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Emotional Intelligence in Marketing Exchanges

This research examines how sales professionals use emotions in marketing exchanges to facilitate positive outcomes for their firms, themselves, and their customers. The authors conduct three field studies to examine the impact of emotional intelligence (EI) in marketing exchanges on sales performance and customer relationships. They find that EI is positively related to performance of real estate and insurance agents, even when controlling for the effects of domain-general EI, self-report EI, cognitive ability, and several control variables. Sales professionals with higher EI are not only superior revenue generators but also better at retaining customers. In addition, the authors demonstrate that EI interacts with key marketing exchange variables—customer orientation and manifest influence—to heighten performance such that high-EI salespeople more effectively employ customer-oriented selling and influence customer decisions. Finally, the results indicate a complementary relationship between EI and cognitive ability in that EI positively influences performance at higher levels of cognitive ability. These findings have implications for improving interactions between buyers and sellers and for employee selection and training.

Keywords: emotion, emotional intelligence, marketing exchange, cognitive ability, sales performance

> An area neglected by marketers, but at the heart of the discipline, is the role of emotions in marketing exchanges and relationships. (Bagozzi, Gopinath, and Nyer 1999, p. 202)

Emotions constitute powerful psychological forces that can strongly influence sales professionals' behavior and performance (Brown, Cron, and Slocum 1997), yet understanding of how emotions are interpreted and employed in marketing exchanges remains surprisingly limited (Bagozzi, Gopinath, and Nyer 1999). Although several studies have examined specific emotions in marketing encounters such as fear and anxiety (Verbeke and Bagozzi 2000), cheerfulness and excitement (Chitturi, Raghunathan, and Mahajan 2008), gratitude (Palmatier et al. 2009), anger and frustration (Wagner, Hennig-Thurau, and Rudolph 2009), and shame and guilt (Agrawal and Duhachek 2010), research has not addressed salespeople's abilities to recognize and respond to their own and their customers' emotions and have not considered how these abilities affect important marketing exchange variables. We refer to marketers' ability to use emotions to facilitate interactions with customers as emotional intelligence (EI) in marketing exchanges.

Emotional intelligence is the ability to acquire and apply knowledge from one's emotions and those of others to produce beneficial outcomes. The marketing literature has largely ignored this ability-based conceptualization of EI despite its potential to benefit people who have high EI and also those with whom they interact, such as customers, in exchange relationships. For example, recent research has suggested that sellers' greater emotion recognition during negotiations with buyers can increase payoffs for both sellers and buyers (Elfenbein et al. 2007). By increasing joint value, sales professionals create greater outcome satisfaction for buyers and increase the likelihood of future business (Martin et al. 2008; Mueller and Curhan 2006). In addition, research in a service setting suggests that employees' displays of emotion can affect customers' affective states and satisfaction (Hennig-Thurau et al. 2006). Thus, EI has the potential to improve current sales performance and enhance long-term customer relationships.

Unfortunately, two important issues have hindered the development of this stream of inquiry. First, in general, prior research has used a domain-general assessment of EI (e.g., Mayer et al. 2003). The results based on these assessments have offered mixed support for job-related outcomes (e.g., Zeidner, Matthews, and Roberts 2004), which may occur because people have high EI in some contexts (e.g., marriage, music) but not in others (e.g., selling). Thus, a general assessment of EI may adequately address broad domains but do poorly when predicting performance in specific contexts (Bearden, Hardesty, and Rose 2001).

Second, EI is often assessed with self-report measures, which are susceptible to faking (Day and Carroll 2008) and therefore are "not valid for the direct assessment of a mental ability" (Mayer, Roberts, and Barsade 2008, p. 519).

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Moreover, prior research has found that self-report measures of EI are highly correlated with personality (Mayer, Roberts, and Barsade 2008; Zeidner, Matthews, and Roberts 2004), which can mask the distinctive effects of EI on important job-related outcomes. Given these limitations, research has been sparse regarding EI's influence in marketing exchanges.

The current research overcomes these shortcomings and contributes to the literature first by introducing the concept of EI in marketing exchanges. We develop an ability-based, objective assessment of EI and provide substantial evidence that EI affects sales performance and enhances customer relationships beyond domain-general and self-reported EI.

Second, we show how EI fits within the nomological network of prominent relationships among marketing exchange variables. Prior research has demonstrated the importance of enhancing sales performance by using customer orientation to influence decision making. Thus, understanding how EI might accentuate relationships is critical to enhancing understanding of marketing exchanges. We underscore the moderating role of EI in marketing exchange relationships by showing that increasing levels of EI enhance the positive relationships between customer orientation and manifest influence on sales performance—two variables with a rich history in the marketing exchange literature (Franke and Park 2006; Kohli and Zaltman 1988; McFarland, Challagalla, and Shervani 2006; Narver and Slater 1990).

Third, we show how EI is related to and interacts with cognitive ability, notably one of the most widely used performance predictors (Schmidt, Shaffer, and Oh 2008) and the basis for hiring decisions and training worldwide (Hunter and Schmidt 1998), even though research has indicated that cognitive ability inconsistently predicts sales performance (Verbeke et al. 2008). Thus, to the extent that EI complements cognitive ability and/or predicts sales performance beyond cognitive ability, managers may have a new tool for more effective hiring and training decisions.

Therefore, to understand how emotions affect marketing exchanges, we conduct three field studies across two contexts: real estate and insurance sales. In the next sections, we review EI and its dimensions, present our hypotheses, describe the data collection process, and discuss the results and implications of our research for theory and practice.

Theoretical Background

Partly because understanding how people think about and use their emotions in everyday life is increasing in importance (Goleman 1995), EI has generated widespread international attention over the past 15 years (Roberts, Zeidner, and Matthews 2001). Understanding and using emotions is particularly salient in marketing exchanges because marketing involves customers, suppliers, and internal collaborators. Indeed, recent estimates indicate that 75% of *Fortune* 500 companies promote EI and that 90% of top performers in virtually every industry have high EI (TalentSmart 2009). As more companies embrace EI, it is important to understand how and why it influences marketing exchanges. Next, we provide an overview of EI and its dimensions.

The mental-ability framework of EI is a composite of distinct reasoning abilities that enable people to process emotion-relevant information (Mayer, Salovey, and Caruso 2000) and is assessed with objective, performance-based measures (Mayer, Salovey, and Caruso 2002). In addition, Mayer and Salovey (1997) propose a higher-order structural model of EI. Scores on each dimension's subscales form four first-order dimensions—perceiving, facilitating (or using), understanding, and managing emotion—which are then summed to form a second-order factor of EI. Next, we describe the four emotional ability dimensions as they pertain to marketing exchanges.

Perceiving emotion is the ability to recognize and appraise emotions accurately (Mayer, Caruso, and Salovey 1999). Perceiving involves awareness and the ability to interpret and differentiate emotions in the self and in others (Roberts, Zeidner, and Matthews 2001). Specific to marketing exchanges, perceiving involves recognizing emotions from facial expressions. For example, emotionally perceptive sales professionals are more likely to recognize when a customer is bored or excited, interested or confused, and relaxed or annoyed. Such perceptions can provide information that salespeople can use to adapt their approaches and effect successful exchanges.

Facilitating (or using) emotion is the ability to access, generate, and use emotions to facilitate thought (Mayer and Salovey 1997). This EI dimension involves mentally assimilating basic emotional experiences (Mayer, Salovey, and Caruso 2000) and includes weighing emotions against one another and against other sensations and thoughts. It allows emotions to focus attention so they can be marshaled in the service of a goal and is an essential component for selective attention, self-monitoring, and self-motivation (Roberts, Zeidner, and Matthews 2001). Specific to marketing exchanges, facilitating emotion involves knowing which emotions are appropriate in sales interactions. For example, sales professionals who use emotions in marketing exchanges more effectively better perceive the customers' feelings, know which emotions to display, and are aware of how their emotions affect customers.

Understanding emotion is the ability to analyze complex emotions and form emotional knowledge (Mayer and Salovey 1997). It involves reasoning and understanding emotional problems, such as knowing which emotions are similar and what they convey. Sales professionals high in emotional understanding are better equipped to know how emotions blend—for example, how pride and joy can lead to elation or annoyance and anxiety to anger—and how these emotions can change during exchanges. For example, salespeople are at a distinct advantage when they understand that anxious customers are likely to become frustrated.

