THE IMPACT OF CUSTOMER FEEDBACK ON SALES AND SERVICE PERFORMANCE: STRATEGIES FOR CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT WITH REFERENCE TO HARSHA TOYOTA

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ABSTRACT

A **sale** is the pinnacle activity involved in selling products or services in return for money or other compensation. It is an act of completion of a commercial activity. A sale is completed by the seller or the provider of the goods or services to an acquisition or appropriation or request followed by the passing of title (property or ownership) in the item and the application and due settlement of a price, the obligation for which arises due to the seller's requirement to pass ownership, being a price he is happy to part with ownership of or any claim upon the item. The purchaser, though a party to the sale, does not execute the sale, only the seller does that. To be precise the sale completes prior to the payment and gives rise to the obligation of payment. If the seller completes the first two above stages (consent and passing ownership) of the sale prior to settlement of the price, the sale is still valid and gives rise to an obligation to pay.

I. INTRODUCTION

Customer service is the provision of service to customers before, during and after a purchase.

According to Jamier L. Scott. (2002), "Customer service is a series of activities designed to enhance the level of customer satisfaction – that is, the feeling that a product or service has met the customer expectation."

Its importance varies by product, industry and customer; defective or broken merchandise can be exchanged, often only with a receipt and within a specified time frame. Retail stores will often have a desk or counter devoted to dealing with returns, exchanges and complaints, or will perform related functions at the point of sale.

Customer service may be provided by a person (e.g., sales and service representative), or by automated means called self-service. Examples of self service are Internet sites. However, In the Internet era, a challenge has been to maintain and/or enhance the personal experience while making use of the efficiencies of online commerce. Writing in Fast Company, entrepreneur and customer systems innovator

Micah Solomon has made the point that "Online customers are literally invisible to you (and you to them), so it's easy to shortchange them emotionally. But this lack of visual and tactile presence makes it even more crucial to create a sense of personal, human-to-human connection in the online arena."

Customer service is normally an integral part of a company's customer value proposition. In their book *Rules to Break and Laws to Follow*, Don Peppers and Martha Rogers, Ph.D. write that "customers have memories. They will remember you, whether you remember them or not." Further, "customer trust can be destroyed at once by a major service problem, or it can be undermined one day at a time, with a thousand small demonstrations of incompetence."

From the point of view of an overall sales process engineering effort, customer service plays an important role in an organization's ability to generate income and revenue. From that perspective, customer service should be included as part of an overall approach to systematic improvement.

Some have argued that the quality and level of customer service has decreased in recent years, and that this can be attributed to a lack of support or understanding at the executive and middle management levels of a corporation and/or a customer service policy.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

To study and understand the key service parameters using Customer Satisfaction and reflect upon the low performing areas.

- To study about the customer satisfaction on the services provided by the dealers.
- To study the opinion of the customers regarding the availability and cost of spare parts.
- To study the opinion of the owners of cars regarding its features like mileage, price etc.
- To study the effect of advertisement on the customers to promote the product.
- To study the customer satisfaction with usage of their products.
- To study the information resources that the customer using before purchasing the products

II. CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

AN INSIGHT

According to Harold E Edmondson " Customer Satisfaction" seems to appear in print more frequently than any other catch phrase used to describe a new found magic for industrial success. Before we proceed in to the study of the dynamics of Customer Satisfaction it is important to know about, who a customer is and what satisfaction really means.

Who really is a Customer?

The question of defining who your customers are seems fairly easy particularly if you have segmented your market properly and understand who you are trying to satisfy. However subtlety that frequently goes undetected by many firms is that is that customer set can be divided into two parts, the apparent customer and the user. The apparent customer is the person or group of people who decide what product to buy and basically have control over the purse strings. The user is a person or group who physically uses the product or is the direct recipient of a service.

What does satisfaction really mean?

As in defining customer above, defining satisfaction also appears simple. However as with customer there is a subtlety that needs addressing. Satisfaction by most definitions simply means meeting the customer's requirement.

