

*A Task-Based Framework for
Mobile Applications to Enhance
Salespersons Performance*



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Agenda

- Overview of the technology for Mobile Applications and services
- Categorization of Mobile Applications and Services
- The nature of salespersons work
- Framework for mobile applications to support salespersons performance
- Some preliminary results from a field study involving the sales representatives of a pharmaceutical company

A little Background on the Technology for MA&S

- Mobile Devices
 - Any device connected to the Internet or other networks through wireless networking using any standard wireless communication protocol
- Assessment of mobile devices can involve their
 - Usability
 - Capability
 - Cost

A little Background on the Technology for MLS

- Connectivity
 - Network support is crucial to support mobile workforce operating without physical access to stationary IS
 - Distinguishing factors include
 - Network capacity (bandwidth)
 - Network availability

Categorization of Mobile Applications and Services

- **Connective Mobile Applications**
 - Involve a mobile or wireless client accessing a centralized service
 - Accessing wirelessly Intranet functionality via a mobile device
- **Interactive mobile applications and services**
 - Support the generation of information through communication between people
 - SMS /MMS functionality, MSN messenger services for pocket PC

Categorization of Mobile Applications and Services

- Proactive Mobile Applications and services
 - Supporting mobile users in responding proactively to potential changing in environmental trends
 - Examples include
 - Use of a mobile wireless client in managing the supply chain
 - Positioning technologies can play a key role in developing mobile applications and services

The Nature of Salespersons Work

- “The great challenge of this century will be to make knowledge work productive, just as the last century made industrial work productive” - Peter Drucker, 1998
- Salespersons are typical examples of knowledge workers linking their companies with the customers

The Nature of Salespersons Work

- They perform a vital boundary spanner role
 - For some customers the salesperson is synonymous with the firm
 - Some customers can be loyal to the individual sales person rather than the firm
- Possess great deal of market information stemming from their daily interactions within the market place
 - To leave this rich source of information untapped would be fool-hardy” (Evans et al, 1985).