Finally, managing emotion is the ability to regulate emotions in the self and in others to achieve a desired outcome (Mayer and Salovey 1997). In marketing exchanges, this dimension involves salespeople's ability to maintain composure in the presence of negative emotions and to influence customers' emotional responses positively. Salespeople proficient in managing emotion are also effective at increasing customer enthusiasm and positive evaluations of products or services and alleviating frustration and anxiety

for perplexed customers. Some salespeople may struggle with frustration and annoyance toward certain customers, but those skilled in managing emotion control their negative emotions and effect positive feelings that ultimately build customer rapport and create relationships based on goodwill.

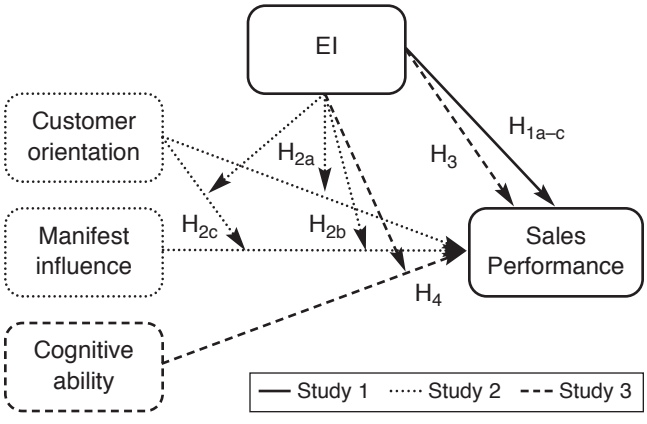
Conceptual Development

In the next sections, we show why an ability-based domain-specific assessment of EI (as opposed to a domain-general or self-report assessment) is necessary. We predict the direct effects of EI on performance (i.e., sales revenue and customer retention), emphasizing sales professionals' ability to think about and use emotions effectively. We develop hypotheses that examine EI's moderation of the relationship to sales performance between two important marketing exchange variables: customer orientation and manifest influence. We conclude by examining the interplay between EI and cognitive ability and its performance effects. Figure 1 shows our conceptual model.

Need for an Ability-Based Domain-Specific EI Measure

Self-report versus ability-based measure. We prefer an ability-based over a self-report measure of EI in marketing exchanges. Self-report measures are often inadequate because people tend to report their abilities inaccurately (Paulhus, Lysy, and Yik 1998). Moreover, they tend to filter self-reports through their self-concepts and impression management motives (Mayer, Salovey, and Caruso 2000), which potentially encourages socially desirable responses. Not surprisingly, the associations are rather low between ability models and self-report scales (r's ~ .22; Brackett et al. 2006), indicating that these approaches yield different information about the same person (Brackett and Mayer 2003). Finally, extensive research has indicated that people are notoriously poor at reporting their emotions (Ehrlinger and Dunning 2003; Mabe and West 1982) and that self-reported EI inadequately assesses emotional skills (Brackett et al. 2006). Thus, we develop the EI in marketing exchange (EIME) scale to assess emotional abilities that relate to performance in marketing exchanges more accurately. (We use the term EIME only when referring to our scale; we use the term EI throughout when referring to the emotional intelligence construct.)

FIGURE 1
Theoretical Model of EI in Marketing Exchanges



Specific versus general domains. Specific domains represent refinements from general domains to evolve the understanding of the construct and to provide further problem-solving ability in specific areas. Domain-general measures sacrifice specialization for generalization and often fail to overcome unique contextual distinctions within a domain (Bearden, Hardesty, and Rose 2001). For example, knowing which emotions are useful when interacting with customers involves more specialized emotional abilities than managing emotions in general. This does not mean that people who are generally emotionally skilled cannot perform well specifically; rather, assessing specific emotional abilities likely enhances assessment of a unique domain. Thus, we developed the EIME scale to identify unique emotional abilities that make people more effective in marketing exchanges. Table 1 provides an overview of a widely used self-report EI scale (SREIS; Brackett et al. 2006), a highly popular domain-general EI scale (MSCEIT; Mayer et al. 2003), and the newly developed EIME scale. We use each scale subsequently in our empirical work.

The Influence of EI on Sales Performance

Mayer and Salovey (1997) suggest that people have unique levels of emotional knowledge underlying their emotional abilities, developed in childhood depending on parental support and formed continually throughout life by environmental circumstances. For example, children of parents who suppress emotions or vent feelings poorly often misunderstand when and how to express emotions. Subsequently, their emotional knowledge develops slowly and their understanding and use of emotional abilities is limited, leading to wide variations of adulthood EI.

As a skilled orator stirs an audience, a person's ability to process and use emotional information can strongly affect interactions and interpersonal influence. Homburg, Wieseke, and Bornemann (2009) suggest that empathetic understanding increases sales professionals' accuracy in meeting customer needs. Unfortunately, scarce research has identified specific emotional abilities than can help understand and determine how to interpret emotions and use them in marketing exchanges to enhance performance (Palmatier et al. 2009).

We suggest that certain people can recognize relevant emotions in marketing exchanges and use them to suit customers' needs. These people alleviate negative emotions and enhance positive ones without repressing or exaggerating information they convey. Similarly, sales professionals are likely to perform better if they can keep their emotions after a lost sale or poor presentation from spilling into subsequent customer interactions but instead integrate emotional information into sales presentations to persuade customers by appealing to current emotional states (Strutton and Pelton 1998). For example, if a customer is frustrated by complex product features, salespeople who can ease frustration will have a distinct advantage over others who

TABLE 1
Comparison of EI Scales

Product	MSCEIT	SREIS	EIME
Type of scale	Ability-based	Subjective self-report	Ability-based
Domain of scale	General	General	Specific
Number of dimensions	4	4	4
Number of items	141	19	15
Sample Items			
Perceiving	Indicate how much of each emotion is expressed by this picture/landscape.	By looking at people's facial expressions, I recognize the emotions they are experiencing.	Indicate how much "surprise" is expressed [in the picture to the left].
Facilitating	What mood(s) might be helpful to feel when meeting in-laws for the very first time?	When making decisions, I listen to my feelings to see if the decision feels right.	How useful might it be to feel "guilt" when attempting to persuade someone to make an expensive purchase?
Understanding	Natalie had never been more surprised in her life. But as she recovered a bit from the shock of the loss and realized she could gain some advantage from the situation if she planned carefully, she became____.	I have the vocabulary to describe how most emotions progress from simple to complex feelings.	A customer was interested and ready to make a purchase. Later, he felt embarrassed and guilty. What happened in between?
Managing	Debbie just came back from vacation. She was feeling peaceful and content. How well would each action preserve her mood? *Action*: She started to make a list of things at home that she needed to do.	I can handle stressful situations without getting too nervous.	Bill is presenting the product well, although the couple is starting to look bored and disinterested. How well would the following behavior help Bill keep their interest and close the sale? *Behavior*: Bill should accept the fact that the couple probably won't make the purchase.

fail to perceive, facilitate, understand, and manage these emotions. Therefore, we expect the following:

H_1: EI in marketing exchanges (a) positively influences sales performance beyond the effects of (b) domain-general EI assessed with the MSCEIT and (c) self-reported EI assessed with the SREIS.

The Influence of EI and Marketing Exchange Variables on Sales Performance

The previous section reveals how EI affects performance directly. However, EI is also likely to affect exchange between buyers and sellers in more complex ways. Next, we examine EI as a moderator, adding to the field's knowledge of the complex interchange between buyers and sellers and providing evidence for the importance of processing emotional information in such encounters. We chose two marketing exchange variables because each taps crucial aspects of customer interactions (Bagozzi, Gopinath, and Nyer 1999). Customer orientation assesses commitment to meeting customers' needs; manifest influence assesses influence on customers.

Customer orientation. Customer orientation requires sales professionals to "engage in behaviors that increase customer satisfaction and avoid behaviors leading to customer dissatisfaction" (Dunlap, Dotson, and Chambers 1988, p. 178). Salespeople with high EI are likely to exhibit behaviors consistent with customer orientation because they effectively perceive, use, understand, and manage emotions in marketing exchanges. High-EI sales professionals are likely to assess customers' needs better, offer products that will satisfy them, describe products and services more effectively relative to the customer's current emotional state, and avoid high-pressure selling, which can result from poor social skills (Thomas, Soutar, and Ryan 2001). Ramani and Kumar (2008) suggest that a customer orientation reflects ability to use information obtained through successive interactions to achieve profitable customer relationships. We suggest that high-EI salespeople perceive customers' emotions effectively; know which emotions are useful relative to customers' needs; understand how fear, anxiety, or frustration might make customers feel; and manage emotions toward finding joint solutions. Therefore, we expect customer orientation to be more positively related to sales performance at higher levels of EI.

