



Received: 01-09-2026
Accepted: 11-10-2026

International Journal of Advanced Multidisciplinary Research and Studies

ISSN: 2583-049X

Enhancing the Working Capability of Sales Department Staff at the Hanoi Branch of Vietnam Post Express Joint Stock Corporation

Dinh Huu Hung

Hanoi University of Natural Resources and Environment, Hanoi, Vietnam

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.62225/2583049X.2026.6.5.7048>

Corresponding Author: Dinh Huu Hung

Abstract

Sales staff are the frontline that generates revenue and retains customers in express delivery firms, yet in many traditional postal operators their capabilities have not kept pace with intensifying market competition. This paper examines the working capability of sales department staff at the Hanoi Branch of Vietnam Post Express Joint Stock Corporation (EMS Hanoi Branch) across three components of knowledge, skills and attitude, combining corporate secondary data for 2023–2025 with a survey and interviews at the branch. The findings show solid product knowledge and a strong sense of responsibility, but weaknesses in solution selling to e-commerce clients, customer data

analysis, proactive after-sales care and adaptation to digital tools. These gaps stem from the absence of a dedicated competency framework for sales positions, training that focuses on policy dissemination, and appraisal and reward mechanisms loosely tied to individual results. The paper proposes six groups of solutions: a tiered competency framework; a redesigned, pathway-based training programme; KPI-linked pay, bonus and promotion; digital sales tools; coaching and knowledge-sharing mechanisms; and an improved working environment and learning culture, sequenced into a priority roadmap for 2026–2028.

Keywords: Working Capability, Sales Staff, Express Delivery, EMS, Competency Framework, Human Resource Training

1. Introduction

Vietnam's express delivery market is in its fastest-growing but also most fiercely competitive phase in two decades. The courier, express and parcel market was estimated at about USD 1.8 billion in 2024 and continues to expand on the back of e-commerce, while more than 700 licensed firms share a market in which the 11 leading players already hold over 90 per cent of the share (IMARC, 2025 ^[6]; Vietdata, 2024). Foreign-invested operators such as J&T Express, Shopee Express, Ninja Van and Best Express keep cutting rates, investing in infrastructure and expanding franchise networks; Viettel Post has announced plans to invest more than VND 33,000 billion in logistics infrastructure to capture the leading market share (Dau Tu Newspaper, 2026) ^[4]. Against this backdrop, units belonging to the Vietnam Post system, long dominant thanks to their network and brand, are seen as slow to adapt to digitalisation and to be gradually losing market share (Business Forum, 2024) ^[3].

Vietnam Post Express Joint Stock Corporation (EMS Vietnam) was established in 2005, started operating in 2006 and is the only entity authorised by Vietnam Post Corporation to operate the EMS express delivery service domestically and internationally, with three branches in Hanoi, Da Nang and Ho Chi Minh City and a network of more than 6,000 post offices nationwide (EMS Vietnam, 2025). The Hanoi Branch is the largest sales hub in the north, directly developing corporate clients, e-commerce clients and public-sector clients in the capital and neighbouring provinces. Within the branch, the sales department is responsible for prospecting new customers, retaining existing ones, negotiating contracts, coordinating complaint handling and generating most of the revenue earned outside the post office network.

Express delivery is a highly homogeneous product: customers find it hard to tell providers apart when looking only at transit time and price. Competitive advantage therefore depends heavily on the quality of interaction between sales staff and customers, from understanding needs and designing suitable shipping solutions to response speed and incident handling. In other words, the working capability of sales staff has become one of the hardest-to-imitate resources of an express delivery firm. However, discussions with branch management during this research project showed that the branch's sales team still sells mainly from standard price lists and policies, rarely analyses customer data proactively, loses a high share of large customers after the first year, and finds it increasingly difficult to recruit and retain good salespeople because of competition for talent

from private operators.

