



## **TRADER'S COMPETENCE IN THE INTERNATIONALIZATION OF PRODUCING AND EXPORTING AUTO PARTS VEHICLES COMPANY**

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### **ABSTRACT**

This research proposes an analysis about the capacity of the Trader on the internationalization of auto parts manufacturers and exporters. The goal of this study is to contribute to the knowledge and for the awareness of key managers of auto parts manufacturers and exporters, for the Automotive Aftermarket business, about the importance of hiring a qualified professional to manage this area. To that end, it was adopted a descriptive research of qualitative nature. By the end of this study, it is considered that the Trader must have deep theoretical knowledge of the subject and the skills to do good use of the tools and techniques of International Marketing. Moreover, he must convey honesty, seriousness, professionalism, adaptability, punctuality, reliability, quick mental acuity and contemplate knowledge on universal culture. The Trader must also have a global view of businesses, be creative, be able to speak foreign languages, have knowledge about the product to be traded, be knowledgeable about the target market, be available for constant trips and always be prepared to learn.



**Keywords:** Professional Capacity, Internationalization, Trader.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The figure of international seller, also known as Trader, emerges as an important ally in promoting medium and long terms trade links. According to Kalafatás (2008) it seems that when travelling to prospect new markets, the Trader will represent the company and Brazilian images in the foreign markets. Thus, his attitude should reveal evidence of honesty, integrity and professionalism.

Colaiácovo (1979) understands that the ability to negotiate is an attribute of an individual or a team. He also suggests that this ability can be developed through both formal training processes, which can include practical exercises of idealized operations, as well as with the practice in actual operations from day-to-day work.

Thus, it is understood that formal training can improve a Trader's negotiation skills, putting aside the concept that learning can only be obtained with practice. Colaiácovo (1979) also suggests that in an individual, there are some features like control, educated "aggressiveness" and the control of emotions, which can be "personality aspects that influence the ability to negotiate, pointing out people who have natural advantages or disadvantages to negotiate." (COLAIÁCOVO, 1979, p. 48).

Panosso (2000) comments about the attributes and the characteristics of the negotiators who are in full swing and already have experience, since this profile can be an enabler in decision-making in more consistent businesses and thus, fulfill the wishes of the parties involved. According to Minervini (2005), the profile of the professional exporter, being the manager of the export department, for example, should cover knowledge related to universal culture, in order to allow treatment with markets that may be significantly different, such as the Chinese and Venezuelan markets, the American and German as well as South African and Thai.

Other mentioned qualities refers to having a global view of the business; have the flexibility to handle the most different and unusual situations; be creative, to promote opportunities for new sales; to master foreign languages; know the product and markets; be willing to learn new and different topics and issues, among others (MINERVINI, 2005). The scope of this research is limited to South American countries in the last six years, as these markets are of vital strategic importance to



the company and together represents more than 95% of the volume of goods exported by this company.

It was at this time, when the Brazilian business units actually started to export and there was an exponential increase in the volume of international business with the countries of this continent.

As a problem to be studied, is to identify the competencies, abilities and skills needed for a foreign trade professional, in this case a Trader, acting in his field of activity and on these markets in a efficiently and effectively way, and the need of the company to adapt its business model to meet the relevant differences in international markets and therefore achieve the expected results.

Thus, the main target of this research was to reveal **the abilities and skills of the international trade area professional (Trader) so that he can act in a more active way in the internationalization of companies and therefore more professionally in the auto parts sector.**

The relevance of this study is justified due to the difficulties experienced by companies in recruiting suitable qualified professionals with adequate knowledge of the South American markets, especially in the auto parts replacement segment (Automotive Aftermarket), so that the internationalization process occurs in a satisfactory way and in accordance to the plans and targets set by the company.

