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Enhancing the Working Capacity of Sales Department Staff at the Hanoi Branch of Vietnam Express Mail Service Corporation

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Abstract
Rapid e-commerce growth has intensified competition in the express mail industry, making the working capacity of Sales Department staff decisive for the competitive position of the Hanoi branch of Vietnam Express Mail Service Corporation. Using desk research - synthesizing, analyzing, evaluating, and comparing secondary data within a Knowledge-Skill-Attitude (KSA) competency framework - this study systematizes the underlying theory, assesses the current situation, and proposes solutions. The findings show that frontline staffing remains thin, new employees' professional knowledge is uneven, complex complaint-handling skills are limited, and mounting workload poses a risk to service attitude. The study proposes solutions in training, recruitment, compensation, technology, and the development of a standardized competency framework, contributing to the theoretical literature and providing a practical basis for branch human resource management.

Keywords: Working Capacity, Competency Framework, Sales Staff, Express Mail, Hanoi

1. Introduction

As Vietnam's digital economy undergoes rapid transformation, e-commerce, hereafter abbreviated as e-commerce, has become the primary growth driver and has triggered a surge in demand for parcel delivery services. According to the Vietnam E-commerce Index Report 2025 published by the Vietnam E-commerce Association, Vietnam's e-commerce market reached approximately USD 32 billion in scale, growing 27 percent year on year, with Hanoi again ranking first nationwide at 74.7 points, ahead of Ho Chi Minh City at 73.5 points (Vietnam E-commerce Association, 2025) [2]. This growth has placed the express mail and courier industry under increasingly intense competitive pressure. According to a market research note by VDSC – Viet Dragon Securities Corporation, which draws on Ministry of Information and Communications statistics, Vietnam's express mail and parcel industry generated revenue of VND 71,140 billion in 2024, with an average annual growth rate of 19.7 percent over the 2017–2024 period; the four leading domestic couriers alone held 46 percent of the market, while foreign-invested courier firms have continued to expand their networks and market share in Vietnam (VDSC, 2025) [10]. Against this backdrop, Vietnam Express Mail Service Corporation, commonly known under the EMS Vietnam brand, hereafter abbreviated as EMS, faces an urgent need to strengthen its competitive capacity in order to maintain and expand its market share, particularly in Hanoi, where competitive intensity and customer expectations for service quality are the highest in the country.

Within the branch's organizational structure, the Sales Department plays a pivotal role, directly prospecting for and acquiring customers, advising on delivery solutions, and maintaining relationships with corporate clients. The working capacity of staff in this department therefore has a direct bearing on the branch's business results and overall competitive position.

The topics of working capacity and competency frameworks have been extensively studied both in Vietnam and abroad. Spencer and Spencer (1993) [8] developed a classic competency framework in which competence is composed of three groups of components - knowledge, skill, and attitude - and also proposed a dedicated competency model for sales personnel based on an analysis of 650 job positions. In Vietnam, research on competency frameworks has continued to expand to various groups of workers, such as the study by Từ Thảo Hương Giang *et al*. (2021) [9] on a competency framework for researchers at public science and technology organizations, and the study by Nguyễn Thị Hạnh (2025) [4] on the relationship between cultural competence and the working capacity of workers in industrial parks. In the logistics field, Phan Thị Trâm Anh and Phạm Quốc

Hải (2025) [7] found that trainee attitude is the factor with the strongest influence on the effectiveness of human resource training at warehousing and logistics enterprises, thereby confirming the central role of the attitude component within the structure of working capacity.

Nevertheless, the studies cited above focus mainly on research staff, industrial workers, or warehousing and logistics employees in general, while comprehensive, in-depth studies on the working capacity of Sales Department staff specific to the express mail and courier industry in a particular locality such as Hanoi remain scarce. This is precisely the research gap that this paper seeks to fill.

Given this reality, the paper is carried out with the following objectives: To systematize the theoretical basis of working capacity and competency frameworks as applied to sales staff in the service industry; to synthesize, analyze, and evaluate the current state of the working capacity of Sales Department staff at the EMS Hanoi branch; and to propose feasible solutions for enhancing the working capacity of this staff. The research question raised is to what extent the branch's Sales Department staff currently meet the required competency standards, and what solutions the branch needs to implement to narrow that gap.