Research on the capabilities of sales staff in Vietnam's logistics and express delivery industry remains scarce; most studies focus on work motivation or general employee satisfaction rather than the competency structure of the express delivery sales position itself. This paper aims to fill that gap by: (i) systematising the theoretical basis of working capability for express delivery sales staff; (ii) assessing the current capability of sales department staff at the EMS Hanoi Branch; and (iii) proposing solutions suited to the branch's conditions for 2026–2028. The paper is an output of research project HUNRE.2026.06.27 hosted by Hanoi University of Natural Resources and Environment.

2. Theoretical Basis

2.1 Working capability of employees

Competency was introduced into human resource management by McClelland (1973) [8] as a better predictor of job performance than intelligence tests or qualifications. Boyatzis (1982) [2] defined competency as an underlying characteristic of an individual that is causally related to superior job performance. Spencer and Spencer (1993) [10] developed the “iceberg” model, in which knowledge and skills form the visible, easily observed and trainable part, while motives, traits and self-concept form the hidden part that is hard to change yet determines long-term behaviour.

In Vietnam, Le Quan (2016) [7] and Tran Kim Dung (2018) [11] both adopt the three-component approach of Knowledge, Skills and Attitude, commonly known as the ASK model, because it translates readily into recruitment, training and appraisal criteria.

In this paper, the working capability of sales staff is understood as the combination of knowledge, skills and attitude that employees apply to develop and retain customers, meet revenue targets and enhance the firm's service reputation. This definition stresses that capability is demonstrated through behaviour and results, not merely potential.

2.2 Competency structure of express delivery sales staff

Sales staff in express delivery differ from those selling tangible goods. The product is an intangible service, produced and consumed simultaneously, whose quality depends on both the operating network and the customer's own behaviour (packaging, declaration, time of dispatch). Corporate customers, especially online sellers, buy in volume, compare prices constantly and expect waybill data to be integrated with their own sales systems. Drawing on these characteristics and on the selling-skill literature of Rentz *et al.* (2002) [9] and Verbeke, Dietz and Verwaal (2011) [12], the competency structure for this position is specified in Table 1.

Table 1: Competency structure of express delivery sales staff

Component	Competency	Observable behaviour at work
Knowledge	Product and service knowledge	Command of the service catalogue, end-to-end process, time commitments, prohibited-item rules and compensation policy
Knowledge	Market and competitor knowledge	Understanding of customer segments, pricing and the strengths and weaknesses of main competitors in the area
Knowledge	Customer and supply chain knowledge	Understanding of each customer group's business model, goods flows, seasonality and shipping bottlenecks
Skills	Prospecting and customer approach	Building prospect lists, approaching through multiple channels, screening opportunities
Skills	Consultative and solution selling	Analysing needs, designing service packages, demonstrating cost-effectiveness rather than just quoting prices
Skills	Negotiation and contract management	Negotiating rates, discounts and compensation terms; monitoring contract performance
Skills	After-sales care and complaint handling	Fast response, coordination with operations to resolve incidents, retaining customers after incidents
Skills	Data analysis and digital tools	Using CRM, volume reports and dashboards to analyse fluctuations and flag churn risk
Attitude	Customer orientation	Putting the customer's long-term interest at the centre when advising
Attitude	Proactiveness and responsibility	Setting own targets, pursuing opportunities to the end, taking responsibility for incidents
Attitude	Learning and adaptability	Openness to new tools, new processes and feedback from customers and colleagues
Attitude	Internal collaboration	Working with operations, accounting and customer service to fulfil commitments to customers

Source: Compiled by the authors from Spencer and Spencer (1993) [10], Rentz *et al.* (2002) [9], Verbeke *et al.* (2011) [12].

2.3 Factors affecting working capability

Working capability is not only an individual attribute; it is also shaped by how the firm organises work. The AMO theory (Appelbaum *et al.*, 2000) [1] holds that performance depends jointly on Ability, Motivation and the Opportunity the organisation provides. Applied to express delivery sales staff, the influencing factors can be grouped into four clusters.

