

## The Impact of the Neuro-Linguistic Programming on the Sales from the Motor Vehicle and Real Estate Area

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**Abstract**—The purpose of this article is to research and emphasize the sales efficiency of the car dealers and real estate agents from the perspective of the Neuro-Linguistic Programming techniques uses. The importance of the two fields in the Romanian and global economy, the immediate need to maintain and attract new clients on the background of the reduction of the population's incomes, and the possible success of the NLP techniques in sales and negotiation, represents serious reasons of research for the present article. Acting in the spirit of the NLP concept means conveying both profitability and image capital, to the important companies in the field. The actual situation from the Romanian market seizes and offers a new perspective regarding the fields of car sales and real estate and regarding the efficiency of people from the system.

**Keywords-component:** Neuro-Linguistic-Programming, auto dealers; real estate agents; metalanguage, sales performance, negotiation, persuasion.

### I. INTRODUCTION

The idea of accomplishing a study regarding the NLP use in sales and the extent to which the performance increases due to NLP was inspired by the fact that Neuro-Linguistic programming is an actuality, complex and practical subject. NLP offers simplicity, efficiency and it is a useful instrument through which success can be easily attained in negotiations, sales and any other field that involves persuasion. Metaphorically speaking, NLP can be considered a "user guide for the human brain"[1] or the "study of human excellence and how we can reproduce it", allowing the control of thoughts, emotions and actions [2].

NLP is based on reaching the objectives, with the help of techniques that refer to [3]: meta-language, peacing, leading, calibration, anchoring, Milton language, VAKOG and for this reason they are very efficient and necessary in any process that involves persuasion and manipulation in different fields in which negotiation is the basis of closing a deal.

It is considered that, by using NLP in car or real estate sales, "the customer's button is pushed"[4].

*Using these techniques, the sales agent can determine the client to buy things that he may not have known know he*

*wanted [5]. As a result, a seller who uses NLP can sell more.*

#### A. The research hypotheses

In the present research, we considered extremely important to aim at proving three hypotheses: 1. *the estate agents do not know the NLP techniques, in exchange they use them unconsciously;* 2. *the car dealers use NLP unconsciously, manipulating the clients.* 3. *the clients whose sellers used NLP are more satisfied, representing the premise of returning to the same dealer or real estate agent, with different occasions;* 4. *the sellers who use NLP (consciously or unconsciously) sell more than those who don't use it.*

#### B. The research methods

The research methods that were used in achieving the article consisted in the documentary research and in the quantitative research through inquiry, which uses as an instrument the questionnaire. It was applied on a sample of 24 real estate agents and car dealers in order to achieve a parallel between these two categories. The result obtained after the analysis of answers will show the field in which they use NLP, consciously or unconsciously, and the extent to which the NLP has an effect on the customers' satisfaction and the number of sales.

*The sample aimed at* in the research is constituted of 12 real estate agents of the main car dealers (Ford, Renault, Dacia-Renault, Audi, Chevrolet, Skoda, Mercedes, Citroën, Toyota; Volkswagen; BMW, Mitsubishi) and 12 real estate agents from Romania, Iași municipality. The sample chosen is representative for the delimited area since it represents over 50% from the total number of agents from the specified fields, from Iași municipality, according to the data from the Chamber of Commerce and Industry Iași.

The questionnaire consists in 29 questions with answers, presented in annex no.1 that implies different NLP elements and techniques in order to test the sales agents' knowledge and degree of easiness with which they identify and use them. The questionnaire application has brought surprising and different results compared to the hypotheses we started from.

From the answers obtained after the research regarding the NLP techniques use in the sales practiced by the

questioned persons, it results the fact that the majority of the car dealers from Iasi not only don't they use NLP, but they do not know the term of Neuro-Linguistic Programming. **Of the 12 people questioned only 4 recognized the term, of which only 3 mentioned that they use it in sales.** Of the 9 people who said that they do not use NLP in sales, it resulted that **2 apply the NLP techniques unconsciously.** In other words, of a number 12 car dealers **only 5 use NLP in sales (41%), consciously or unconsciously.**

As regards the NLP techniques, as we can see from figure 1, the most used NLP techniques by the 5 dealers are the **meta-language and VAKOG [6].** The agents claim that they pay attention to the words that the customers use, in exchange they **do not use the words from the semantic field preferred by the client.** For example, one of the tests used within the questionnaire was the answer given by the dealer when expressing a client's opinion: "The price offered does not sound good to me at all". I ascertained that **only one person chose the variant that comprised words from the auditive sphere.** This shows an incorrect and inefficient use of the NLP. **At the unconscious level, 8 car dealers from 12 calibrated the clients, and 4 of them managed to speak "their language".**