Manifest influence. Manifest influence refers to changes in customers' decisions and behaviors because of sales professionals' participation (Kohli and Zaltman 1988). Salespeople with greater manifest influence are likely to be superior performers (McFarland, Challagalla, and Shervani

2006). We expect that high-EI salespeople influence customers more effectively because they recognize and understand their needs and can help find the best solutions, which leads to positive outcomes for the firm, customer, and salesperson. Without EI, interpersonal skills suffer, and attempts to influence may seem divisive and pushy. We expect manifest influence to be more positively related to sales performance at higher EI levels.

In addition to the two-way relationships, we anticipate that manifest influence will significantly affect sales performance when sales professionals are better able to employ a customer orientation, but only when they have higher levels of EI. Low-EI salespeople may try to use customer orientation to influence customers' decisions, but their communication will be less effective because they cannot integrate emotional information. For example, customers may interpret an inability to detect anxiety or frustration as signaling a lack of caring when the salesperson is merely less able to read emotions. Furthermore, not knowing which emotions reduce tension, not understanding how anxiety and frustration can lead to anger, and not being able to help customers relax can cause salespeople to seem uncaring, disingenuous, or even manipulative. Alternatively, higher levels of EI are likely to make a customer orientation seem more credible and sincere because the salesperson also incorporates customers' emotions. Therefore, we expect customer orientation to moderate the relationship between manifest influence and sales performance, but only at higher levels of EI. In summary, we predict the following:

H_2: EI in marketing exchanges moderates the relationships between (a) customer orientation and (b) manifest influence and moderates (c) the interaction of customer orientation with manifest influence on sales performance such that these relationships are more positive at higher levels of EI.

The Influence of EI Beyond Cognitive Ability

Considerable attention has been paid to the impact of cognitive ability on sales performance (Churchill et al. 1985; Sujan, Weitz, and Kumar 1994; Walker, Churchill, and Ford 1977; Weitz 1981; Weitz, Sujan, and Sujan 1986). For example, prior research has examined sales performance from an information processing perspective, in which the salesperson's amount of domain-specific knowledge of customers (Weitz 1978), products (Szymanski 1988), and competitors (Sujan, Sujan, and Bettman 1988) predicts sales performance. Despite the prevalence of cognitive ability studies in the marketing literature, recent research suggests that emotional ability is as important, if not more so, than cognitive ability (e.g., Schmidt and Hunter 2004). We suggest that EI can powerfully distinguish "those who truly understand emotions from those who get lost in them" (Mayer, Salovey, and Caruso 2000, p. 413). For example, a sales professional who has high cognitive ability but low EI may be highly knowledgeable about product features but may not perceive that the customer is confused and thus may lose the sale. Another salesperson might have less cognitive ability but higher EI and can recognize, understand, and respond effectively to the frustrated customer and thus close the deal.

Salespeople who are better able to perceive, use, understand, and manage emotions are likely to be proficient sellers because they can go beyond the spoken or written word, read customers' emotions, know which emotions are appropriate in particular situations, understand how customers feel during and after purchases, and effectively manage emotions to effect positive outcomes for both customers and themselves. In addition, high-EI salespeople are more likely to generate positive feelings toward customers and create relationships characterized by goodwill and understanding. They are more likely to be viewed as nonmanipulative and genuine in their interpretation and understanding of customers' emotions, which should lay the groundwork for establishing and maintaining long-term customer relationships. Therefore, we hypothesize the following:

H_3: EI in marketing exchanges positively influences sales performance beyond the effects of cognitive ability.

The Influence of EI and Cognitive Ability on Sales Performance

We suggest that cognitive ability and EI make independent but complementary contributions to performance. A complementary relationship suggests that these abilities are distinct but mutually supportive constructs and that their differences allow each to contribute to a unified outcome (Barbalet 2001). Such a view is consistent with recent research that examines the interaction between social competence and cognitive ability (Verbeke et al. 2008). We suggest that EI interacts with cognitive ability such that cognitive ability has a positive direct effect on sales performance but that this relationship is likely to be strengthened at higher levels of EI.

Sales professionals who have high cognitive ability are likely to find it easier to understand how their products work and how they can function in complex customer settings. They are also likely to be better equipped to ask probing questions that uncover issues and challenges that customers face and to understand their situations. Thus, cognitive ability is clearly beneficial. However, we suggest that higher EI enhances cognitive ability to boost sales performance. Specifically, those who have both cognitive ability and high EI can better discern whether they are conveying information that is resonating with customers, understand how basic customer emotions combine to form more complex emotions, and regulate their emotions and customers' emotions during marketing exchanges. High-EI sales professionals understand subtle facial expressions of confused customers, which prompt them to repeat or clarify messages or find better ways to explain product or solution details. Thus, salespeople with high cognitive ability can understand what the customer is telling them, and salespeople who also possess high EI can understand how the customer is conveying that information, why the customer is feeling and expressing certain emotions, and when to express or suppress their own emotions.

Although salespeople with greater cognitive ability may have little difficulty understanding problems and providing

reasoned solutions to customer problems, without at least moderate levels of EI they will be unable to read, understand, or use emotional information in the interaction. For example, they will struggle with recognizing whether customers are enthusiastic or frustrated and with understanding complex emotional information, such as distinguishing facial expressions. They will also misread the appropriateness or blending of various emotions and fail to discern how to regulate their own emotions or manage the customers' emotions. Thus, we expect a weak relationship between cognitive ability and sales performance when EI is low. In summary, we suggest that EI affects the likelihood of cognitive ability enhancing sales performance, such that when EI increases, cognitive ability is more strongly related to sales performance. Formally, we hypothesize the following:

H_4: EI in marketing exchanges and cognitive ability interact such that the relationship between cognitive ability and sales performance is more positive at higher levels of EI.

Method

We conducted three field studies to test our hypotheses. Before providing details, we briefly summarize the development of our EI measure: EIME. Recall that we wanted to create an ability-based, domain-specific scale because none existed, and domain-general and self-reported EI measures have limitations, as discussed previously.

We took several steps to ensure the validity of the new EIME measure. To ensure content validity, we used several sources to develop an initial pool of items. First, we asked 108 upper-division business students and 45 MBA students to describe reactions to various marketing situations, such as poor customer service and rude salespeople. We provided participants definitions of the four EI dimensions and then used these statements to develop an initial set of items. We used the existing domain-general EI scale (MSCEIT) and self-report EI scales (e.g., SREIS) to guide our development of the EIME scale. This combination of sources resulted in an initial 130-item pool, which then underwent three purification procedures.

First, 14 sales professionals from an automobile dealership provided feedback regarding face validity, wording appropriateness, and accuracy of the contexts posed for all items. This resulted in 25 items being deleted, leaving 105 remaining items.

Second, consistent with the methodology used in scoring the MSCEIT, we asked 24 people with expertise in emotion studies to determine correct responses for items in the initial pool. Mayer and colleagues (2003) indicate that experts are more reliable judges of correct emotional responses than nonexpert consensus groups. Research has advocated using multiple expert judges ($N > 10$) to capture some degree of consensus (Mayer, Salovey, and Caruso 2003). When one or two experts are used alone, they tend to perform no better than consensus groups. Each expert in our sample had at least 4 years of graduate training in emotional expression and behavior, including specialized training in emotional research. Seven had more than 15 years of studying emotions and behavior. Each had at least 5 years of sales and/or sales management experience. We asked them to determine the best response for each item, and then we weighted each item according to the percentage of correct responses. For example, if 80% of the experts indicated that the correct response was "D," respondents choosing "D" received .80 toward their overall EIME score. We removed 30 items that a majority of our experts failed to agree on, leaving 75 items.

Third, we administered the remaining items to a sample of real estate agents. We sent letters inviting participation in our online survey to 250 agents randomly selected from an online listing service. One week later, we followed with an e-mail as a reminder, resulting in a usable sample of 110 agents, a 44% response rate. Participants who completed the survey received a $20 check. Using Armstrong and Overton's (1977) procedures, we found no evidence suggesting problems associated with nonresponse; EIME scores were similar for the first and last quartile of respondents ($M = 11.20$ versus $M = 11.68$; $t_{53} = -1.00$, $p > .05$). Furthermore, no evidence of nonresponse bias appeared in subsequent data collections.