This research wants to contribute to the knowledge and awareness of the main managers of producers and exporters of auto parts companies, to the Automotive Aftermarket, about the importance of hiring highly qualified professionals for the specific management of this area. It also seeks to identify what is the real importance of professional competency of the international trade area professional (Trader) so that it can act in a more active way in the internationalization of companies and an even more professional way in the auto parts sector.

This research is organized into six sections. Along with the introduction, section two, develops the theoretical framework on Trader's Competences and Strategies for Internationalization. Later, on section three, it draws up a brief description of the auto parts sector. Section four describes the methodological procedures. On section five, the results are presented and analyzed, and finally, the

section six provides the concluding remarks of this research and suggestions for future studies.

## **2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS**

In this section, are presented, the theoretical concepts related to a Trader's competences, abilities and skills in the formation of a foreign trade professional and strategies for internationalization.

### **2.1. Trader's competences in the formation of foreign trade professional**

According to Kalafatás (2008) it is clear that as we try to outline an ideal profile for the professional of export business, the requirements are physiological, technical and behavioral. The author believes that the foreign trade professionals must be constantly up to date with regard to the tendencies, because otherwise, their theoretical references would be lost in the complex environment of constant changes that is a striking feature of the international trade area. For this reason, Kalafatás (2008) highlighted the importance of using formal training to instill some skills inherent in the export and import business professional.

Colaiácovo (1979) explains that as far as the team is concerned, the ability to delegate tasks, screen the staff, lead and coordinate people is important requirements for the ability to negotiate. The dynamics of the group plays an important role in helping to develop these capabilities.

According to Kalafatás (2008), taking into consideration the various existing positions in an export department, usually defined by the size of the company, we have the export manager profile, it can usually match the international salesman / Trader.

Even from the point of view of Kalafatás (2008), note that the profile of an international salesman / Trader should combine negotiating skills, personal and intercultural characteristics.

The ideal profile [...] mix throughout: the energy of an Olympic runner, mental Einstein's agility, mastery of language as a teacher of foreign languages, the balance of a judge, the tact of a diplomat and the perseverance of a pyramid builder. (MINERVINI, 2005, p. 229).

Up to this moment note the relevance of each of these attributes in a Trader which already gives us an idea of the complexity of the issue treated in this research.



Le Boterf (2003) states that the international salesman's behavior refers to what he calls know how to be. Thus,

[...] it is clear that what is called, sometimes, 'behavioral skills' is increasingly important in a profession: the ability to listen, welcoming attitudes, their initiative, tenacity and self-confidence are qualities every increasingly required in professional situations. It is normal for a human resources policy seeks to obtain 'professional behavior' desired. Professionalism is not only a matter of know-how: it also pertains to learn to be. The knowledge is a result from a given situation. Knowledge is the result of interaction between a personality and a specific situation. (LE BOTERF, 2003, p. 125).

"The author proposes that the professional is truly competent, when he is able to put together internal and external resources in a troubled situation faced in his day to day activities." (KALAFATÁS, 2008, p. 21).

According to some North-American authors, the concept of competence refers to a set of knowledge, skills and attitudes that a professional possesses. These sets of knowledge are the stock of accumulated information that will provide the professional know-how and expertise why to do. The skills include technical knowledge, dexterity and know how to do. Attitudes concern the interest, determination and want to do (DURAND, 1999).

Le Boterf (2003, p. 11) states that "the economy of skills is not limited to the economy of knowledge, and skills are nothing without people. [...] the labor market will demand professionals who make use of his personality."

"Other internal resources should be mobilized in a professional problem situation." (KALAFATÁS, 2008, p. 40).

## **2.2. Strategies for Internationalization**

The world is in the era where the products are produced in one country, shipped to another - where additional processes may still finish the product. After ready they can be stored and / or sold in different countries, often repaired or reused, recycled or discharged (FERDOWS, 1997a).

To Jussani (2013, p. 41), "[...] for a company to be international it is necessary to have offices in several countries. However, for a company to be global you need: adaptation, understanding and multicultural sensitivity - spread across the whole company."