Another test of the questionnaire was carried out through the scenario. If a customer says: "The price is too high!" – which answer variant will you use? The answers chosen from the variants chosen showed that **8 car dealers of 12 have chosen the variant that uses NLP.** We consider that this result is due to the fact that it is a situation that sellers often deal with. The answer of the car dealer: "Too high, compared to what?" makes the client think if the price is really too high. Although the answer offered by the car dealers was correct, we still realized that they in fact use it mechanically, without knowing that in this was they use the metalanguage technique.

From figure 1, we can notice that the car sellers **use very little the Milton language [7], only 3 persons of 12.** Although it is an efficient technique in sales, it results that the dealers are not their advocates.

At the same time, we can notice that **the car dealers do not use meta-programs, do not caliber the clients according to the meta-program that characterizes them and does not present the product qualities that the client was not in fact to hear.** A test carried out within the questionnaire was through the scenario: A client says: "What do you think? What car should I choose?", in the conditions that the respective customer's need was to be admitted and not to feel an inner satisfaction. Only 3 car dealers (at the unconscious level) and 2 dealers (at the conscious level) of the 12 questioned, calibrated the client and chose the variant through which they say that the people would envy him. We consider that it is a too small percentage since the meta-programs are important in sales, and their identification allows the understanding of the customers' styles and needs, means offering them what they need, means sales.

From the analysis of the centralizing figure 1, it results that the **car sales agents create a relationship with the clients only through the tone, rhythm and volume, the**

**relationship through posture being chosen only by 3 persons.** In order to be as certain as possible of the results' veracity, **while we discuss with the dealers questioned we aimed at seeing if they are attempting to make a relationship with us through posture.** We thought of this observation since it was possible that the car dealers imitated the position of the interlocutor's body, and in the questionnaire saying that they do not do that. Unfortunately, both methods, the questionnaire and the observation led to the same result: **the car dealers do not make a relationship through posture with the clients.** We compare this result with the theory [8, 9] which sustains the importance of body language in customer's persuasion and in increasing the rate of signed contracts.

The dealers admitted that they make trainings, but did not attend any Neuro-Linguistic Programming Training that ensures the immediate efficiency in sales.

As regards the real estate agents, the things are different, this aspect being possible to notice from the centralized answers in figure 2. From a number of 12 people questioned, **9 real estate agents recognized the term of NLP and 7 of them claimed that they apply it in the sales techniques.** In addition, of the 5 people who said that they do not use NLP, from the answers they gave resulted the fact that 4 persons use it unconsciously. More exactly, of a number 12 real estate agents, 11 use NLP in sales, consciously or unconsciously. The real estate agents were specialized on using NLP in sales, the majority using this program consciously.

The real estate agents are very busy, are permanently on the field, as one of them was saying: "now we are chasing the clients, not the clients us", taking into account the economic crisis conditions and the reduction of the customers' appetite for the real estate. Figure 2 presents the extent to which the real estate agents use the NLP techniques in sales. Making a comparison between figures 1 and 2 we can notice the difference between the real estate agents and the car dealers. **The real estate sellers use the NLP techniques in the meetings with the customers in a proportion of 80%, unlike the dealers who use them only in a percentage of 41%.**

In addition, the most used NLP techniques by the real estate agents, at the conscious level, are the meta-language, VAKOG, the anchor, the relation through tone, rhythm and volume and the Milton language, as regards the dealer who used only the metabolism and VAKOG and then unconsciously to a great extent.

As the car dealers, the real estate agents do not use the technique of meta-programs, which is why we consider this fact as being a minus in satisfying the customers' needs and desires.

Thus, from these final results, the **hypothesis no. 1, according to which the real estate agents do not know the NLP techniques, in exchange they use them unconsciously, is infirmed.**

In fact, in Iasi municipality, the real estate agents are very trained as regards NLP and use it frequently in sales, in an conscious manner through the techniques of this program.