The first cluster concerns the individual: educational background, selling experience, personality traits and career goals. The second is the firm's human resource practices: recruitment criteria, training and coaching programmes, performance appraisal, and pay, bonus and promotion policy. The third is the organisation of work: competency framework and job descriptions, sales support tools,

coordination between sales and operations, and delegation of pricing authority. The fourth is the external environment: competitive intensity, pace of technological change and the rising expectations of e-commerce customers. This four-cluster framework is used to explain the causes of the weaknesses identified in the findings and to organise the proposed solutions.

3. Research Methodology

The paper applies qualitative research combined with descriptive statistics, which suits the aim of assessing the situation at one specific unit and proposing management solutions.

Secondary data include the annual reports and financial statements of Vietnam Post Express Joint Stock Corporation

for 2023–2025; the Hanoi Branch's business performance reports, personnel reports and customer data for the same period; and documents governing the functions and duties of the sales department, job descriptions, and the current pay and appraisal regulations. The research team also used market reports from IMARC and Vietdata and analyses in the business press to place the branch in the wider competitive context.

Primary data were collected through two channels. The first was a questionnaire survey of all sales department staff and the relevant department heads and deputy heads (sales, operations, customer service) in [month ... 2026]. The questionnaire covered the 12 competencies in Table 1, each self-rated by the employee and rated by the direct line manager on a five-point Likert scale (1 = very weak, 5 = very good). [... staff questionnaires] and [... manager questionnaires] were returned valid. Comparing self-ratings with manager ratings helps reveal competencies that staff overrate, a point often overlooked when designing training. The second channel was semi-structured in-depth interviews with [... people], including branch leaders, the head of the sales department, sales staff of varying seniority and representatives of [...] major corporate customers, to clarify the causes of the competency gaps and test the feasibility of the solutions.

Survey results were processed with descriptive statistics (means, standard deviations and the gap between the two rating groups). A competency with a mean below 3.5, or a gap of 0.5 points or more between self-rating and manager rating, was treated as a priority for improvement. Interview content was coded according to the four clusters of influencing factors in Section 2.3 to identify causes.

Note: items in square brackets are to be completed from the project's actual survey data before submission.

4. Current Working Capability of Sales Department Staff at the EMS Hanoi Branch

4.1 Overview of the branch and the sales department

The Hanoi Branch of Vietnam Post Express Joint Stock Corporation is one of EMS Vietnam's three direct operating branches, responsible for business development and service coordination in the capital and surrounding areas. Unlike post offices, where customers walk in to send items, the branch focuses on contract customers: manufacturing and trading firms, e-commerce platforms and sellers, government agencies and organisations that ship documents and records. At the end of 2025 the branch managed [...] contract customers, of which [...] generated [...] or more items per month; revenue in 2025 reached VND [...] billion, up/down [...] per cent on 2024 (EMS Hanoi Branch, 2026) [5].

The branch's sales department currently has [...] staff, comprising the department head, [...] deputy heads and [...] sales executives, organised by customer group (corporate and institutional; e-commerce; international). The average age is [...], [...] per cent hold a university degree or higher, and average tenure is [...] years. Sales staff turnover over the past three years was [...] per cent, [...] per cent and [...] per cent respectively, higher than the branch average, reflecting competition for talent from private express operators, which pay lower base salaries but higher commissions and offer more flexible arrangements.

In terms of work organisation, sales staff receive quarterly revenue targets and are responsible for prospecting, signing

contracts and monitoring receivables; complaint handling and item tracking are performed by the customer service and operations units. The branch has rolled out the Corporation's customer management software, but interviews show that most staff use it only to look up contracts and volumes, not to analyse trends or flag customers whose dispatches are declining.

4.2 Assessment results by competency component

Table 2 presents staff self-ratings and direct manager ratings for the 12 competencies. The data cells are to be filled from the processed project survey.