"International strategy is the one through which the company sells its products or services outside the sphere of their local market. One of the main reasons for implementing an international strategy is the potential that international markets have to generate new opportunities." (HITT et al., 2008, p. 211).

Levitt (1983) apud Kraus (2000, p. 6), "[...] the interest in the topic 'company's internationalization' has also grown internationally, driven by Levitt's (1983) arguing, regarding to the emerging emergence of global organizations that, in the author's opinion, it will replace the current Multinational Corporations, by delivering standardized products and sell them in the same way in the global market."

According to Kraus (2006, p. 27):

In the specialized literature, however there is no, solid theoretical structure on the internationalization process, or about the development of businesses internationally. The great majority of accredited authors conducted case studies, experience reports, or consulting work.

The lack of a solid theoretical structure is one of the major challenges for scholars. However, in an attempt to integrate knowledge in the area of international business, included Czinkota (1986), Sullivan (1996), Caves (1998), Toyne and Nigh (1997). These sought to organize the different pieces of the mosaic that were turned away by the difficulties of generalization, the work of most authors.

Deresky (2003, p. 206) describes globalization as "[...] a process by which a company gradually changes due to the international competition, saturation of domestic markets and the need for expansion, new markets and diversification."

Fleury (1999) apud Jussani (2009) states that the process of internationalization of leading companies from developed countries already have a long history. History tell us, that the first company to internationalize itself was the French Saint-Gobain in the XVIII century.

Jussani (2009, p. 34), says that:

Theories of internationalization process of companies can be divided into two distinct theoretical lines:

a) Economic theories talk about the internationalization process based on economic rationality and the optimal allocation of resources globally. One can mention as an example the model of Dunning (1993).

b) Behavioral theories tend to concentrate focus on subjective factors of decision-making overseas investment, assuming the process of internationalization as a gradual evolution in operating in global markets. One can mention as an example the model of Uppsala School. (JOHANSON; VAHLNE, 1990).

"In the specialized literature, many researchers have tried to understand the factors that drive a company to the international market. The qualities and managerial skills of the managers involved in decision making seem to be a strong key indicator." (KRAUS, 2006, p. 28).

To Czinkota and Ronkainen (1993, p. 247), "[...] success in the early stages, when the first export shipments take place, seem to be a motivating factor to take bigger steps toward a greater commitment.". According to these authors a strong academic background, combined to fluency in foreign languages are essential factors.

Leonidou and Katsikeas (1996, p. 519) agree with the arguments of Czinkota and Ronkainen (1993) and states that "[...] exporting is the first and decisive step to expand the internationalization process, or for the development of international business.". For them, there is a sequential learning process, such as: export, licensing, joint venture formation, or the holding of own investments in foreign territory.

Kamath et al. (1987, p. 405) mention four factors as predominant in the development of exports:

- 1) the quality of human resources both in management level, as the workforce on the factory floor;
- 2) a clear view of the corporative mission;
- 3) ability to set in motion the corporative strategy;
- 4) special attention to the details of export transactions (market-to-market, product-to-product, contract-to-contract, linked to the business).

In accordance to Kraus (2006, p. 29):

In specialized literature, it is also clear that, when passing the exporting process to stages of greater commitment, the Brazilian company, or foreign, assume long-term risks, and, for example, after installing a subsidiary abroad, these ties are difficult to be undone. In exports, on the other hand, the company can come back and withdraw from a market with a volume of reduced costs involved in that decision.

As for the factors used by producers of auto parts companies, to choose the target market for the initiation and development of their exports, and there is some agreement in the literature. Cooper and Kleinschmidt (1985) point to a trend among producers and exporters to seek initially geographically or culturally close markets.

In the initial stage of exports, "The company carries out scarce export transactions, and can decide between a higher degree of involvement in the international market or not" (LEONIDOU; KATSIKEAS, 1996, p. 524).