We evaluated the remaining items for each lower-order dimension using principal axis factor analysis. Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin tests of sampling adequacy and Bartlett tests of sphericity indicated that the data were appropriate for factor analysis. In addition to evaluating the factor loadings, we assessed corrected item-to-total correlations. These comprehensive procedures yielded 15 items for the final EIME scale.

We assessed the theoretical model specifying a higher-order factor structure with four lower-order dimensions by performing confirmatory factor analysis on the variance–covariance matrix using AMOS 7.0 (Arbuckle 2006). Consistent with the theoretical model specifying a higher-order factor structure, the second-order model fit the data well ($\chi^2 = 93.41$, d.f. = 86, $p = .27$; comparative fit index = .99; and root mean square error of approximation = .02). The comparative fit index of .99 met the .90 cutoff Bentler (1992) recommends, and the root mean square error of approximation of .02 indicated a good fit (Byrne 1998). Further assessment of the higher-order solution indicated that all estimates were of the proper sign and significant (t-values ≥ 2).

When analyzing the reliability of scales with item format heterogeneity (i.e., scale items that differ systematically from other items within the same dimension), split-half reliabilities are appropriate and consistent with prior research for assessing both dimension and overall ability-level reliabilities (see Brackett and Mayer 2003; Mayer, Salovey, and Caruso 2002; Mayer et al. 2003; Nunnally and Bernstein 1994). Specifically, we used different item formats within the EI dimensions to tap a broader range of abilities to process emotional information. For example, the understanding dimension captures sales professionals' ability to understand what emotions are felt (item 8), how emotions change over time (items 9 and 10), and how emotions blend to form more complex emotions (item 11). Given differences in item format within dimensions and across dimensions, we used split-half reliabilities to estimate reliabilities for the overall and dimension-level EIME. The split-half

reliability for the EIME scale was .86. The split-half reliabilities at the dimensional level were .76 for perceiving, .82 for facilitating, .71 for understanding, and .83 for managing. Scores on the EIME ranged between 1.79 and 13.04 and averaged 10.00.

Next, we describe three studies that test our hypotheses. Specifically, Study 1 assesses salespeople's ability to perceive, use, understand, and manage emotions to influence sales revenue. In Study 2, we assess EI's ability to enhance the impact of two important marketing exchange variables—customer orientation and manifest influence—on sales revenue. Finally, Study 3 examines the complementary relationship between EI and cognitive ability on sales performance.

Study 1

Sample and Survey Procedure

We conducted Study 1 (undertaken to assess H_{1a} and H_{1b}) across two stages. First, we contacted 500 agents randomly selected from a major national real estate company. To boost responses, we offered $20 for completing the survey. We received 181 responses, a response rate of 36.2%. Second, to reduce effects of common respondent bias, we conducted Stage 2 one week after Stage 1. All 181 agents were invited by mail to participate in a follow-up survey that included the 141-item MSCEIT to measure domain-general EI. To boost the response rate, participants received an additional $20. Of these agents, 69 completed the MSCEIT used in our analyses, for a 38.1% response rate. The EIME and MSCEIT showed discriminant validity because a two-factor correlated model fit significantly better than a one-factor model ($\Delta\chi^2 = 21.75$, d.f. = 1, $p < .01$).

Measures

EIME. We used the previously described 15-item EIME measure to assess ability-based EI in marketing exchanges. The split-half reliability of the EIME was .84.

MSCEIT. We assessed domain-general EI with the 141-item MSCEIT scale Mayer and colleagues (2003) developed. The split-half reliability of the MSCEIT was .89.

Sales revenue. The company provided each agent's annual sales revenue. We employed this single indicator to reflect proficiency in the sales role.

Control variables. We included age, gender, and years of sales experience as control variables. The Appendix includes the Study 1 measures.

Results

Table 2 displays the results. We mean-centered measures before conducting the analyses. In support of H_{1a}, EI, age, gender, and sales experience were regressed onto sales revenue, indicating a significant effect of EI ($\beta = .28$, $p < .05$) and explaining 15% of the variance in sales revenue.

To test H_{1b}, we conducted hierarchical regression. A second regression including EI, MSCEIT, age, gender, and sales experience revealed that only EI ($\beta = .43$, $p < .05$) significantly predicted sales revenue. No significant change was evident in explained variance ($F(1, 53) = 1.95$, n.s.) when we included MSCEIT. Although EI and MSCEIT were significantly correlated ($r = .42$, $p < .01$), multicollinearity was not significant (variance inflation factor < 10). These results support H_{1b}.

TABLE 2
Study 1: EI and MSCEIT as Predictors of Sales Revenue (H_{1a} and H_{1b})

	Sales Revenue	
	M1	**M2**
EI	.28*	.43*
Experience	.19	.21
Age	–.15	–.16
Gender	–.06	–.10
MSCEIT	—	–.24
R^2	.15	.18
F (M1 versus M2)	F(1, 53) = 1.95	

*$p < .05$.

To understand which dimensions of EI are specifically related to sales revenue, we adopted a structural equation modeling approach using partial least squares (PLS) analysis with Smart-PLS 2.0 (Ringle, Wende, and Will 2005). We used the variance-based PLS procedure because PLS is robust to small sample sizes and deviations from normality (Henseler, Ringle, and Sinkovics 2009). To test the hypothesized relationships, we used bootstrapping with 500 subsamples (Chin 1998) to generate t-values. Table 3 shows these dimension-level results. Dimension-level analyses revealed that understanding ($\beta = 80{,}012.76$, $p < .05$) and managing emotions ($\beta = 49{,}183.71$, $p < .05$) were positively related to sales revenue. Understanding and managing emotions are essential to selling complex high-involvement products, particularly for real estate agents, who deal with transactions that take considerable time and effort. An agent can greatly benefit from empathizing and understanding the emotions that accompany the complex process of buying a home. If agents can lessen customers' fear and anxiety by using emotional management techniques such as consoling, they are likely to develop stronger customer relationships and ultimately increase sales.

Study 1's results demonstrate that EI affects sales revenue. However, it is also important to examine whether EI can enhance the performance relationships of two key marketing exchange variables: customer orientation and manifest influence. To this end, we conducted Study 2.

Study 2

Sample and Survey Procedure

For Study 2, we contacted a random sample of 300 insurance agents located in the Northeast United States. Using the same procedures employed in the first study, we received 107 usable responses, for a 36% response rate. In this study, we examined the extent to which EI moderates the relationships (1) between customer orientation and sales revenue, (2) between manifest influence and sales revenue, and (3) among a three-way interaction of EI, customer orientation, and manifest influence on sales revenue.

TABLE 3
Dimension-Level EI Results

	Dimensions of EI			
	Perceiving	**Facilitating**	**Understanding**	**Managing**
Study 1: Sales Revenue (Real Estate)				
EIME	.06	.50	2.55**	2.84**
	(460.51)	(9090.92)	(80,012.76)	(49,183.71)
MSCEIT	1.12	–.98	1.94*	–.24
	(15,669.56)	(–11,063.87)	(42,060.58)	(–1260.17)
Study 2: Sales Revenue (Insurance Agents)				
EIME	2.93**	3.22***	–.28	1.39
	(99,047.20)	(101,067.60)	(–9241.50)	(81,401.59)
Study 3: Sales Revenue (Insurance Agents)				
EIME	.18	3.83***	.84	2.10**
	(3515.86)	(95,951.86)	(9499.13)	(39,120.68)
SREIS	–.33	–.58	.83	1.72*
	(–4206.52)	(–6341.44)	(9206.92)	(18,143.98)
Study 3: Retention (Insurance Agents)				
EIME	1.47	.82	.57	2.14**
	(1.56)	(1.42)	(1.32)	(4.14)
SREIS	–.35	.46	1.12	1.37
	(–.81)	(1.20)	(1.51)	(1.78)

*$p < .10$.
**$p < .05$.
***$p < .01$.
Notes: t-values are provided, and unstandardized beta coefficients are in parentheses.

Measures

EI in marketing exchanges. We used the 15-item EIME. Split-half reliability was .79.

Sales revenue. The participating firm for each salesperson supplied yearly sales revenue. This served as the primary dependent variable in Study 2.