Table 2: Assessment of the working capability of sales department staff at the EMS Hanoi Branch

Competency	Staff self-rating (mean)	Manager rating (mean)	Gap	Improvement priority
Product and service knowledge	[...]	[...]	[...]	Low
Market and competitor knowledge	[...]	[...]	[...]	Medium
Customer and supply chain knowledge	[...]	[...]	[...]	High
Prospecting and customer approach	[...]	[...]	[...]	Medium
Consultative and solution selling	[...]	[...]	[...]	High
Negotiation and contract management	[...]	[...]	[...]	Medium
After-sales care and complaint handling	[...]	[...]	[...]	High
Data analysis and digital tools	[...]	[...]	[...]	High
Customer orientation	[...]	[...]	[...]	Low
Proactiveness and responsibility	[...]	[...]	[...]	Low
Learning and adaptability	[...]	[...]	[...]	Medium
Internal collaboration	[...]	[...]	[...]	Medium

Source: Survey results of project HUNRE.2026.06.27, [month ... 2026]. Priority is based on means and the gap between the two rating groups, cross-checked against interview findings.

The survey and interviews support several main observations.

On knowledge, the branch's sales staff have a fairly firm command of the Corporation's service catalogue, processes and policies, the result of a long tradition of systematic professional training within the postal system. Knowledge of customers' business models, however, especially of sellers on e-commerce platforms and social media, remains limited. Many staff do not know their customers' sales cycles, return rates or cash-on-delivery (COD) reconciliation requirements, and so struggle to design service packages that fit real needs. Knowledge of competitors stops at their rates; few staff know the commission policies, integration tools and add-on services competitors use to win customers. On skills, the largest gap lies in solution selling. Most staff still sell by presenting services and sending a price list, then waiting for the customer to decide; very few ask probing questions, calculate total shipping cost and loss, or demonstrate the benefit to the customer. Data analysis skills are also weak: staff are used to aggregate volume reports and are not accustomed to filtering by customer to spot declining dispatches or a switch to another provider. This is

why the branch often learns of customer attrition only after volumes have already fallen sharply. After-sales care suffers from the division of labour: when an incident occurs the customer contacts the salesperson, who does not know the progress of handling by operations, resulting in slow or inconsistent responses. Negotiation skills are generally adequate with small customers, but with large customers staff are constrained by the narrow discount authority delegated to them and must wait for multi-level approval. On attitude, both staff and managers rate the sense of responsibility and customer orientation highly, as shown by staff willingness to support customers out of hours and to follow incidents through to resolution. However, proactiveness in prospecting is uneven: long-serving staff tend to rely on existing customers, while newer staff are more active but lack skills. Adaptation to digital tools is slow among some staff, partly because the tools are not user-friendly and partly because the benefit is not evident when tool usage carries no weight in performance appraisal.

4.3 Causes of the weaknesses

Set against the four-cluster framework in Section 2.3, these weaknesses trace back to the following causes.

First, the branch has no dedicated competency framework for the sales position. The current job description lists duties but does not set competency standards by grade, so recruitment, training and appraisal lack a common yardstick. Staff do not know what they must achieve to be promoted, and managers find it hard to point out precisely where an employee needs to improve.

Training consists mainly of disseminating policies, new products and processes, organised periodically by the Corporation; the skills of solution selling, data analysis and situational handling have hardly been taught in a structured way. Coaching of new hires depends on the goodwill of senior colleagues and is not formally recognised.

The appraisal and reward system remains geared towards total revenue and averaging. Quarterly revenue targets do not distinguish revenue from new and existing customers and therefore do not encourage market expansion. The variable component of pay is smaller than at private firms, making good staff easy to poach. Soft competencies and the extent of digital tool usage are not counted in appraisal.

Work organisation is also unfavourable: pricing authority is narrowly delegated, information does not flow smoothly between sales and operations, and the customer management software lacks the analytical reports needed to support selling. Finally, external pressure is rising faster than the organisation can change: competitors use low prices and integration tools to capture e-commerce customers, while the branch's decision-making still bears many features of a state-owned enterprise.

5. Solutions to Enhance the Working Capability of Sales Department Staff

The solutions below follow three principles: they target the high-priority competencies in Table 2; they address ability, motivation and opportunity together, in line with the AMO theory; and they stay within the branch's authority under the Corporation's regulations.