To Leonidou and Katsikeas (1996, p. 525), "[...] the companies classified as belonging to the advanced stage are those that often export and acquire on these activities, experience in several markets."

Leonidou and Katsikeas (1996) developed their own classification and has some advantages over other classifications, because in this way, any producer of goods, exporters or not, can be classified. This model covers from the apparently not interested companies in foreign trade and focused only on the domestic market, even those fully engaged and committed to international export operations.

### **3. AUTO PARTS SECTOR CHARACTERIZATION AND EXPORT TO SOUTH AMERICAN AFTERMARKET**

According to Santos and Pinhão (2000, p. 72):

The auto parts industry has responded to many challenges to meet automakers, which, pressed by growing worldwide competition, pass on the pressure to their suppliers. Internal programs to reduce costs, productivity increase and earnings and margin gains are large companies' common practices, as well as implementation of joint ventures and acquisitions to expand the product range and geographic coverage.

Santos e Pinhão (2000) states that the consequences of the changes placed in practice in the domestic auto industry were significant on the auto parts sector, which consist of heterogeneous companies in terms of technological expertise, management and quality and productivity standards.

Large Brazilian auto parts companies located in the country came under pressure to build capacity in order to remain suppliers to the automakers. Thus, there was a high level of investments in this sector, as well as the search for associations, mergers and technological agreements (SANTOS; PINHÃO, 2000).

For Santos and Pinhão (2000, p. 80), "[...] to meet the new production automakers concepts, it was found not only the entry but also the strengthening of global manufacturers. Several were already present, but are extending their lines of action and consolidating its position in the new spaces [...]"

Also according to Santos and Pinhão (2000, p. 80):

Accordingly, we have put in place in the country previously announced strategies of automakers in reducing the number of suppliers, to modularization, reducing the number of manufactured components and operation with a few key suppliers participating in the vehicle development. At the same time, they observe the internationalization of manufacturers and the use of common platforms in Mercosur.

There were no academic studies addressing this specific issue. Even so, it is worth highlighting the importance of this market for Brazilian and multinational companies, auto parts manufacturers, operating in Brazil. For many of these companies, this market has been explored for several years; but is still far from its peak; and represents an important part of its operating and financial results. It is a market with great growth potential. It can be said that there are several advantages and facilities for a company to act and expand its business in these markets.

Among the thirteen countries that make up South America, excepting Brazil, nine of them have very interesting auto spare parts markets to local manufacturers. They are, in alphabetical order: Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay and Venezuela. It can be pointed out among the commented above facilities: the similarity of the current car park compared to the Brazilian fleet; similar cultural environment, geographical proximity and customs benefits.

#### **4. METHODOLOGICAL PROCEDURES**

For this study a descriptive qualitative research was adopted. As for the method of qualitative research, some types and data collection and analysis strategies can be adopted. Godoy (1995b, p. 21) states that "[...] the qualitative approach offers three different possibilities of carrying out a research: documental research, case study and the ethnography."

##### **4.1. Kind of research**

Gil (2008) classifies the research into three big groups: exploratory, descriptive and explanatory. Descriptive researches have as main target, as its name implies, describe characteristics of a given population or phenomenon or, else, the establishment of relationships among variables. Using standard techniques of data collection is one of its most highlighted characteristics.

##### **4.2. Data collection instrument and the research's subject**

For Godoy (1995), the data obtained in researches can appear as: the transcription of interviews, field notes, photographs, videos, drawings and various other types of documents. With the aim of a broad understanding of the phenomenon being studied, all reality data are important and should not be

disregarded. All aspects, how people and the environment where they are inserted must be viewed holistically, so, not being reduced to variables, but seen as a whole.

Data collection occurred through semi-structured interviews in order to capture the opinion of international business industry executives about their perception regarding the proper skills of the trader who acts on producers and exporters auto parts companies.