In academic terms, the paper contributes to the theoretical literature on working capacity in the express mail and courier service sector, a field that has so far received little systematic research attention in Vietnam. In practical terms, the paper carries direct significance for management. Its findings provide branch leaders with a basis for formulating training policy. The findings also support the development of a standardized competency framework for the sales staff position. On that basis, the branch has grounds for improving the quality of its workforce and strengthening its competitive capacity amid an increasingly fierce express mail market.

2. Theoretical Basis and Research Methods

2.1 Theoretical Basis

The concept of working capacity is grounded in the foundational work of McClelland (1973) [3], who argued that competence is a combination of personal characteristics causally related to job performance, rather than being determined solely by intelligence quotient or academic credentials. Building on this view, Boyatzis (1982) [1] defined competency as an underlying characteristic of an individual that leads to effective or superior job performance, encompassing motives, traits, skills, self-image, social role, and the body of knowledge used. Spencer and Spencer (1993) [8] further expanded the concept by decomposing competency into five components - motive, trait, self-concept or attitude, knowledge, and skill - in which knowledge and skill form the visible surface that is easy to observe, while motive and trait form the underlying core that determines behavior. For the purposes of this paper, working capacity is defined as the combination of knowledge, skill, and attitude that employees need in order to effectively carry out their assigned tasks; this approach closely follows the core components that are observable and measurable within a business environment, and is well suited to the secondary-data nature of desk research.

On this basis, the paper adopts the Knowledge-Skill-Attitude competency framework, hereafter abbreviated as the KSA framework, as its primary analytical framework. The KSA framework originates from the model of Spencer and Spencer (1993) [8], which was built on an empirical analysis of 650 job positions and includes a dedicated competency model for sales staff that emphasizes achievement orientation, the ability to exert influence, and relationship-building skills. In Vietnam, the KSA framework has also been applied to other groups of professional workers, as in the study by Từ Thảo Hương Giang *et al*. (2021) [9] on researchers at public science and technology organizations, demonstrating the adaptability of this framework across a variety of organizational contexts.

For Sales Department staff in the express mail service industry, the three competency components can be specified as follows. In terms of knowledge, staff need a thorough understanding of the service portfolio, operating procedures, and service quality commitments. In terms of skill, staff need customer care, contract negotiation, and situational problem-solving skills for issues arising during pickup and delivery. In terms of attitude, staff need a sense of responsibility, the ability to withstand pressure, and a customer service orientation. This set of competencies is consistent with the sales-staff competency model of Spencer and Spencer (1993) [8], adapted to reflect the operational characteristics of the express mail and courier industry.

Working capacity does not form spontaneously but is shaped by a range of organizational factors. Phan Thị Trâm Anh and Phạm Quốc Hải (2025) [7], studying warehousing and logistics enterprises, found that trainee attitude, instructor quality, learning motivation, training content, and managerial support are the factors that determine training effectiveness, thereby indirectly shaping working capacity. At the level of service enterprises, Nguyễn Thị Mạnh Thu (2026) [6] provides evidence that sustainable human resource management and the degree of technology application both have a statistically significant positive effect on managerial capacity, with technology application exerting a stronger effect in the short term. Drawing on the studies above, the paper identifies three groups of input factors that directly affect the working capacity of Sales Department staff: Training and development, compensation and motivation policy, and the degree of technology application.

2.2 Research Methods

The paper uses desk research as its primary method, through the synthesis, analysis, evaluation, and comparison of secondary data, without conducting any primary survey. Secondary data are drawn from three groups of sources: The branch's internal reports on staffing structure and business results; industry reports on express mail, courier, and e-commerce published by state management agencies and industry associations; and the domestic and international academic works cited in Section 2.1.

The data-processing procedure follows four steps. The synthesis step compiles data according to the three components of the KSA framework and the three groups of input factors identified above. The analysis step clarifies the concrete manifestation of each competency component in the Sales Department's operations. The evaluation step compares these manifestations against actual job requirements to identify strengths and limitations. The comparison step situates the results in relation to the general standards of the express mail industry in order to highlight the branch's distinctive features. The overall analytical framework is illustrated in Fig 1, which depicts the relationships among the group of input factors, the three

components of knowledge, skill, and attitude, and job performance outcomes.