Customer orientation. We used Periatt, LeMay, and Chakrabarty's (2004) five-item scale. The coefficient alpha was .88.

Manifest influence. We adapted Kohli and Zaltman's (1988) seven-item measure. The coefficient alpha was .74.

Control variables. As in Study 1, we included age, gender, and sales experience as control variables. We added two control variables related to sales performance—adaptive selling and self-efficacy—to test whether EIME affected performance beyond the variables. We adapted Spiro and Weitz's (1990) nine items for adaptive selling and Sujan, Weitz, and Kumar's (1994) five-item self-efficacy scale. The Appendix displays each scale used in Study 2.

Results

Table 4 shows correlations and descriptive statistics for variables used in Study 2. In $H_{2a–c}$, we predicted that EI would interact with customer orientation, manifest influence, and both customer orientation and manifest influence such that its impact on sales revenue would be more positive at higher levels of EI. To test these hypotheses, we ran

TABLE 4
Study 2: Correlation Matrix and Summary Statistics

Measure	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**8**	**9**
EI	(.79)								
Customer orientation	.17	(.88)							
Manifest influence	.05	.32**	(.74)						
Self-efficacy	.07	.38**	.19	(.79)					
Adaptive selling	–.16	.13	.09	.30**	(.72)				
Experience	.20*	.20*	.17	.31**	–.08	—			
Age	.29**	.19	.07	.28**	–.09	.59**	—		
Gender	–.11	–.01	.01	.04	–.09	.08	.02	—	
Sales revenue	.30**	.30**	.39**	.30**	.16	.25*	.25**	–.03	—
M	10.78	4.66	3.65	4.53	3.75	16.52	47.41	1.34	648[a]
SD	1.64	.46	.76	.46	.53	12.24	11.00	.48	94[a]

*$p < .05$.
**$p < .01$.
[a]Values are in thousands.
Notes: Reliabilities are shown on the diagonal of the matrix.

a regression with sales revenue as the dependent variable and customer orientation, manifest influence, EI, the three two-way interactions, and the three-way interaction along with age, gender, sales experience, self-efficacy, and adaptive selling as control variables. Table 5 displays the results. The overall regression was significant ($F(1, 290) = 6.09$, $p < .01$). The results revealed a significant main effect for EI ($\beta = .27$, $p < .01$), manifest influence ($\beta = .22$, $p < .05$), adaptive selling ($\beta = .16$, $p < .10$), the interactions between customer orientation and EI ($\beta = .37$, $p < .01$), the interactions between manifest influence and EI ($\beta = .17$, $p < .10$), and a three-way interaction among customer orientation, manifest influence, and EI ($\beta = .39$, $p < .01$). These results support $H_{2a–c}$ and suggest that as EI increases, the positive relationship is enhanced between an insurance agent's customer orientation and manifest influence on sales.

To understand these interactions, we conducted simple effects analyses (i.e., the slopes at one standard deviation above and below the mean for the moderator variable EI) (Aiken and West 1991) to verify that the interaction supported our prediction. The results reveal that moderate ($\beta = 14{,}540.25$, $p < .05$) and high levels ($\beta = 76{,}470.84$, $p < .01$) of EI are necessary to enhance the impact of customer orientation on performance. Similarly, moderate ($\beta = 13{,}192.21$, $p < .10$) and high levels ($\beta = 64{,}947.33$, $p < .01$) of EI are necessary to enhance the impact of manifest influence on performance. Moreover, the greatest effect of manifest influence on performance occurs when both EI and customer orientation are high ($\beta = 71{,}646.74$, $p < .01$). For the simple effects tables, see the "Additional Analyses" section in the Web Appendix (http://www.marketingpower.com/jmjan11).

Though not formally hypothesized, we tested whether EI intervenes as a variable between customer orientation and sales performance. Specifically, does EI act as mediator through which customer orientation influences sales performance? Our findings revealed that customer orientation was positively related to sales revenue ($\beta = .19$, $p < .10$); when we included EI as the mediator, customer orientation no longer related to sales revenue ($\beta = .15$, $p > .10$). These results support EI's mediating role on the customer orientation–performance relationship.

As Table 3 displays, dimension-level analyses using PLS revealed that perceiving ($\beta = 99{,}047.20$, $p < .05$) and facilitating ($\beta = 101{,}067.60$, $p < .01$) emotion were positively related to sales revenue. For insurance agents, the abilities to perceive, assimilate, and use emotions to decipher how to meet customers' needs best may be particularly effective. Specifically, emotionally perceptive agents attend to facial expressions, recognize when and whether emotions resonate, and effectively discern the best services. For example, it is useful to know that customers may feel fear and anxiety when they consider purchasing insurance but joy and relaxation when offered services that alleviate risks. Integrating and using perceptual information for effective communication and positive interaction is vital to creating interactions based on goodwill and positive emotions.

Studies 1 and 2 provide evidence for the importance of EI and its moderating impact on marketing exchange variables, but we needed further examination of how EI and cognitive ability interact to create a complementary relationship to sales performance. Furthermore, we needed further examination of whether EI affects performance beyond self-report EI and whether EI can be extended to predict customer retention, which can be vital. Research suggests that a 1% improvement in retention can improve firm value by 5% (Gupta, Lehmann, and Ames 2004).

TABLE 5
Study 2: EI as a Moderator of Customer Orientation and Manifest Influence (H_{2a}, H_{2b}, and H_{2c})

	Sales Revenue
EI	.27***
Customer orientation (CO)	.08
Manifest influence (MI)	.22**
EI × CO	.37***
EI × MI	.17*
CO × MI	.08
EI × CO × MI	.39***
Self-efficacy	.09
Adaptive selling	.16*
Experience	–.04
Age	.15
Gender	.09
R^2	.45
F-value	F(12, 90) = 6.09***

*$p < .10$.
**$p < .05$.
***$p < .01$.

Study 3

Sample and Survey Procedure

In Study 3, we randomly selected 300 insurance agents located in three northeastern states. Using the Study 2 procedures, we received 88 usable responses, for a 29% response rate. To reduce the potential for order effects, we included the EIME scale at the beginning of the survey for half the participants and at the end for the other half.

Measures

EI in marketing exchanges. Again, we employed the 15-item EIME. The split-half reliability was .81.

Sales revenue and customer retention. The participating firm for each salesperson supplied annual sales results, giving us an independent performance measure. To measure customer retention, agents provided the percentage of customers they had retained in the past 12 months.

Cognitive ability. We objectively assessed the agents' cognitive knowledge (i.e., objectively defined right or wrong responses) about selling and their specific understanding of procedures and techniques they were trained to use. We conducted personal interviews with six insurance agents in the same general specialty field to determine the appropriate level of sales knowledge that insurance agents in our sample should have acquired. We carefully developed items to provide moderately difficult items that salespeople with higher cognitive ability would be likely to answer correctly. Correct answers were determined through the company Web site and verified through personal interviews with

agents not involved with the study. We used eight items to measure objective cognitive ability (α coefficient = .89).

Self-report EI. We used the leading 19-item self-report EI scale (SREIS; Brackett et al. 2006; α = .77). The EIME and SREIS showed discriminant validity because the two-factor correlated model fit significantly better than the one-factor model ($\Delta\chi^2 = 51.67$, d.f. = 1, $p < .01$).

Control variables. We included sales experience, adaptive selling (α = .88), and self-efficacy (α = .97) as control variables. We added sales role (i.e., whether the sales professional was a junior or a senior sales representative) to control for the size of sales territory as an alternative explanation of higher sales revenue. Controlling for the sales role provides evidence that EI influenced sales revenue despite the size of the sales territory or differences between junior and senior salespeople. The Appendix reports each measure used in Study 3.

Results

Order effects. We examined a potential alternative explanation (e.g., testing effects) to allay concerns that the order of the EIME might artificially affect our findings. Thus, we counterbalanced the EIME. No order effects were evidenced when the EIME appeared at the beginning versus the end of the survey relative to the two performance measures—customer retention and sales revenue. Table 6 contains a correlation matrix for all variables.

Sales revenue and customer retention. We mean-centered the measures before conducting the analyses. Table 7 displays the hierarchical regression results. The initial regression, including self-report EI, cognitive ability, EIME, self-efficacy, adaptive selling, sales experience, and sales role (Model 1) explained 15% of the variance in customer retention and 17% of the variance in sales revenue. Multicollinearity showed little effect between the independent variables (variance inflation factors < 10). The results revealed that EIME significantly predicted both customer retention (β = .30, $p < .05$) and sales revenue (β = .35, $p < .05$) beyond self-report EI, cognitive ability, self-efficacy, adaptive selling, sales experience, and sales role. These findings support H_{1c} and H_3.