The interviews were conducted individually with executives of several companies that have relevant experience in foreign trade and international logistics in the automotive industry. The same occurred between June and July of 2014 and were recorded with the agreement of each of the participants. Then the content of the recordings were transcribed for facilitating data analysis.

Note that respondents were previously informed that it was an academic research only, in order to understand the perception of each one about this matter and that all data, concerning both the company and the participants as well, would be kept under secrecy.

The respondents work in the Foreign Trade area in a solid and relevant way and most of them with tradition and experience in the auto parts / automotive sector (Table 1).

Table 1: Profile of respondents.

<b>Respondents</b>	<b>Graduation</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>Time in that function</b>	<b>Time in the company</b>	<b>Time performing in foreign trade</b>
Respondent 1 (E1)	Graduation in Administration	Foreign Trade Manager	More than 10 years	More than 10 years	More than 10 years
Respondent 2 (E2)	Pos Graduation in International Marketing	Managing Partner	More than 10 years	More than 10 years	More than 10 years
Respondent 3 (E3)	Graduation in Administration with emphasis in Foreign Trade	Export Sales Analyst	Up to 5 years	Up to 5 years	Up to 5 years
Respondent 4 (E4)	Pos Graduation in Logistics Management	Logistic Manager	Up to 5 years	Between 6 and 10 years	Between 6 and 10 years

#### **4.3. Data processing**

Merriam (2002) explains that the data gathered through interviews should be analyzed to detect patterns or commonalities. Finally, the results should be presented and correlated with theoretical work.

Miles and Huberman (1994) apud Gil (2008) suggest three steps for data analysis: reduction, display and conclusion/verification. The presentation, which is relevant at this point, should organize the collected and selected data so to be possible to create a systematic analysis of the differences and similarities of their interrelationship as well.

#### **4.4. Delimitation of the study**

This study considered cases of national and foreign companies, producers and exporters of auto parts to international markets and located in Brazil. In summary, it was especially considered the reports of some of its employees and executives who have direct involvement in the foreign trade area and some relevance regarding the work and functions of a Trader.

#### **4.5. Limitation of the method**

According to Vergara (2009), the data collection process, which is accomplished through interviews, has some peculiar limitations. Here are some highlighted examples of these possibilities: difficulty in communication between the researcher and the respondent; the available time for the interviews; the possibility that the respondent withholds or distort data and information; presenting partial truths or even lie.

Therefore, the results obtained from interviews should be excluded due to the limitations of this kind of approach (VERGARA, 2010).

### **5. PRESENTATIONS AND ANALYSIS OF RESULTS**

In this section it was presented and analyzed the data and results obtained in field research.

## **5.1. Competence of Trader**

The foreign trade professionals must have extensive knowledge to properly perform their functions. Considering the function of the Trader as extremely important for the internationalization of Brazilian companies, according to E1:

[...] this professional carries the virtues and faults of the Brazilian industry. Therefore, many of the strengths or weaknesses of a Brazilian Trader, are the reflexes of the company he represents, and for being in Brazil, they suffer from many typical vicissitudes of our country [...]

They often must know foreign languages and have some knowledge about the general aspects of the culture of the country with whom they are negotiating, such as: customs, habits, tastes, symbols, religions, laws, legislations, among others (KEEDI, 2004).

To this topic the respondents reported:

If the company is in a hurry to get results in the Foreign Trade area, the best solution is to hire a Trader with experience in company line of business. If, however, this hurry is not a major factor, it can "create" your own Trader from any employee who already knows very well its range of products manufactured by the company or someone from the import area, and since he has the right profile to be a salesman, highlighting: flippancy, command of English and Spanish languages. The process is lengthy, but the contact with the professional associations is important, as well participating in fairs and exhibitions in Brazil and internationally. Of course, a foreign trade graduation will be of capital importance for the Trader to meet, at least the practices and the laws governing the export sales. (Stretch of interview with E1).