The hypothesis according to which the car dealers use ***NLP unconsciously, manipulating the clients is partially confirmed by the final results.*** According to them, only 41% of the Iasi dealers use NLP. Among them, 4 % use NLP at the unconscious level and 6% consciously. That is why we consider that the dealers' capacity of manipulating/persuading customers is low, the NLP techniques being of a real help in influencing the interlocutor. The Milton language is the representative technique of manipulation, which, as it can be seen in figure 1 as well, it is very little used by the car dealers. Idem above.

Hypothesis 3: ***"the clients whose sellers have used NLP are more satisfied" is confirmed. This claim is supported by the answers to question 19: How many clients have returned?"*** with the help of which we decided to measure the customers' satisfaction. The real estate agents have chosen the variants with a percentage over 50% in a much higher number than the car dealers. Correlating this answer with the high percentage (over 80%) of the sales agents who know and use NLP in the real estate field, it results that the NLP use in sales increases the customers' satisfaction. We considered that if the customers have returned, they were satisfied by the sellers and even by the product/service, because it was exactly what they wanted.

The customers' satisfaction degree differs from the sales agents who use NLP to those who do not use it. The answers obtained at question 19 of the questionnaire proves the fact that 83% of the real estate agents claimed that over 50% of the customers have returned for a new acquisition, and the car dealers have chosen this answer variant in a percentage of 50%. ***Thus, the clients' satisfaction depends of the use of NLP in sales.***

***Hypothesis 4, according to which the sellers who use NLP (consciously or unconsciously) sell more than those who do not use it, was confirmed.***

Applying the questionnaire, and centralizing the answers from question no. 18, "What percentage from the meetings that you had with a client ended up with a contract" we obtained the answers from figure 3. From this figure, it results that 17% of the car dealers claimed that over 50% of the meetings with clients ended up with a contract, while in the case of real estate agents, the situation was different.

Comparing the graphs 3 with 4, we can notice that the difference between the car dealers and the real estate agents, or more exactly between the sales agents who use NLP and those who do not. It can be very clearly concluded that applying the NLP techniques the number of contracts signed and implicitly of sales increases. As a result, ***the number of contracts signed depends on the correct and conscious use of the NLP in sales.***

Thus, we consider that the managers of car branches of Iasi should not neglect the fact that their sales agents do not use NLP. Indeed, the customers' purchasing decision depends also on the purchasing power, but a good user of NLP can determine a person to buy, even if he did not intend to. Moreover, using NLP, a seller can convince without manipulating, but just by meeting the needs detected in the client, since at the basis of this mechanisms

lays the interlocutor's understanding and knowing him he could present him with the optimal solution. These are the most important things in marketing and direct selling according to the theory [10].

In conclusion, we consider that the Neuro-Linguistic Programming has a real effect on the sales performances. We can notice this thing only looking at the difference between the real estate agents and the car dealers, in the number of contracts signed by the two categories, as a result, if the managers want the company's prosperity it is good to offer the sales agents NLP trainings, since the results are immediately visible.

## II. GENERAL CONCLUSIONS

In a world where the alert rhythm that we permanently confront with demands the maximum efficiency in everything we do, in which we all want to be successful, in which achieving performance is on the first place, it is obvious that selling, no matter whether there are products or services, cannot occur randomly. For this, a well-established plan is necessary, an instrument that helps achieving the purpose in the most efficient manner possible.

The Neuro-Linguistic programming cannot lead to performance purely and simply. It has to be discovered, understood and adapted according to each person. NLP applied in sales must first of all answer two major objectives: understanding the customers' needs and using it with integrity. Thus the sellers, applying the techniques, which must be aware of the customers' needs and desires, in order to be able to present in the end the optimal solution for them.

It is essential not to forget the two objectives: on the one hand, to listen and understand the clients and on the other hand, to apply the NLP techniques in an ethical manner.

It is possible that some agents consider building the relation with the client expensive or a waste of time. However, they must be aware of the fact that each satisfied client will share his satisfaction with approximately 5 or 6 persons, while a dissatisfied client will share his negative experience with other 10 persons. Moreover, those who consider treating the issue of satisfaction/claims of customers in order to earn new customers, the costs are at least 25% higher.

In achieving performance in sales, we consider that the managers must focus on specializing the sellers in NLP, but the simple knowledge of the techniques is not sufficient they must be permanently used. They must check the manner in which they are applied and the purpose for which they are used. If NLP is used ethically, long-term relationships with the clients can be built, with whose help the earning will be on the long term, and the client returning for other acquisitions for himself or for the people he knows.