TABLE 6
Study 3: Correlation Matrix and Summary Statistics

Measure	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
EI	(.81)								
Cognitive ability	.29**	(.89)							
Self-efficacy	.14	.00	(.97)						
Adaptive selling	.22	.08	.06	(.88)					
SREIS (self-report EI)	.46**	.25*	.26*	.51**	(.77)				
Experience	.20	.11	.16	–.06	–.07	—			
Sales role	.09	.05	.10	–.17	–.03	.25*	—		
Sales revenue	.31**	.13	.08	.14	.20	.14	–.05	—	
Customer retention	.29**	.33**	–.04	.14	.12	.12	–.02	.20	—
M	9.71	3.72	4.30	3.63	3.39	15.15	1.25	115[a]	83%
SD	2.54	3.02	1.02	.76	.42	9.39	.44	169[a]	10%

*$p < .05$.
**$p < .01$.
[a]Values are in thousands.
Notes: Reliabilities are shown on the diagonal of the matrix.

TABLE 7
Study 3: EI and Cognitive Ability on Customer Retention and Sales Revenue (H_3 and H_4)

	Sales Performance			
	(Customer Retention)		(Sales Revenue)	
	M1	M2	M1	M2
Cognitive ability (CA)	.19*	.12	.07	.01
Self-report EI	–.14	–.02	–.02	.08
EI	.30**	.33**	.35**	.38***
EI × CA	—	.32**	—	.27*
Self-efficacy	–.05	.01	.02	.07
Adaptive selling	.16*	.18*	.07	.08
Experience	.04	.00	.07	.03
Sales role	.04	.02	.09	.07
R^2	.15	.22	.17	.22
F(M1 versus M2)	F(1, 56) = 5.15**		F(1, 56) = 3.75*	

*$p < .10$.
**$p < .05$.
***$p < .01$.
Notes: M1 items listed are standardized beta coefficients.

A second regression (Model 2) including variables from Model 1 and the interaction between EI and cognitive ability explained an additional 7% of the variance in customer retention ($F(1, 56) = 5.15$, $p < .05$) and an additional 5% of the variance in sales revenue ($F(1, 56) = 3.75$, $p < .10$). The results suggest that the interaction between EI and cognitive ability is significantly related to customer retention ($\beta = .32$, $p < .05$) and sales revenue ($\beta = .27$, $p < .10$). To understand the nature of these interactions, we conducted simple effects analyses to verify that the interaction supported our prediction (Aiken and West 1991). As we expected, the results reveal that the relationship between cognitive ability and customer retention was more positive at moderate ($\beta = 2.26$, $p < .01$) and high ($\beta = 3.15$, $p < .01$) levels of EI. Similarly, the relationship between cognitive ability and sales revenue was more positive at moderate ($\beta = 49{,}568.13$, $p < .01$) and high ($\beta = 62{,}359.56$, $p < .01$) levels of EI. At low levels of EI, cognitive ability was not significantly related to customer retention or sales revenue. These findings are consistent with H_4. For the simple effects tables, see the "Additional Analyses" section in the Web Appendix (http://www. marketingpower.com/jmjan11).

Dimension-level analyses (see Table 3), again using a PLS structural equation modeling approach, revealed that facilitating ($\beta = 95{,}951.86$, $p < .01$) and managing ($\beta = 39{,}120.68$, $p < .05$) emotion were positively related to sales revenue. As we discussed previously, the ability to use emotional information is critical for insurance agents because of the emotion-laden nature of the process. Knowing which emotions are associated with different risks can be vital to providing products and services that meet customer needs. Similarly, alleviating customers' fears and anxiety through consoling and other emotional management techniques is likely to increase sales.

Furthermore, managing emotion ($\beta = 4.14$, $p < .05$) was positively related to customer retention. Strong negative emotions lurk in insurance sales because of the anxiety, frustration, and even fear associated with financial risk and coverage—emotions that customers feel even before encountering the salesperson. Considering the potential for negativity and volatility, salespeople are distinctly advantaged if they can regulate emotions in purchase decisions, the self, and others. Reducing reluctant customers' frustration and elevating or maintaining their joy can help build relationships and ultimately lead to more satisfied and loyal customers.

Overall, the results from Study 3 suggest that EI increases revenue and retention beyond cognitive ability and self-reported EI. In addition, cognitive ability and EI are complementary in that the greatest impact of cognitive ability occurs at moderate and high levels of EI.

Discussion

Theoretical Implications

Although researchers continue to pose questions regarding the role of emotion in exchange relationships and the use of emotion to influence customers (Bagozzi, Gopinath, and Nyer 1999; Gustafsson, Johnson, and Roos 2005), these questions have remained largely unanswered. In the current research, we identify a variable that the marketing literature has overlooked or misunderstood: Emotional intelligence provides an important key for understanding how sales professionals interact with customers in ways that not only facilitate the interactions but also lead to positive outcomes for the firm, customer, and salesperson. Although much excitement has been generated about the purported benefits of EI (Goleman 1995), conspicuous shortcomings have limited its theoretical development. We have attempted in five ways to overcome these shortcomings and advance the literature on emotion and EI in marketing exchanges.

First, prior domain-general EI findings have been equivocal (e.g., Zeidner, Matthews, and Roberts 2004). On the basis of current research, these prior findings are somewhat expected given that domain-general assessments have limited capacity to predict in specific domains such as marketing exchanges. Indeed, our results show a rather modest correlation between the domain-specific EIME and the domain-general MSCEIT and greater predictive validity of the EIME, providing further support that a domain-specific assessment is necessary.

Second, we show that EI can have important contingency effects in marketing exchanges beyond directly affecting performance. Our findings indicate that being able to attend to customers' needs (customer orientation) and influence them (manifest influence) are more positively related to performance when people possess high EI. In addition, we find that EI mediates the relationship between customer orientation and sales performance, suggesting that sales professionals' emotional abilities are essential if they are to effectively employ strategies and techniques for interacting with customers. Therefore, although it is important to train sales professionals to use a customer orientation, they will be able to employ such techniques most effectively if they possess EI. Thus, EI is an important antecedent to sales performance and essential to successful selling behaviors.

Third, we provide theoretical insights into the relationships among EI, cognitive ability, and performance, and we explain and demonstrate how EI and cognitive ability interact to affect performance. Thus, we provide new insights into the interplay between EI and cognitive ability and extend recent research that examines "intelligences" other than general cognitive, such as social competence (Verbeke et al. 2008).

Fourth, we advance the literature by developing an ability-based EIME measure, which starkly contrasts with published EI scales based on subjective self-reports (SREIS; Brackett et al. 2006). As we discussed, self-report scales are susceptible to faking (Day and Carroll 2008) and invalid for assessing ability (Mayer, Roberts, and Barsade 2008). Thus, the current research should advance further research assessing and testing EI in marketing exchanges.

Fifth, we uncover underlying dimensions of EI that uniquely influence sales performance in different contexts. The ability to understand and manage emotions seems particularly useful in real estate contexts. Such contexts often involve multiple visits to numerous homes with demanding

customers. Agents who can keep their composure (i.e., manage their emotions) and recognize that an anxious client may become frustrated (i.e., understand the client's emotions) are likely to perform more effectively. In insurance contexts, the evidence indicates that perceiving, facilitating, and managing emotions are effective. Such contexts typically involve fewer interactions with clients. This suggests that the ability to recognize and use emotions quickly should be particularly useful. For example, being able to read facial expressions (i.e., perceiving) and knowing which emotions to portray to clients (i.e., facilitating) are likely to be particularly effective in such contexts.

Managerial Implications

Customer relationship management. This research provides evidence that high-EI sales professionals, compared with moderate- and low-EI salespeople, influence sales revenue and retain more customers, a finding that has potential implications for maintaining customer relationships over time. High-EI salespeople are more likely to perceive how the customer feels in various situations, know which emotions are useful in various settings, understand how basic emotions might evolve given a customers' current emotional state, and manage emotions to reduce frustration and anxiety or elevate moods through positive emotion. Thus, EI can be important to effective customer relationship management and can substantially affect the firm's bottom line.