Companies should invest in competence providing language courses, courses in the area of trade marketing, economics and trends broadening the strategic vision, maximizing sales and having better knowledge of the several markets and their particularities (economic, political and cultural). Currently, the companies do not invest in professionals of this area, because they hope that they already have this knowledge when hired (basic requirement). (Stretch of interview with E3).

Forms of competence can vary from training in specialized companies, seminars, workshops, benchmarking with companies of other sectors and also travels abroad to contact customers and suppliers, up to a more technical competence and qualifying as a specific Post Graduation. (Stretch of interview with E4).

## **5.2. Strengths and weaknesses of the Brazilian Trader**

There were no scholarly work or research on this query in particular, however, with the reports described below; it is possible to have a reasonable understanding of some of the potential strengths and weaknesses of the Brazilian Trader.

With the above, follow the impressions of respondents:

A good Trader first of all, has to know well the products produced by his factory, its applications in the international motor vehicles, in the case of Aftermarket business. Participation in block, of several auto parts industries in international trade fairs, often draw attention and facilitate foreign buyers' visits and the exchange of information among exhibitors about a particular customer, Also, many Traders usually have local sales representatives, which enhances contacts and the "follow-ups". As weaknesses of the Brazilian Trader, I mention the difficulty of complying with the deadlines agreed with the customer, and also the difficulty of maintaining prices at medium and long terms, since the exchange rate variation is a factor that is out the control of the companies, but it has a direct impact on revenues. Also mention as a deficiency of the Brazilian Trader, which of course reflects the deficiency of his Brazilian industry of auto parts, the low capacity to develop and produce exclusive pieces to overseas markets, due to the long lead times for development and due to tooling costs. Thus, the product range offered by the Brazilian auto parts industries often is very limited, contrary to what the Eastern and even the Italians do. (Stretch of interview with E1).

I believe that the strengths of the Brazilian Trader are: good relationships, empathy and flexibility. Their weaknesses, according to my understanding are: lack of punctuality; change of opinions and delay in information. (Stretch of interview with E2).

The weaknesses of the Brazilian Trader in the auto parts sector are: lack of monitoring of new market trends (lack of update / market study by the professional); threat of new entrants (lack of knowledge of potential new competitors); threat of new products / services (lack of vision to expand the product range and meeting trends / demand of a specific country), and bargaining power among suppliers - buyers (lack of feedback to the Purchasing Department in relation to the market prices changing that can endear the product, resulting in lost sales and directly affecting the sector). On strengths, I can mention: search for knowledge / update by the professional side; professional hospitality with the customers; flexibility in the negotiations and be facing different cultures, people, policies and economics, making the professional rich in knowledge / experience. (Stretch of interview with E3).

I think the Trader's strengths are: empirical knowledge; knowledge gained from Brokers, Customers and Logistic Operators. On the other hand, I believe that the Trader has some weaknesses, such as: difficulty in interpretation of legislation and lack of knowledge of foreign markets. (Stretch of interview with E4).

### **5.3. Characteristics of a Brazilian Trader**

Martinelli and Almeida (1998, p. 44) understands that "[...] children are always considered excellent negotiators, due to the following factors: are persistent, do not know the meaning of the word no. But they know that the word no often means perhaps; they never get embarrassed, always have a ready answer to every situation; and often they read the adults better than those read them."

To this topic the respondents reported:

Investment in their own human capital, through exchange in international markets, understanding the culture and habits of every continent. (Stretch of interview with E2).

The famous 'Brazilian way' devalues in any way the Brazilian professional in front of negotiations. The Trader could show him more serious, have more focus and honor with the established deadlines in the negotiations to ensure the trust of customers and establish new partnerships. (Stretch of interview with E3).