Customer satisfaction is a concept that more and more companies are putting at the heart of their strategy, but for this to be successful they're needs to be clarity about, what customer satisfaction means and what needs to happen to drive improvement. Without this, there is a risk that customer satisfaction becomes little more than a good intention, with confused objectives failing to address the real issues for customers,

one helpful way to look at the problem is to rephrase the objectives: set the sights on helping the customers meet their goals.

Customer satisfaction can be defined in many different ways. Finding the right way for a company depends on understanding your customer and on having a clear vision of the role that customer satisfaction is to play in the strategy. For example, a focus on customer satisfaction can work alongside existing segmentations to support revenue generation from high value customers or it can be a company-wide objective rooted in the brand values. For the former, it may be sufficient to focus on improving customer service, but for the latter a broader definition of customer satisfaction is necessary, closer akin to corporate reputation.

Whatever the strategy for customer satisfaction, it must at least include getting the basics right. Failing to achieve this can destroy the reputation as well as losing valuable customers. Every customer, regardless of their economic worth to the business, has the power to influence – positively or negatively – a company's reputation. Once the objectives for the customer satisfaction strategy are defined there are a number of steps we can take to make sure the focus on customer satisfaction is effective.

The sales and marketing relationship

Marketing and sales are very different, but have the same goal. Marketing improves the selling environment and plays a very important role in sales. If the marketing department generates a potential customers list, it can be beneficial for sales. The marketing department's goal is to increase the number of interactions between potential customers and company, which includes the sales team using promotional techniques such as advertising, sales promotion, publicity, and public relations, creating new sales channels, or creating new products (new product development), among other things. It also includes bringing the potential customer to the company's website for more information, or to contact the company for more information, or interact with the company via social media such as Twitter, Facebook, a blog, etc.

The relatively new field of sales process engineering views "sales" as the output of a larger system, not just that of one department. The larger system includes many functional areas within an organization. From this perspective, sales and marketing (among others, such as customer service) are labels for a number of processes whose inputs and outputs supply one another to varying degrees. Considered in this way, to improve the "output" (namely, sales) the broader sales process needs to be studied and improved as would any system, since the component functional areas interact and are interdependent.

In most large corporations, the marketing department is structured in a similar fashion to the sales department and the managers of these teams must coordinate efforts in order to drive profits and business success. For example, an "inbound" focused campaign seeks to drive more customers "through the door" giving the sales department a better chance of selling their product to the consumer. A good marketing program would address any potential downsides as well.

The Sales department's goal would be to improve the interaction between the customer and the sales facility or mechanism (example, web site) and/or salesperson. Sales management would break down the selling process and then increase the effectiveness of the discrete processes as well as the interaction between processes. For example, in many out-bound sales environments, the typical process is out bound calling, the sales pitch, handling objections, opportunity identification, and the close. Each step of the process has sales-related issues, skills, and training needs as well as marketing solutions to improve each discrete step, as well as the whole process.

One further common complication of marketing involves the inability to measure results for a great deal of marketing initiatives. In essence, many marketing and advertising executives often lose sight of the objective of sales/revenue/profit, as they focus on establishing a creative/innovative program, without concern for the top or bottom lines. Such is a fundamental pitfall of marketing for marketing's sake.

Many companies find it challenging to get marketing and sales on the same page. Both departments are different in nature, but handle very similar concepts and have to work together for sales to be successful. Building a good relationship between the two that encourages communication can be the key to success even in a down economy.

Marketing potentially negates need for sales

Some sales authors and consultants contend that an expertly planned and executed marketing strategy may negate the need for outside sales entirely. They suggest that by effectively bringing more customers "through the door" and enticing them to contact you, sales organizations can dramatically improve their results, efficiency, profitability, and allow salespeople to provide a drastically higher level of customer service and satisfaction, instead of spending the majority of their working hours searching for someone to sell to. While this theory is present in a few marketing consulting companies the practical and realistic application of this principle has not been widely proven in the market and sales forces worldwide continue to be responsible for developing business as well as closing it.