The importance of this study resides in the fact that the managers can be aware of the fact that training their own sales agents through NLP trainings represents an efficient investment in the success of their own real estate or can business.

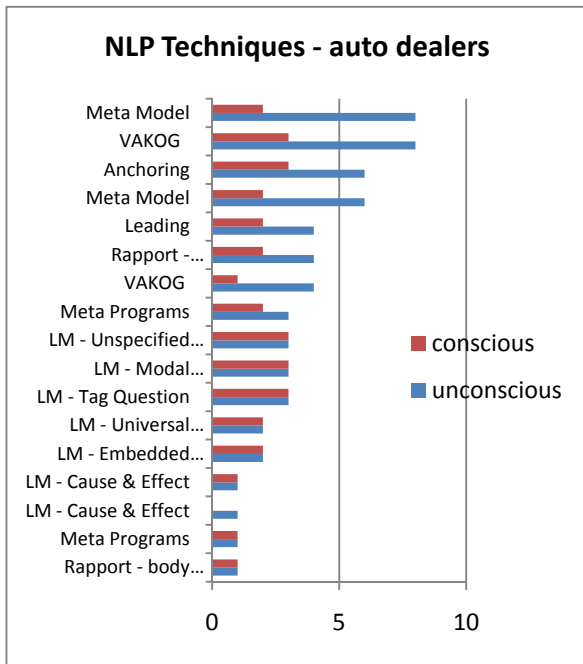


Figure 1. NLP techniques – car dealers

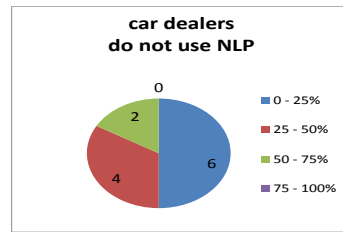


Figure 3. Car dealers who don't use NLP. Percentage of success in signing contracts by the car dealers.

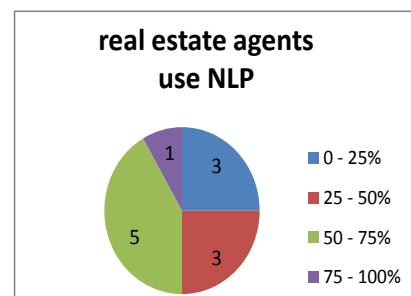


Figure 4. Real estate agents who use NLP. Percentage of success in signing contracts by the real estate agents

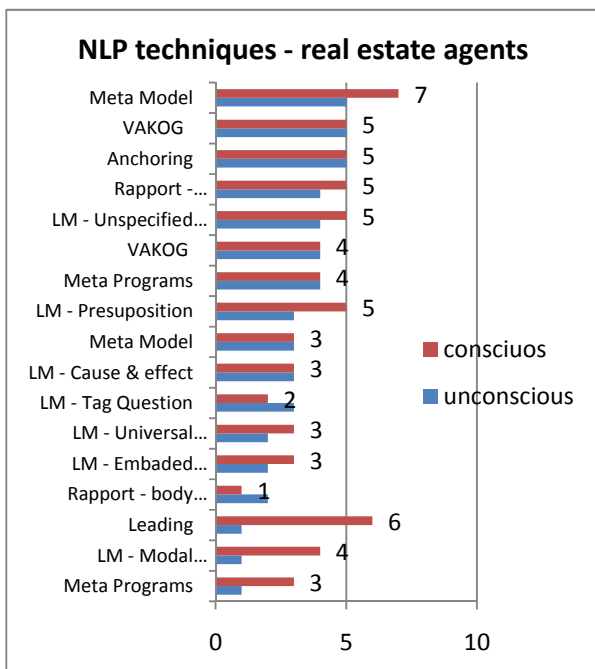


Figure 2. NLP techniques – real estate agents

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## Annex no. 1

### Questionnaire

The first part of the questionnaire (questions 1-4) has the purpose of evaluating the knowledge of sellers about NLP.

1. Are you familiar with the term of Neuro-Linguistic Programming?

- a. yes      b. no
2. Do you know the techniques of the Neuro-Linguistic Programming?  
a. yes      b. no
3. Do you apply the techniques of the Neuro-Linguistic Programming?  
a. yes      b. no
4. What do you think your success in sales depends on ?