Adding to the direct effects of EI on performance, our findings indicate that high-EI sales professionals significantly influence the effectiveness of key marketing exchange variables. The marketing literature has emphasized the importance of influencing customers' decision making to find optimal solutions (manifest influence) and the importance of meeting customers' needs (customer orientation). We found one variable in particular that accentuates sales performance relationships—high EI—even when we controlled for several variables, including adaptive selling and self-efficacy. Furthermore, a three-way interaction demonstrated that higher EI influences the effectiveness of selling techniques. Note that simple effects analyses of the three-way interaction indicated that the combination of low EI and high customer orientation was negatively related to sales revenue. This suggests that without EI, sales professionals trying to use a customer orientation may not recognize which emotions will reduce tension, fail to understand how negative emotions will lead to anger and frustration, and be unable to manage customers' emotions by helping them relax. In their failure, they might seem to be uncaring, disingenuous, or even manipulative. Thus, higher EI can significantly improve the use of selling techniques. These relationships represent an extension of how emotions influence customer relationships and suggest that salespeople who have control over and knowledge of their own emotions and the emotions of their customers will not only perform more effectively but also more proficiently employ strategies designed to create and maintain strong positive customer relationships.

Selection. Sales managers must select highly talented candidates from applicant pools, knowing that sales force turnover affects recruiting and selection costs (Darmon 1990). Many selection procedures test cognitive ability and could easily include an EI assessment. Hunter and Schmidt's (1998) meta-analytic assessment of selection procedures suggests that firms should enhance job performance by combining cognitive tests with assessments such as integrity measurements. However, until now, no useful assessment tools have been available to determine an applicant's ability to use emotions when interacting with customers. Furthermore, selecting people with high EI can have other outcomes critical to performance, such as better communication among coworkers, teammates, and supervisors; facilitation of positive work climates; enhanced citizenship behavior; reduced role conflict; and less turnover (Verbeke 1997).

Training. People can learn EI (Mayer and Salovey 1997); therefore, such training could help sales professionals improve their performance (Kumar, Venkatesan, and Reinartz 2008). Companies might assess EI to discern which dimensions are lacking and then focus training on overcoming EI weaknesses. For example, sales professionals scoring low on managing EI can be taught to manage their own and customers' emotions more effectively. Our findings suggest that those with at least moderate levels of cognitive ability may be the best candidates for focused EI training because these people may have the most to gain. Those with low cognitive ability do not seem to benefit from training for greater EI.

Limitations and Directions for Further Research

Limitations. The first limitation of this research is that we restricted it to evaluating the performance of real estate and insurance agents. In the future, researchers should evaluate EI in other marketing exchange contexts, such as complex customer-solution sales, product sales, and service-oriented businesses. A second potential limitation is that we restricted our scoring system to item responses on which 50% of our expert judges agreed, which could produce some range restriction (Schmidt, Shaffer, and Oh 2008) because experts vary in their knowledge of emotional information. Nevertheless, use of multiple experts (N = 24) is likely to alleviate much of this concern. Third, although sales revenue can be consistently measured across multiple contexts, agents with higher EI could have larger territories; similarly, insurance agents with higher EI might interact with more lucrative clients. We added several controls, such as sales experience and sales roles, to alleviate this limitation. Finally, we focused on moderated relationships between EI and two focal marketing exchange variables, but other moderated relationships may exist between EI and the control variables. Although our data (not reported in this article) suggest nonsignificant relationships between EI and adaptive selling and EI and self-efficacy, other contexts or outcomes may reveal more insights about EI's relationship to these and other marketing exchange variables. Next, we discuss potential areas for further research.

Emotional confidence and calibration. Although emotional ability is critical, salespeople may further enhance performance by having confidence in their use of emotion, beyond the effects of EI (Alba and Hutchinson 2000). Confidence may increase motivational effects in which sales professionals interact with buyers in ways that are consistent with their beliefs about their emotional knowledge and ability (Chitturi, Raghunathan, and Mahajan 2007; Moorman et al. 2004). However, research suggests that people are "wrong too often when they are certain that they are right" (Fischhoff, Slovic, and Lichtenstein 1977, p. 561). Thus, the concept of emotional calibration, referring to the correspondence between what people know and what they think they know about emotions, may provide insights into emotions and marketing exchanges.

Dimensions of EI. In this research, we explore the four underlying EI dimensions as they relate to performance. We found that each dimension influenced various aspects of marketing exchanges, though additional research is needed to understand fully how these dimensions influence and interact with additional constructs. For example, how might dimensions of EI predict dimensions of adaptive selling? Though not reported, our data indicate that the managing dimension was correlated with both the behavior ($r = .24$, $p < .05$) and the belief ($r = .38$, $p < .01$) dimensions of adaptive selling (see Marks, Vorhies, and Badovick 1996). The ability to manage others' emotions may be particularly useful when employing aspects of adaptive selling. Further research should explore these relationships in greater detail.

EI beyond social skills. Researchers have begun to examine the importance of social skills (Cross and Sproull 2004) in improving customer interactions. The socially skilled sales professional helps customers solve, reframe, and understand their needs (Wierenga and Van Bruggen 1997; Wotruba 1991). For example, Verbeke and colleagues (2008) indicate that cognitive ability influences performance when social skills (i.e., social competence) are high. We encourage researchers to assess the role of social skills along with EI and cognitive ability.

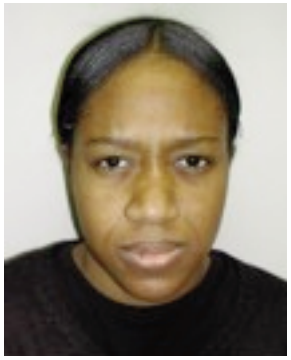
We hope that this research will encourage researchers to understand better the influence of emotion in marketing exchanges. Understanding the role of EI could lead to a variety of favorable outcomes, including a richer knowledge of how sales professionals think and feel when they interact with customers, employees, and supervisors, as well as enhance customers' buying experiences.

APPENDIX
Measures

EI in marketing exchanges: Split-half reliabilities were .84, .79, and .81 across the three field studies. Expert scores are provided in parentheses.

Section A

In this section, we are interested in emotions expressed in facial expressions and pictures. Please circle the answer that corresponds to the emotion(s) expressed in each face or picture.



1. Indicate how much "sadness" is expressed in the picture to the left:

   1. Not at all present (.89)
   2. Slightly present (.11)
   3. Moderately present (.00)
   4. Quite present (.00)
   5. Extremely present (.00)

2. Indicate how much "surprise" is expressed in the picture to the left:

   1. Not at all present (.00)
   2. Slightly present (.00)
   3. Moderately present (.10)
   4. Quite present (.73)
   5. Extremely present (.17)

3. Indicate how much "fear" is expressed in the picture to the left:

   1. Not at all present (.76)
   2. Slightly present (.24)
   3. Moderately present (.00)
   4. Quite present (.00)
   5. Extremely present (.00)

APPENDIX
Continued

Section B

In this section, we would like you to indicate how useful each emotion might be in response to the scenario that is presented. How useful might it be to ... (check column that applies for each question)

	Not at All Useful	Slightly Useful	Moderately Useful	Quite Useful	Extremely Useful
4. Feel "hostility" when interacting with an angry supervisor?	(.92)	(.04)	(.04)	(.00)	(.00)
5. Feel "anxiety" when determining the needs of a customer?	(.68)	(.28)	(.04)	(.00)	(.00)
6. Feel "guilt" when attempting to persuade someone to make an expensive purchase?	(.82)	(.14)	(.04)	(.00)	(.00)
7. Feel "frustration" when negotiating compensation issues with your supervisor?	(.70)	(.21)	(.09)	(.00)	(.00)

Section C

In this section, we would like you to circle the emotional response that is the most likely to be felt in the situations described below.