Some marketing consulting firms postulate that each selling opportunity at each enterprise lies on a continuum of numbers of people involved, necessary degree of face-to-face interaction, overhead, and through-put time, to name a few dimensions. The number of people involved in actual face-to-face selling at, say, a clothing store is probably vastly different from that at an on-line book-seller.

In reality, marketing and sales are complementary, and do not negate each other's purpose or presence. Marketing is a field/process designed to ascertain what consumers want/value, and accordingly manufacture such goods/services. Marketing is a process founded on the premise that consumers are king , and thus developing a long-term relationship with them is key to organisational survival. This is important, considering the fact that a market economy is demand-led. In contemporary firms, sales is often the end-point in the marketing process, after the determining of consumer needs, marketing planning, marketing strategy, marketing research, market segmentation, etc. have been executed.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Date Sources:

Primary Data:

The data is collected directly from each and every customer.

Pilot Survey

A pilot survey was conducted to understand the factors, which would positively influence the customer. Personal Interviews totaling 20 were conducted for the sales team, potential customers and the existing customers of company. The factors scoring high in the interviews were considered to be the key deliverables.
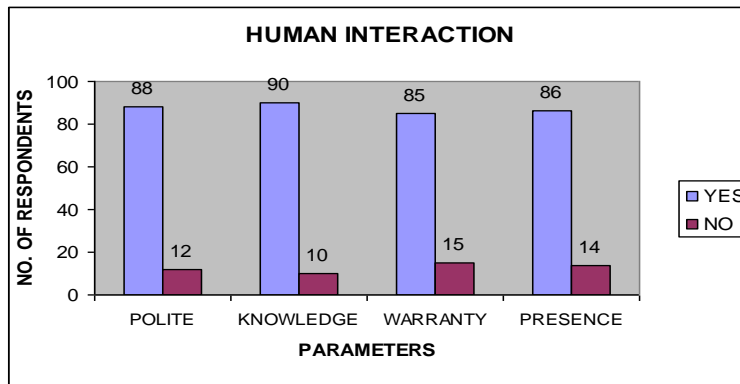
Survey Research:

The research was done to learn about people's preferences and satisfaction of the company customer.

IV. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Table-1

SNO	OPINION	POLITE	KNOWLEDGE	WARRANTY	PRESENCE
1	YES	88	90	85	86
2	NO	12	10	15	14
3	TOTAL	100	100	100	100

Human Interaction

Inferences

The graph clarity indicates that approximately 90% of the customers are positive about the human interaction at the showroom.

Interpretation

The personnel score a high 93% (approx.) in being courteous, polite, knowledgeable and communicating the warranty and schedule but there is a slight decrease in the attention provided at the time of delivery, which is area to concentrate. Nevertheless, the overall human interaction is above the acceptable levels.

Table-2

Product Information

| SNO	OPINION	AVAILABILITY	KNOWLEDGE	TEST DRIVE
1	YES	88	86	88
2	NO	12	14	12
3	TOTAL	100	100	100
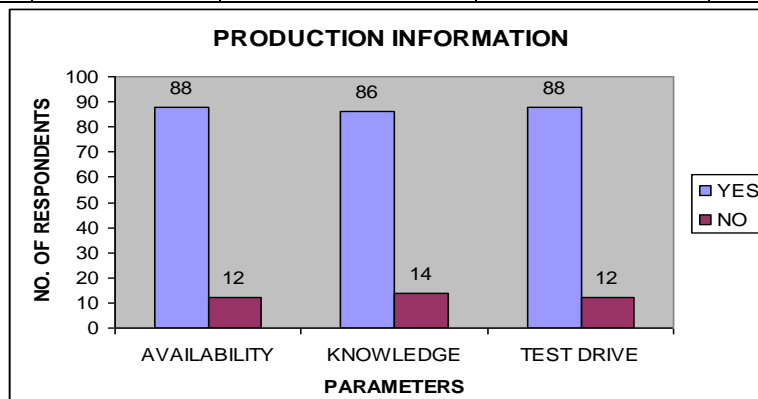
Inferences

The graph shows that the brochures, leaflets and price list are readily available. Approx. 85% of the customers agree that the sales consultant was knowledgeable and was adept in handling the queries of the customers. And almost every customer was offered a test drive (96%).