*The purpose of the following questions from the second part of the questionnaire is that of checking if the sellers from the direct sales networks know and apply NLP techniques. Even if some of them have answered negatively to the first three questions, it is possible to draw a conclusion from the second part that they use the techniques, but they are not aware of this thing. We created a question or two for each NLP technique, in order to check if they are used and if they are, to what extent (never, occasionally, frequently or always).*

5. When you negotiate with a client, do you try to imitate his position?  
a. never  
b. occasionally  
c. frequently  
d. always
6. When you negotiate with a client, do you speak on the same tone, rhythm and volume with the client?  
a. never  
b. occasionally  
c. frequently  
d. always

*The first two questions from part two (5, 6) are for checking the utility of the technique of the relationship with the client through the body posture, rhythm, tone and volume.*

7. During a negotiation, do you watch if the client is imitating your body's position?

- a. never  
b. occasionally  
c. frequently  
d. always

8. When you notice that a client imitates your body's position that means that :

- a. he is interested      b. that I am the one who dominates  
c. it does not mean anything

*Questions 7 and 8 have the purpose of checking if the sellers use the leading in order to influence customers.*

9. During a meeting with a client you are paying attention to the words that he uses (semantic field – visual, auditory, kinesthetic, olfactory, gustative)  
a. never  
b. occasionally  
c. frequently  
d. always

10. If the client answers your proposal in this manner: "This does not sound good at all". Which answer variant will you use?

- a. Let me tell you something else. You will certainly like what you will hear.  
b. I will show you a flier as well. The images from it will clarify the things.  
c. What would make you feel good?

*With the help of questions 9 and 10 we want to know if the sellers usually calibrate the client, and then use the words that they prefer. If at question 10 the respondents will choose the variant "I" it means that they know how to calibrate the client and use this fact to influence him. This represents a control key.*

11. If the client says: "The price is too high!" Which variant of answer will you use?

- a. Indeed, but think of the product quality.  
b. Too high, compared to what?  
c. Why do you think that?

12. If the customer says: "I cannot buy". Which variant of answer will you use?

- a. What stops you from buying?  
b. Why can't you buy?  
c. Could I present you other offers?

Questions 11 and 12 have as purpose to test the knowledge of sellers about metalanguage and about their use in transactions. The control key in checking this aspect is the answer B to the question 11, and the answer a to the question 12. these answers will show if the sales agents are using the metalanguage.

13. If, for example, the client says: "I can hardly wait to move into my new apartment. I want a new couch". Which answer variant will you use?

a. If you take this couch you will feel no difference from the couch that you had.

c. This couch is very resistant, it will be in the same state in 5 years as well.

14. If the client says: "What is your opinion? What car should I choose?" Which answer variant will you use?

1. If you buy this car everybody in the city will envy you.

b. Buying this car, you will feel a real inner satisfaction.

Questions 13 and 14 are dedicated to the metaprograms. Answer c to the question 13 and "b" at question 14 show that the seller uses the metaprograms technique.

15. Do you use these statements during the negotiations with a client?

	never
It is important to listen to me carefully	occasionally
Tomorrow we sign the contract, don't we?	
While I tell you what it is about you may browse the catalogue.	frequently
After you buy you will feel better.	always
Everybody is interested in the new product.	
You can trust me.	
It is the best product on the market.	
Do you want to sign now or later?	

*Question 15 has the purpose of seeing if the sales agents use the Milton language.*

16. When the client is in a state of great intensity (joy, satisfaction, sadness etc.) do you usually use certain stimuli (tonality, gestures, sounds, images etc?) to anchor his state and use it later?

- a. never  
b. occasionally  
c. frequently  
d. always

With the help of question 16 I will see if the sellers use transaction anchors. Part three of the questionnaire (questions 17-19) is dedicated to the sellers' performance.

17. What experience do you have in the field?

- a. one month – 1 year      b. 1 year – 3 years  
c. over 3 years.

*If from the first questions, those about NLP, it will result that the seller does not have the knowledge about this program or does not use it, but however the second part shows that he uses the NLP techniques, we will deduce that he behaves instinctively, unconsciously in their use. Question 17 will show if the manner in which he behaves during the negotiations is due to experience.*

18. What percentage of the meetings that you had with a client ended up with a contract?

- a. 0- 25%    b. 25 – 50%    c. 50 – 75%    d. 75 – 100%

*The answer to question 18 will show the performance of the sales agent.*

19. How many of your clients have returned?

- a. none    b. 25%    c. 50%    d. 75%    e. all

*The last question, number 19 checks the customers' satisfaction. The bigger the percentage of customers who returned, the bigger the satisfaction.*