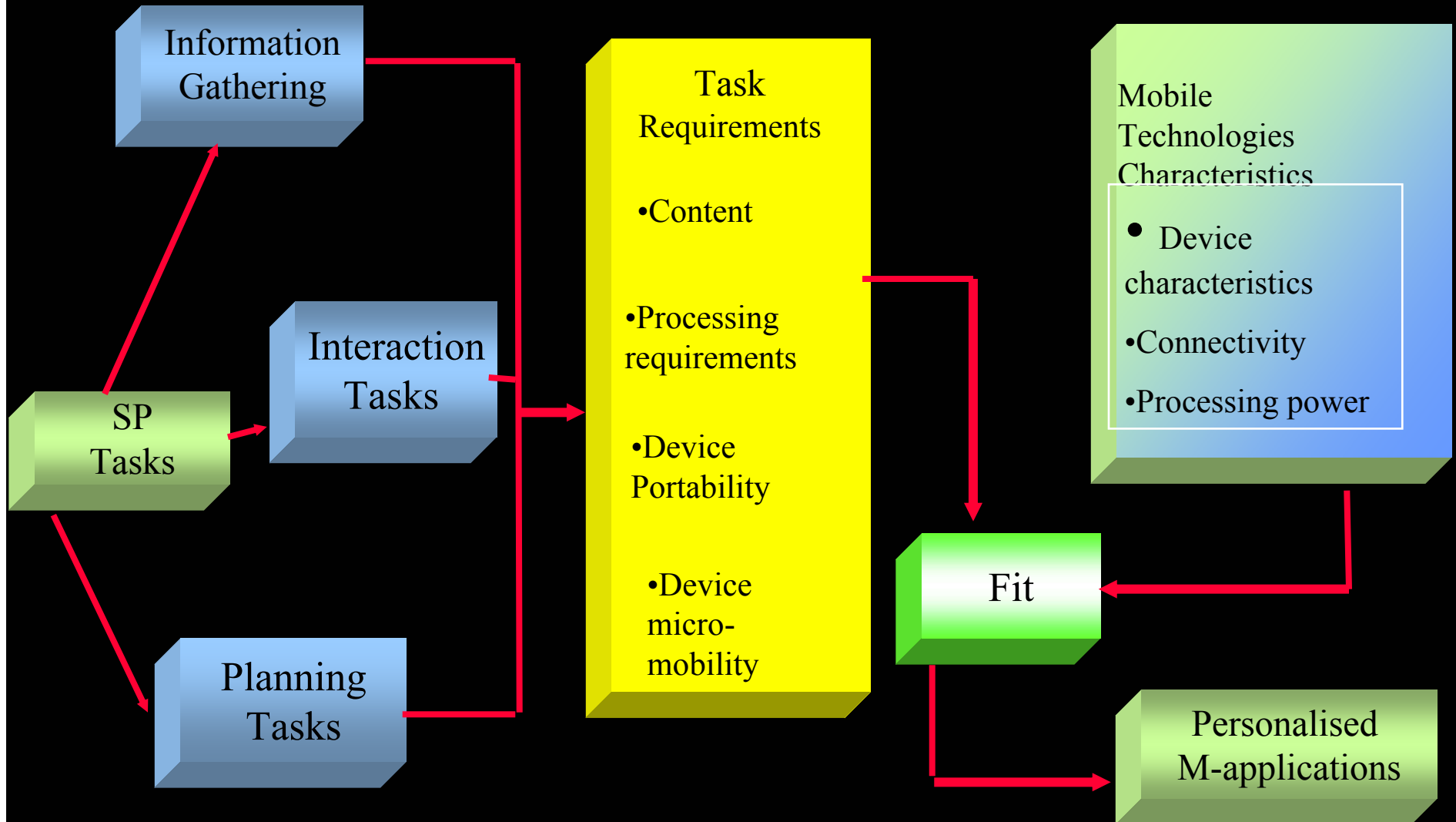
Nature of Salespersons Work

- They are also mobile workers
 - Working in various locations: the client site, the hotel, the car and so on
- And represent a growing number of employees
 - About 1.9 million sales rep in US alone in 2002

Framework for Mobile Applications to Support Salespersons Tasks

- Categorization of salespersons tasks by the areas that might be affected by mobile technologies
- Fitting mobile technologies characteristics with salespersons task requirements
- Involving actively the salespersons in the design, the development and the implementation of the mobile applications

A Framework for Mobile Applications to Support Salespersons Tasks



How Mobile Applications Can Support Salespersons Performance?

- Several authors suggest that the individual and organizational gain from advanced information and communication technologies occur indirectly through the positive impact such technologies has on informational and communication processes (Huber 1990 , Mooney , Grover 1998 .
- In the case of salespersons we can retain as mediator variables the determinant of their performance which have the potential to be enhanced by the properties of mobile support systems.