Interpretation

The showroom scores high in providing the relevant product information and is leaving no stone unturned to provide the specific information needs of the customers. This also reflects that the customer cars personnel are well- equipped with the product information.At most cars has been taken to ensure that the customers are provided with the product information

Table-3
Time & Promptness

SNO	OPINION	FAST PROCESSING AT ORDER	DELIVERY AT PROMISED	FAST PROCESSING AT DELIVERY
1	YES	90	88	92
2	NO	10	12	08
3	TOTAL	100	100	100
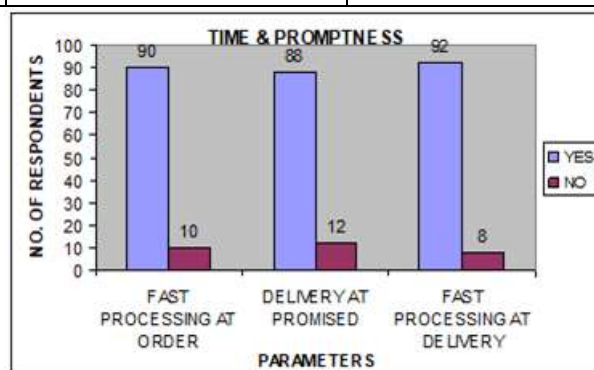
Inferences

84% of customers have responded positively about the work being bikeried out quickly. 25% of the customers are unhappy about the promptness in the delivery of the vehicle. Approximately 75% of the customers feel that the processing was fast.

V. **FINDINGS**

- Toyota Motors Pvt. Ltd enjoys a high patronage from its customers.
- Most of the customers had a good experience of shopping at Toyota Motors Pvt. Ltd.
- The satisfaction levels can also measured
  with the level of recommendations to friends and associates; It is evident that more than 80% customers are satisfied with the service offered at Toyota Motors Pvt. Ltd.
- The probability that the customers would repeat that purchase at the same showroom is high, which is a good sign.
- The sale satisfaction index of Toyota Motors Pvt. Ltd showroom is 8.4 on scale of ten which is exceptionally good; the showroom should persist on high levels of commitment to maintain the good image it has created. The industry SSI (2003) is 104 out of 126 according to power Asia pacific. And Toyota Motors Pvt. Ltd scores 105 out of 125.

SUGGESTIONS

In the interview it was found that the customers are happy about the training programs under taken by the showroom, which train the customers to negotiate miner breakdowns comfortably. It has been observed that 25% of customers have reported a slack in the delivery process. This is the only area of concern that has emerged from the city.

1. Company should give some incentives to the dealers for promoting the products of TOYOTA Motors. They should not neglect dealers. They should select good dealers, b which they can give customer satisfaction.

2. Company should setup service centers at dealer level itself. They should train some personnel for exclusive maintenance of these Televisions. They should provide home service to the customers. The personnel should be appointed by company to the dealers. The service should be accurate.

3. Enough spare parts for the latest models should be stocked, so as to meet sudden break down calls. To enable the customers to get in touch with the service personal more easily, the number of direct phones should be increase or provide the toll free number.

4. Periodically, review meetings with the customers in different areas should be convinced, to have a general consensus regarding problems being faced by them.

VI. CONCLUSION

from project conclude that promotion of any service can be successfully executed by creating awareness through word of mouth and by maintaining the service according to Advertising and Sales Promotional Activities. Study was useful in understanding the customer relationship among a various customers launching new formulations can make **company** to the pioneer in many market segments.

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