would be important to assess whether the relative importance of the different influence tactics is relatively stable or varies across cultures. A strength of the current study is that though the focus is on professional buyer–seller relationships in a business-to-business context, the salespeople sell both products and services, often in a retail setting.

An important contribution of this study to the influence tactics literature (e.g., DelVecchio et al. 2003; Goff, Bellenger, and Stojack 1994; Scheer and Stern 1992; Spiro and Perreault 1979; Yukl and Tracey 1992) is the validation of the SITs framework. Although we were ultimately able to use existing influence tactics in the formation of this framework, we were careful to follow traditional measurement development standards, including a goal of including the most commonly used tactics in the framework and eliminating those that are not consistent with the personal selling context. For researchers who want to examine the salesperson influence process within the buyer–seller exchange, SITs provide a good starting point. Inspirational appeals have received the least attention in the literature compared with the other five SITs we identified. Furthermore, almost all the literature that has focused on this tactic has not published full item-level data. Thus, four of the five items we included in this study for this measure are new. We recognize that our scale items for this construct will require modifications in future studies. Researchers should develop items that are more specific to the emotions being targeted.[5]

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[5] We are grateful to a knowledgeable reviewer for pointing out the necessary modifications to the scale items.

APPENDIX
Scale Items

Buyer Responding in Regard to a Specific Salesperson	
Source	**SITs Scale Items**
Based on Venkatesh, Kohli, and Zaltman (1995)	**Information Exchange** The salesperson … 1. Presented information related to your various purchase options. 2. Asked about your long-term purchasing goals. 3. Ensured you received all product and sales materials relevant to your purchasing decisions.[a, d] 4. Asked if there were any problems or needs he or she could help address.[c, d] 5. Talked about the possible applications of his or her products or services.[d]
Adapted from Venkatesh, Kohli, and Zaltman (1995)	**Recommendations** The salesperson … 1. Made it clear that by following his or her recommendations, your business would benefit. 2. Outlined the evidence for expecting success from his or her suggestion(s).[c] 3. Provided a clear picture of the positive impact on your business a recommended course of action would have. 4. Made a logical argument supporting his or her specific suggestions.[c, d] 5. Made it explicit, when making a suggestion, that it was intended for the good of your firm.
Adapted from Venkatesh, Kohli, and Zaltman (1995)	**Threats** The salesperson … 1. Stated that your firm would stop receiving preferential treatment if his or her proposals were ignored. 2. Advised that he or she would stop doing business with your company if his or her requests were not followed. 3. Threatened to become uncooperative if your firm failed to agree to his or her demand(s). 4. Indicated he or she could make "things difficult" for your business if his or her requests were not met.
Adapted from Venkatesh, Kohli, and Zaltman (1995)	**Promises** The salesperson … 1. Offered to give special attention to your company if you would give him or her new business.[d] 2. Made promises to give something back for complying with his or her request (e.g., discounts, quicker delivery). 3. Offered additional benefits for your business after you had been initially reluctant to agree to his or her terms.[c] 4. Offered to provide incentives to your business for agreeing to his or her purchase request(s). 5. Offered a specific deal for your business to change your position on certain issues.[c]

APPENDIX
Continued

Buyer Responding in Regard to a Specific Salesperson

Source	SITs Scale Items
Adapted from Schriesheim and Hinkin (1990)	**Ingratiation** The salesperson … 1. Acted in a friendly manner prior to asking for what he or she wanted.[b] 2. Sympathized with you about the added problems that his or her request caused.[a] 3. Made you feel good about yourself before making his or her sales pitch. 4. Complimented and praised your achievements.[d] 5. Discussed shared interests and/or hobbies prior to discussing sales issues.[d]
Based on Yukl and Tracey (1992)	**Inspirational Appeals** The salesperson … 1. Tried to get you excited about what he or she was selling.[d] 2. Argued you had an exciting opportunity to help your company/business.[a, d] 3. Described the use of his or her products or services with enthusiasm and conviction. 4. Appealed to your values and ideals when asking for your business.[d] 5. Made a sales pitch which tried to appeal to your emotions.[a, d]

Source	Outcome Variable Scale Items
Adapted from Kohli and Zaltman (1988)	**Manifest Influence**[e] 1. How much weight did you give to the salesperson’s opinions before buying?[a] 2. To what extent did the salesperson’s involvement influence your choices? 3. How much impact did the salesperson have on your purchase decisions? 4. To what extent did you go along with the salespersons suggestions? 5. How much weight did you give the salesperson’s statements in making you purchase decisions?[d] 6. To what extent did your decisions reflect the salespersons influence? 7. To what extent did the salesperson influence the criteria used for making purchase decisions?[a]

Salesperson Responding in Regard to Matched Buyer

Source	Buyer Orientation Scale Items
Adapted from Williams and Spiro (1985)	**Buyer Task Orientation**[f] 1. This customer likes to focus on the task at hand. 2. This customer likes to make our sales interactions as efficient as possible. 3. This customer is highly goal oriented.[d] 4. This customer is purposeful in accomplishing his/her purchasing goals.[c]
Adapted from Williams and Spiro (1985)	**Buyer Self Orientation**[f] 1. This customer is more interested in him/herself than what I have to say. 2. This customer usually dominates conversations.[c] 3. This customer tries to impress me with him/herself. 4. This customer is more focused on talking about him/herself than my products.
Adapted from Williams and Spiro (1985)	**Buyer Interaction Orientation**[f] 1. This customer is easy to talk to.[c] 2. This customer likes to socialize during sales interactions. 3. This customer likes to talk to people.[c] 4. This customer is interested in me as a person, not just a salesperson.

[a] We dropped this item after the confirmatory factor analysis.
[b] We found this item to have a low factor loading and did not include it in the confirmatory factor analysis.
[c] We dropped this item because of face validity concerns of the reviewers.
[d] We added this item to the original scale.
[e] We measured these items on a five-point Likert-type scale, anchored by “very little” and “a great deal.”
[f] We measured these items on a five-point Likert-type scale, anchored by “strongly disagree” and “strongly agree.”
Notes: We measured all items on a five-point Likert-type scale, anchored by “never” and “always,” except when otherwise noted.

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