8. Matthew works best when his supervisor lets him do things the way he believes is best. When his supervisor began to micromanage his activities, Matthew felt_____.
   1. pleased (.00)
   2. disappointed (.00)
   3. relaxed (.00)
   4. frustrated (.92)
   5. guilty (.08)
9. A man went into an electronics store feeling rested. Later, he felt anxious. What happened in between?
   1. He was approached by an aggressive salesperson. (.78)
   2. He saw an old friend that he hadn't seen in several years. (.00)
   3. He was helped by a cashier whom he thought he recognized. (.00)
   4. He found an alternative product that he liked almost as well. (.04)
   5. He couldn't find the brand of cell phone he wanted. (.18)
10. A customer was interested and ready to make a purchase. Later, he felt embarrassed. What happened in between?
    1. The customer received a brief phone call. (.00)
    2. The customer realized he could not afford to make the purchase. (.88)
    3. The customer realized that he should compare prices before making the purchase. (.00)
    4. The customer said that he/she was not interested in making the purchase. (.12)
    5. The customer continued to search for more information about the product. (.00)
11. Happiness is a combination of which group of three emotions listed below:
    1. Envy, joy, pride (.00)
    2. Pleasure, activeness, arousal (.10)
    3. Joy, pleasure, satisfaction (.82)
    4. Satisfaction, joy, excitement (.08)

Section D

In this section, we would like you to indicate how effective each action might be in response to the scenario that is presented.

Bill never received clear instructions about how to do his job. One day he found out he was reassigned to a supervisor who had a reputation for setting clear goals and objectives. Bill felt relieved and calm for the first time in a long while. How well would the following behaviors help Bill maintain his feelings?

12. Behavior: He could tell his new supervisor how much he didn't like the previous supervisor.
    1. Not at all effective (.79)
    2. Slightly effective (.17)
    3. Moderately effective (.04)
    4. Quite effective (.00)
    5. Extremely effective (.00)

A customer agreed to make a large purchase from you. Later, however, you found out that the customer never had enough money to make the purchase. How well would the following behavior help you reduce your disappointment?

13. Behavior: Call back the customer and criticize him for wasting your time.
    1. Not at all effective (.90)
    2. Slightly effective (.10)
    3. Moderately effective (.00)
    4. Quite effective (.00)
    5. Extremely effective (.00)

APPENDIX
Continued

Section D, Continued

14. Behavior: Teach the customer a lesson by not returning any of his phone calls.
    1. Not at all effective (.91)
    2. Slightly effective (.09)
    3. Moderately effective (.00)
    4. Quite effective (.00)
    5. Extremely effective (.00)

A couple has shown some interest in a product that Bill is selling. Bill is presenting the product well, although the couple is starting to look bored and disinterested. How well would the following behavior help Bill keep their interest and close the sale?

15. Behavior: Bill should accept the fact that the couple probably won't make the purchase.
    1. Not at all effective (.70)
    2. Slightly effective (.26)
    3. Moderately effective (.04)
    4. Quite effective (.00)
    5. Extremely effective (.00)

Study 1: Additional Measures

MSCEIT: A 141-item scale developed by Mayer and colleagues (2003). The split-half reliability was .89.

Sales performance (sales revenue): The amount of annual revenue for each salesperson was provided by the real estate company.

Study 2: Additional Measures

Sales revenue: The amount of annual revenue for each salesperson was provided by the insurance company.

Customer orientation: Five-item scale anchored by 1 = "strongly disagree" and 7 = "strongly agree," developed by Periatt, LeMay, and Chakrabarty (2004). The coefficient alpha was .88.

1. I try to figure out what customer needs are.
2. A good employee has to have the customer's best interest in mind.
3. I try to bring a customer with a problem together with a product/service that helps solve that problem.
4. I offer the product/service that is best suited to the customer's problem.
5. I try to find out what kind of products/services will be most helpful to a customer.

Manifest influence: Seven-item scale anchored by 1= "very little," and 7= "a great deal," adapted from Kohli and Zaltman (1988). The coefficient alpha was .74.

1. How much weight did the customer give your opinions before buying?
2. To what extent did your involvement influence the customer's choices?
3. How much impact did you have on the customer's purchase decisions?
4. To what extent did the customer go along with your suggestions?
5. How much weight did the customer give your statements in making his or her purchase decisions?
6. To what extent did the customer's decisions reflect your influence?
7. To what extent did you influence the criteria used for making purchase decisions?

Self-efficacy: Five-item scale anchored by 1 = "strongly disagree" and 7 = "strongly agree," adapted from Sujan, Weitz, and Kumar (1994). The coefficient alpha was .79 in Study 2 and .97 in Study 3.

1. I know the right thing to do in selling situations.
2. Overall, I am confident of my ability to perform my job well.
3. I feel I am very capable at the task of selling.
4. I feel I have the capabilities to successfully perform my job.
5. I am good at selling.

Adaptive selling: Nine-item scale anchored by 1 = "strongly disagree" and 7 = "strongly agree," developed by Spiro and Weitz (1990). The coefficient alpha was .72 in Study 2 and .88 in Study 3.

1. When I feel that my sales approach is not working, I can easily change to another.
2. I like to experiment with different sales approaches.
3. I can easily use a wide variety of selling approaches.
4. I find it difficult to adapt my presentation style to certain buyers. (reverse scored)
5. I vary my sales styles from situation to situation.
6. I feel confident that I can effectively change my planned presentation when necessary.
7. Basically, I use different approaches with most customers.
8. I am very flexible in the sales approach I use.
9. I try to understand how one customer differs from another.

APPENDIX
Continued

Study 3: Additional Measures

Customer retention rate: Agent provided an estimate of the percentage of customers retained.

SREIS: 19-item scale anchored by 1 = "very inaccurate" and 5 = "very accurate," developed by Brackett and colleagues (2006). The coefficient alpha was .77. See the "Additional Measures" section in the Web Appendix (http://www.marketingpower.com/jmjan11).

Cognitive ability: An eight-item scale was developed. Correct answers are in boldface. The coefficient alpha was .89. Respondent frequencies are provided in parentheses.

1. How can individuals manage their credit information file to achieve a better credit rating?
   a. Change their name so as to restart their credit record. (.05)
   b. Cancel all of their credit cards and convert to a cash basis purchase behavior. (.15)
   c. **There are no "quick fixes," a good credit rating must be built over time.** (.50)
   d. Marry another person resulting in a merging of a poor credit score with a better score. (.30)
2. Individuals may request a credit report from a credit rating bureau:
   a. **Once each year for a small fee.** (.12)
   b. Once each year for free, with additional requests requiring a small fee. (.62)
   c. Multiple requests per year for free. (.04)
   d. First request is free, with an increasing cost scale for additional reports during the same year. (.22)
3. Who is covered by the liability portion of a homeowner's policy?
   a. Homeowner. (.00)
   b. Household members other than the homeowner. (.00)
   c. **Neighbors or other visitors.** (.97)
   d. Household pet. (.03)
4. Will an excellent credit rating be affected by an inquiry from (*respondent's firm*) into my credit history?
   a. **There is no effect on an individual's credit rating from insurance company inquiries.** (.54)
   b. Insurance company inquiries are accumulated by the credit rating agency and may exert a cumulative effect on the individual's credit rating. (.06)
   c. Insurance company inquiries only affect an individual's credit rating if they have a past history of collection difficulties. (.40)
   d. These inquiries are maintained by the credit rating agency in a hidden "blind" file that is not visible to the consumer. (.00)
5. How can an individual receive a copy of their credit report?
   a. By requesting the IRS to provide authorization for the release of the credit report: www.irs.gov/creditauthorization/. (.09)
   b. By requesting a copy from the Trans Union bureau: www.transunion.com/. (.77)
   c. By paying a fee to the Experian Corporation and thereby obtaining a credit report release authorization code that can be used at Equifax to receive the actual credit report: www.experianfax.com/. (.04)
   d. By requesting a credit report from the Selective Service Administration: www.ssa.gov/. (.10)
6. Are any items in a home not covered by (respondent's firm) homeowner's policy?
   a. Dangerous items such as firearms and knives. (.12)
   b. **Pet related damage.** (.57)
   c. Household appliances. (.18)
   d. Trailers. (.13)
7. What coverage do I have for damage from vandalism or malicious mischief?
   a. You are covered up to your policy limits unless your house was rented for a period exceeding six months. (.04)
   b. **You are covered up to your policy limits unless your house was vacant for 30 or more consecutive days preceding the incident. (.78)**
   c. The coverage is determined by state limits unless the house has been occupied for more than one year. (.00)
   d. The coverage is determined by the frequency of claims made for malicious mischief. (.18)
8. Am I covered if a windstorm damages trees in my yard?
   a. **Coverage is not provided to replace the trees damaged by a windstorm.** (.65)
   b. Coverage is provided to replace the trees only if a covered structure on the property is undamaged. (.02)
   c. Coverage is not provided to replace the trees only if a covered structure on the property is damaged. (.08)
   d. Coverage is provided to replace the trees. (.25)

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