Deepen knowledge on the rights offered by the tax legislation, increase knowledge in tax benefits that can be obtained with the countries of potential customers, knowledge of the market potential in countries with large automotive fleet, explore the diversity of fleets in the countries of customers. (Stretch of interview with E4).

#### **5.4. Capabilities for the Trader formation**

Grostein (2006) reports that someone who wishes to become and act as a Trader, must invest in his technical-professional training, seeking formal courses, at the graduate level and subsequently post-graduation in the international trade area; plus learn languages, but also should not ignore their knowledge about the history, culture, customs and traditions of different countries and peoples where he will act.

In this question, respondents answered:

The Trader of auto parts, besides knowing very well the product of his industry, has to know the products of his competitors. He also has to know the rules of international trade, thus a degree in Foreign Trade is desirable. The command of the English and Spanish languages is absolutely necessary. It is important to attend meetings and lectures promoted by classes of entities, to exchange experiences. It is very important that the trader can stitch within his company, the real desire of foreign trade because often, his efforts cannot find resonance in other departments of the industry, notably engineering, production, expedition, even in the financial department. (Stretch of interview with E1).

Graduation course, specific training for the area of operation and mainly the command of foreign languages. (Stretch of interview with E2).

To join the foreign trade area, as a Trader, the professional must first seek a degree in Foreign Trade and / or International Relationships. For this function it is essential to attend and master any languages, preferably English and Spanish. After some years of experience, for a more strategic position, the trader must have international experience and attend an MBA course in Marketing and / or International Economics. Updating courses and internal training (SAP, Product Range, and Leadership), are essential to making the professional more and more qualified and able to take on bigger positions. (Stretch of interview with E3).

Knowledge on international law and international trade relations. Training abroad, Graduation in specific area and experience abroad. (Stretch of interview with E4).

#### **5.5. Trader Natural skills**

Fisher and Ertel (1997) apud Saavedra and Santos (2007, p. 106),

An ideal negotiator is firm, friendly and creative. States that in order to have an efficient negotiation, every negotiator must have the following skills: generate effective communication, create good relationships, find out the interest of the other part, prepare the several possible agreements, convince

the other part that he is being treated with justice, define what are the options for the agreement and reach the final compromise.

For the respondents:

It is required from the Trader, many skills, either being natural or acquired. The first of these skills is to enjoy what he does professionally and in addition easiness of communication, often in a foreign language. It is also required from the Trader, the ability to travel often lonely for a long period, without affecting his ability to work. He will have to be organized with the account of travel expenses, because it is generally required to report these expenses after the trip. He must have his own initiative, because he will not have at his side a "boss" all the time, saying what to do. (Stretch of interview with E1).

Empathize. Really know the customer's needs and what he wants from your company. (Stretch of interview with E2).

Communication, good personal presentation, charisma, initiative, focus on the customer and passion for sales. (Stretch of interview with E3).

The Trader also has to have fluency in a foreign language; cross-cultural knowledge; skillfulness in negotiations (purchases and sales) and deep knowledge about the products being traded. (Stretch of interview with E4).

## 5.6. Posture of a Trader

Lewicki and Hiam (2003) apud Dias (2008) reports that:

Each trader reacts differently in conflicting situations. Some defend with tooth and nail in a typical fight reaction. There are those who make concessions and are in the middle ground between fight and escape. Finally, there are those who want to seek creative collaborations in the effort to transform conflicts into cooperation and problems solving. Knowing how a person reacts, provides some predictability on the way of negotiating, unless he learns how to use in a contingent way the trading styles. Knowledge of negotiator types contributes to better understand the emotional reactions to conflict of each part, to gain objectivity and so the negotiator can self-manage on the reactions and answers to the other.