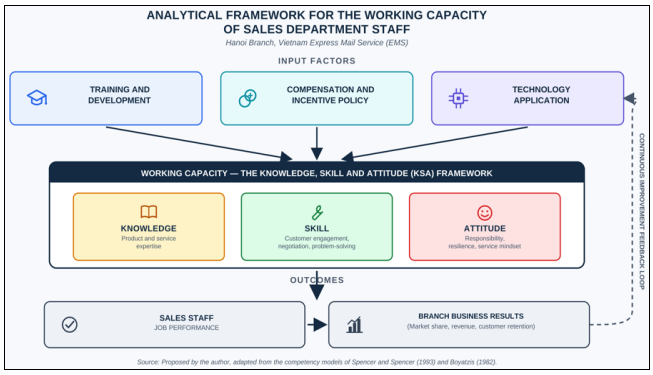

Fig 1: Analytical Framework for the Working Capacity of Sales Department Staff

This four-step approach ensures systematic consistency between the theoretical basis and the situational assessment presented in the following section, while limiting the risk of subjective inference that commonly arises when working with secondary data.

3. Current Situation of the Working Capacity of Sales Department Staff at the Hanoi Branch of Vietnam Express Mail Service Corporation

Vietnam Express Mail Service Corporation – Joint Stock Company, operating under the EMS Vietnam brand, was founded on 24 January 2005, officially commenced operations on 1 January 2006, and has been listed on the UPCoM market under the ticker EMS since 5 January 2018 (Vietstock, 2026) [11]. It is the sole entity in Vietnam authorized to operate the EMS express mail service, a global brand under the Universal Postal Union, with its head office in Hanoi and a network spanning three branches in Hanoi, Da Nang, and Ho Chi Minh City (Vietstock, 2026) [11]. Because it is located in the area with the country's leading e-commerce index, the Hanoi branch occupies a critical position within the Corporation's business system, and the branch's Sales Department is the frontline force that directly engages, advises, and maintains relationships with corporate customers.

There is currently no public report that disaggregates staffing data by individual branch or by Sales Department, so the situational analysis below is built on secondary data published at the level of the whole Corporation, particularly from the customer care function, whose role resembles that of sales staff in terms of direct customer contact. According to Nguyễn Thị Lan Anh (2023) [5], a staff member of the Corporation, the whole system employs nearly 2,400 workers, while the Customer Care Center has only 136 staff, equivalent to about 5.6 percent of the total workforce - a proportion the author describes as "not commensurate" with the Corporation's scale and pace of business growth. This is an important indicator of staffing pressure in frontline units, including the Sales Departments of the branches.

Viewed through the three components of the KSA framework presented in Section 2.1, the competency situation of the Corporation's frontline staff reveals the following specific features. In terms of knowledge, Nguyễn Thị Lan Anh (2023) [5] reports that one of the strategic objectives for 2022 was skills training and the development of case-based scenarios, while also noting that new complaint-handling staff "still lack professional proficiency" and require mentoring - indicating a persistent gap between job requirements and actual professional knowledge. In terms of skill, 2021 operating data recorded an average annual call-answer rate of 91.7 percent, ranging quarterly from 83.8 percent to 95.1 percent; at the same time, there were 299,615 complaints in the domestic market, of which 14,003 cases, or 4.67 percent, required compensation (Nguyễn Thị Lan Anh, 2023) [5]. These indicators reflect a fairly good level of skill in receiving customer requests, but complaint-handling and complex-situation skills remain areas for improvement. In terms of attitude, the frontline unit was noted as "showing signs of overload" due to rapidly growing business scale and service demand (Nguyễn Thị Lan Anh, 2023) [5], while Phan Thị Trâm Anh and Phạm Quốc Hải (2025) [7] found attitude to be the strongest factor influencing the effectiveness of human resource training in the logistics industry - indicating that the risk of declining service attitude, if workload pressure is left unmanaged, is one that sales staff must pay particular attention to.