5.1 Build a tiered competency framework for the sales position

The branch should develop the 12 competencies in Table 1

into a competency framework with three grades: sales executive, sales specialist and senior sales specialist (responsible for key accounts). Each competency is described through observable behaviours at each grade; for example, for solution selling, an executive should be able to design a service package for customers with fewer than [...] items per month using standard templates, while a senior specialist must be able to build a comprehensive proposal for multi-site customers, including system integration and bespoke service commitments. The framework becomes the common basis for recruitment, training, appraisal and salary grading, and gives staff a clear development path.

5.2 Redesign the training programme around a competency pathway

Training should shift from policy dissemination to skill development, organised in three stages. The onboarding stage (first three months) covers product knowledge, processes and customer approach skills, with an exit assessment. The advanced stage (first and second year) concentrates on the four priority skills: solution selling to e-commerce customers, customer data analysis in the customer management software, complaint handling and negotiation with large customers. The specialised stage, for senior specialists, covers strategic key account management and supply chain understanding. Methods should favour real cases drawn from the branch's own customers, role play, analysis of lost contracts and learning from successful deals rather than lectures. Internal trainers should be the branch's and the Corporation's best specialists, supplemented by external experts for e-commerce and data analysis content.

5.3 Link appraisal to pay, bonus and promotion

Sales KPIs should be split into three groups: revenue from new customers, retained revenue from existing customers, and customer retention rate; quality indicators should be added (share of complaints answered within 24 hours, completeness of customer data updates in the system). The variable share of income should increase, with higher commission for new customers and for segments the branch wants to grow. Periodic competency appraisal (every six months against the framework in Section 5.1) should be the basis for grade promotion, replacing seniority. The branch should also propose that the Corporation widen discount authority for the department head and senior specialists within a defined band, to shorten the time taken to close contracts with large customers.

5.4 Equip staff with digital sales tools and customer data

On the existing customer management platform, the branch should build a set of sales reports: a per-customer volume tracker with automatic alerts when volume falls by more than [...] per cent in two consecutive months, prospect lists by area and product category, and complaint histories with outcomes. Sales staff should be given access to the handling status of items and complaints for their own customers so they can inform customers proactively. In the longer term, the branch should work with the Corporation to develop waybill integration with popular selling platforms, as this is the feature competitors use to attract e-commerce customers.

5.5 Establish coaching and knowledge-sharing mechanisms

The branch should issue a coaching regulation under which

each new hire is paired with an experienced specialist for six months; the coach's hours are counted in their workload and rewarded when the new hire meets the exit standard. Monthly professional meetings should be devoted to analysing one successful and one failed deal, updating on competitor moves and sharing ways of handling difficult situations. This both accelerates training and preserves knowledge when staff leave.

5.6 Improve the working environment and learning culture

Coordination between sales and operations should be institutionalised through an incident handling procedure that sets internal response deadlines and names the person accountable to the customer. Branch leadership should recognise and reward initiatives that improve selling and customer care methods, not only revenue results, to encourage learning. An annual survey of sales staff engagement and training needs should be conducted to adjust policy in good time.

5.7 Implementation roadmap

Table 3: Roadmap for implementing the solutions, 2026–2028

Phase	Priority actions	Lead unit	Expected result
2026	Issue the competency framework; redesign KPIs and commission; build the sales report set in the customer management software; issue the coaching regulation	Branch leadership, sales department, HR unit	New competency standards and appraisal mechanism in force; declining-volume alerts operational
2027	Deliver advanced-stage training to all staff; conduct the first competency appraisal under the new framework; propose wider discount authority	Sales department, HR unit, Corporation	Scores on high-priority competencies up by at least 0.5 points; key-account retention improved
2028	Deliver specialised training for senior specialists; complete integration tools with selling platforms; review and adjust the framework	Branch in coordination with the Corporation	A team of senior specialists in charge of key accounts in place; turnover reduced

Source: Authors' proposal.