Therefore respondents commented:

Each market has typical habits and requirements. For example, in Latin America, as a rule, the customer always asks in which hotel you are staying. Therefore, it is always advisable to stay in a hotel that offers a good image because the Trader is representing an important auto parts industry. I've seen Traders who were staying in a third-class hotels and this, as a rule, caused bad impression to customers. Generally they were Traders that 'earned on a daily basis' and used this expedient, to make 'some extra money.' It is important, therefore, to cause good impressions to the customers. Another interesting habit is that in Latin America there is a great tendency to be invited from a customer to have lunch or dinner. You need to know the local habits, as well as typical food, not to be surprised or commit some 'gaffe'. For example, Mexicans usually have lunch around 15hs and if the Trader did not know that, he can become stressed by not leaving toward the restaurant at 12pm. The food there is also very different from ours, many things based on corn and quite spicy, which can easily result in a stomach disorder. Americans do not use to ask about hotels and invitations to lunch, usually has to come from the Trader part. To the Eastern people, especially the Japanese, punctuality is a determining factor. And note that when it talks about punctuality, is not to arrive half an hour before the scheduled time, you get five minutes before. Arrive very early, it is also considered lateness.

You have to know the habits and know how to interpret the answers. For example, a 'maybe', said in Japanese certainly means a negative answer. (Stretch of interview with E1).

First like what he does. Later know how to represent your company, knowing how to sell the product and especially know the habits and customs of their country. (Stretch of interview with E2).

Charisma; seriousness; punctuality; sales expertise and command of foreign languages; good presentation; hospitality; flexibility and focus are key features for good representation of the Trader in the international market. (Stretch of interview with E3).

Regarding professional attitude, I would point: ethics; moral; objectivity; reliability; focus and concentration, and with respect to personal posture highlight: politeness; seriousness; honesty; the integrity and keen insight on analysis of people. (Stretch of interview with E4).

## **6. CONCLUSIONS**

The starting point for any closing remarks was the analysis about the competence of the Trader in the internationalization of producers and exporters of auto parts, in other words, discover and understand what the requirements and skills that professionals of the Foreign Trade area must have or get to work in the function of International Trader and get satisfactory results.

The purpose of this research sought to contribute to the knowledge and awareness of the main managers of producers and exporters of auto parts companies, to the Aftermarket, about the importance of hiring a highly qualified professional for the specific management of this area. It also sought to identify what is the real importance of the professional competency of international trade area (Trader) so that he can act in a more active way in the internationalization of companies and an even more professional way in the auto parts sector.

For this work, a descriptive qualitative research was adopted, with the collection of data and then the analyses of it. As a result of this study, in a generic way, we can attest that it has been identified, besides the proper formal training specific to the area; the professional in question must also have innate abilities to be a high profile and proven excellence Trader.

Thus it is considered that for the professional in question, the Trader, get full success in his export sales activities to replacement markets (Aftermarket) of South American countries, is not enough to have a deep theoretical knowledge about the subject and the needed skills to make good use of the tools and techniques of international marketing. It is also essential that this professional, who represents the

export company, transmit honesty; seriousness and professionalism, as well as being flexible; reliable; be prepared to perform their tasks; have quick mental processing and even contemplate knowledge related to universal cultural. Other suggested and needed features to this professional are: have a global view of the business; have flexibility to handle the most different and unusual situations; be creative to promote sales opportunities; to be able to speak foreign languages; know about the product to be traded and also about the target market; show willingness to travel, be prepared to learn, among others. He also should not ignore that some skills can be developed through a formal training process. The use of formal training can help instill some skills inherent to the international seller. It is also suggested that certain individuals may have natural advantages or disadvantages for negotiations, observing if that individual has features like domination, polite aggression and control over its emotions.

To continue on this line of research, it is suggested to deepen the research on natural and instinctive skills of a professional who acts as International Trader, to try to understand and try to maximize their potential for human and personal interrelationship (Relationship Marketing) and thereby, increase their capacity to perform and development of new businesses and keeping the existing business. Coupled with this, it would also be interesting to work in the research on the improvement of learning the universal culture of the countries and peoples where they intend to do business.

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