Table 1: Summary Assessment of the Working Capacity of Frontline Staff at Vietnam Express Mail Service Corporation under the KSA Framework

Competency component	Specific requirement for sales staff	Secondary evidence / indicator	Level of attainment
Knowledge	Thorough understanding of freight tariffs, parcel safety regulations, and international delivery procedures	2022 strategic objective on professional training and case-scenario development; new complaint-handling staff still lack professional proficiency and require mentoring (Nguyễn Thị Lan Anh, 2023) [5]	Moderate; a gap remains relative to requirements, most evident among new staff
Skill	Customer care, negotiation, solution advisory, complaint handling	Average call-answer rate of 91.7% (2021); 299,615 domestic complaints, 4.67% requiring compensation (Nguyễn Thị Lan Anh, 2023) [5]	Fairly good at the intake stage; limited in handling complex situations
Attitude	Sense of responsibility, ability to withstand pressure, customer-service orientation	Frontline unit shows signs of overload (Nguyễn Thị Lan Anh, 2023) [5]; attitude is the strongest factor affecting logistics human resource training effectiveness (Phan Thị Trâm Anh & Phạm Quốc Hải, 2025) [7]	Fairly good but carries a risk of decline if pressure is left unmanaged

Note: As no public report yet disaggregates data by the Hanoi branch or by the Sales Department, the secondary evidence in Table 1 is compiled from Corporation-wide data. When finalizing statistics for submission, the author should cross-check and, where possible, supplement these indicators with the Hanoi branch's own internal reports to strengthen the specificity and reliability of the assessment.

Drawing on the analysis above, the strength of the sales staff at the Hanoi branch lies in the global brand reputation they inherit and the Corporation's exclusive domestic position in operating the EMS service. The notable limitations are a low proportion of frontline staff relative to business scale, uneven knowledge and skill in handling complex situations, and a growing workload that poses a risk to service attitude. The main causes lie in e-commerce growth and transaction volumes outpacing the rate of staffing expansion, together with professional training that has not yet been comprehensively standardized - consistent with the proposal to establish a dedicated training unit that Nguyễn Thị Lan Anh (2023) [5] put forward.

4. Solutions for Enhancing the Working Capacity of Sales Department Staff

Training and development: The branch should standardize its onboarding training program for new staff. Training content should focus on tariff procedures, parcel safety regulations, and complaint-handling skills. The mentoring mechanism should be formalized. Experienced staff should be assigned to directly guide new hires during their first three to six months. Every six months, the branch should conduct refresher training based on actual complaint cases that have arisen.

Recruitment and staffing: The branch should review the Sales Department's staffing establishment against actual transaction volume. The current proportion of frontline staff is low relative to the system-wide business scale. The branch should prioritize adding staff during e-commerce peak periods, especially at year-end. The job description for the sales staff position should clearly state the three competency groups of knowledge, skill, and attitude, to serve as the basis for recruitment and evaluation.

Compensation policy and motivation: The branch should link part of staff income to customer satisfaction indicators, not solely to sales revenue. A reasonable job-rotation or compensatory-leave mechanism helps reduce the risk of prolonged overload. Timely recognition for successfully handling complex complaints will reinforce a professional service attitude.

Technology application: The branch should equip sales staff with an online tool for looking up tariffs and shipping regulations. A centralized customer relationship management system would allow staff to track each customer's transaction and complaint history. Such a tool reduces the burden of manual memory work, thereby improving the speed and accuracy of customer advisory.

Standardized competency framework: The branch should issue an official set of knowledge, skill, and attitude competency standards for the sales staff position. This set of standards would provide a unified basis for recruitment, training, evaluation, and workforce planning. This also represents a branch-level step toward implementing the proposal to establish a dedicated training unit that Nguyễn Thị Lan Anh (2023) [5] put forward at the Corporation-wide level.

5. Conclusion

The working capacity of sales staff does not arise naturally. It is nurtured by appropriate training, policy, and technology. The Knowledge-Skill-Attitude framework makes it possible to see each piece of that capacity clearly. At the Hanoi branch, the picture that emerges is of a workforce with a solid brand foundation, yet still thin in frontline staffing and uneven in situational handling expertise.

This gap is not necessarily a fixed weakness. It can be regarded as room for improvement. Every investment in training, every reasonable compensation policy, every technology tool added all contribute to narrowing that gap.

In an industry where delivery speed is increasingly becoming a common standard, it is the person behind each piece of advice, each complaint resolved, that customers remember. The capacity of sales staff is therefore not merely an internal human resource matter. It is bound up with the competitive capacity of the entire branch.

This study stops at secondary data. Figures from field surveys conducted at the branch itself, in future research, will help sharpen this picture further. But the direction forward, even now, is already clear enough to begin.

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