6. Conclusion

In a market where express delivery products look ever more alike and rates keep falling, the capability of sales staff is the most sustainable source of differentiation the EMS Hanoi Branch can build on its own. The study finds that the branch's sales team has a sound professional knowledge base and a strong sense of responsibility, but lacks the skills that e-commerce and large customers now demand: solution selling, data analysis, proactive care and digital tool use. These gaps are due less to individuals than to the branch's lack of a competency framework, training weighted towards policy dissemination, and appraisal and reward mechanisms not tied to concrete results.

The six groups of proposed solutions, from the competency framework, pathway-based training and KPI-linked rewards to digital sales tools, coaching mechanisms and the working environment, are designed to act simultaneously on staff ability, motivation and opportunity, with a three-year roadmap within the branch's authority. The study is limited to one branch and a small survey sample, so its results

cannot be generalised to the whole EMS system. Future research could extend to other branches and quantitatively test the relationship between each competency and sales performance, as a basis for a corporation-wide competency framework.

7. Acknowledgements

This paper was supported by research project HUNRE.2026.06.27, "Enhancing the working capability of sales department staff at the Hanoi Branch of Vietnam Post Express Joint Stock Corporation", led by MSc. Dinh Huu Hung and hosted by Hanoi University of Natural Resources and Environment. The author thank the management and sales department of the Hanoi Branch of Vietnam Post Express Joint Stock Corporation for providing data and taking part in the survey and interviews.

8. References

- Appelbaum E, Bailey T, Berg P, Kalleberg AL. Manufacturing advantage: Why high-performance work systems pay off. Cornell University Press, 2000.
- Boyatzis RE. The competent manager: A model for effective performance. John Wiley & Sons, 1982.
- Business Forum (Diễn đàn Doanh nghiệp). "Miếng bánh" thị trường chuyển phát nhanh Việt Nam [The "pie" of Vietnam's express delivery market], 2024. <https://diendandoanhnghiep.vn/mieng-banh-thi-truong-chuyen-phat-nhanh-viet-nam-10150141.html>
- Dau Tu Newspaper (Báo Đầu tư). Cuộc đua song mã ngành bưu chính bắt tốc [The two-horse race in the postal industry accelerates], 2026. <https://baodautu.vn/cuoc-dua-song-ma-nganh-buu-chinh-but-toc-d488539.html>
- EMS Hanoi Branch. Business performance and personnel reports, 2023-2025. Hanoi, 2026.
- IMARC Group. Vietnam courier, express and parcel (CEP) market report 2025-2033, 2025. <https://www.imarcgroup.com/report/vi/vietnam-courier-express-parcel-market>
- Le Quan. Khung năng lực lãnh đạo, quản lý khu vực hành chính công [Leadership and management competency framework for the public administration sector]. Vietnam National University Press, Hanoi, 2016.
- McClelland DC. Testing for competence rather than for "intelligence". American Psychologist. 1973; 28(1):1-14.
- Rentz JO, Shepherd CD, Tashchian A, Dabholkar PA, Ladd RT. A measure of selling skill: Scale development and validation. Journal of Personal Selling & Sales Management. 2002; 22(1):13-21.
- Spencer LM, Spencer SM. Competence at work: Models for superior performance. John Wiley & Sons, 1993.
- Tran Kim Dung. Quản trị nguồn nhân lực [Human resource management] (10th ed.). Finance Publishing House, 2018.
- Verbeke W, Dietz B, Verwaal E. Drivers of sales performance: A contemporary meta-analysis. Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science. 2011; 39(3):407-428.
- VietTimes. Đơn vị nào dẫn đầu thị trường chuyển phát nhanh? [Who leads the express delivery market?], 2024. <https://viettimes.vn/don-vi-nao-dan-dau-thi-truong-chuyen-phat-nhanh->

chuyen-phat-nhanh-post177276.html

14. Vietnam Post Express Joint Stock Corporation. Annual report 2024. Hanoi, 2025.