Taxonomy of The Determinants of Salespersons Performance

Sales Skills



Technical Knowledge

Target Selling

Market Knowledge

Planning Skill

Sales Behavior



Smart selling

Customer Orientation

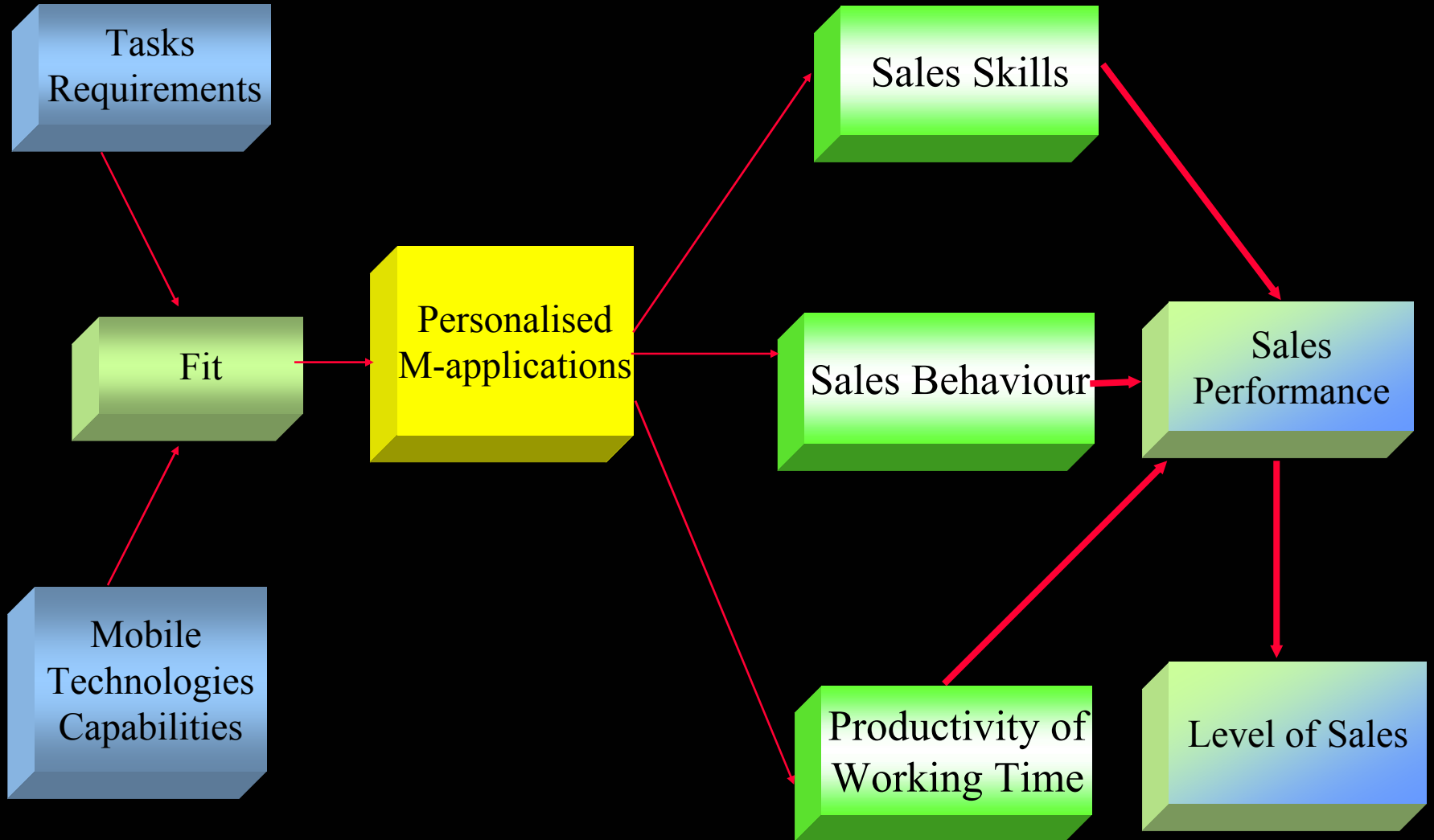
Productivity of Working Time



Call Productivity

Leads Follow up

A Framework for Mobile Applications to Support Salespersons Tasks



Some Results from The Field Study

- The study involved the sales representatives of a pharmaceutical company
- The purpose was to study their information needs when they are operating within a mobile work environment
- The field work for the research adopted a qualitative approach, informed by the principles underlying ethnography

Some Results from The Field Study

- The study revealed a number of challenges the reps face
 - Pre-mobility challenges
 - Planning how to deal with the unpredictable
 - Potential cancellation of a scheduled meeting with a doctor
 - Adaptation to the shortcoming associated with the technological support
 - In-mobility challenges
 - Adaptation during sales call
 - Working in dead time

Some Results from The Field Study

- In-mobility challenges
 - Availability gap
 - Coordination with stationary workers
- Post mobility challenge
 - Achieving the work life balance
- Implications in terms of the development of mobile support system
 - Portability and micro-mobility are important
 - Type of information support needed: anyplace, sometimes but in the right form
 - The standard pull paradigm of information may not be appropriate to satisfy the reps' highly situational and short lived information need

The End

Thank You

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