

TECHNIQUES OF RETAIL SALESMANSHIP : BE FUTURE READY

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Abstract :

Retail industry being transformed by a range of forces—including globalisation and new forms of competition; growth of online sales and changing consumer preferences. The industry provides many workers with their first employment opportunity, often on a flexible basis, and develops a skills base important for other industries. The workforce is facing increasing pressure to develop new skills to tackle transformational challenges, which in turn is creating exciting new career opportunities and a need for stronger industry leadership. In this rapidly changing retail environment salesmanship skills must grow and evolve to keep pace.

Today, and in the future, retailers and merchants must have well developed business management skills, and must be absolute “Students-of-the-Business”. This requires in-depth knowledge of business planning and financial management. Though there are many management skills but the aim of the paper is to highlight those retail salesmanship skills that are required to develop highly merchandising trade, and procurement skills; knowledge of suppliers, their structures, their decision processes and criteria, financials, and performance metrics; the ability to influence behavior through collaboration and the ability to understand and apply consumer and shopper insights to business building solutions. Because satisfying the needs of the consumers has always posed problems and the person who has been most able in satisfying them has, through out time, been a successful skill are shopkeeper.

Keywords:management skill, salesmanship skill, merchandising trade, consumer, shopkeeper.

INTRODUCTION :

Retailing, which is the last link in the process of distributing the producer’s goods to the consumer, is one of the most important fields of work in India today. It is the top five retail markets in the world by economic value. It accounts for 14-15 % of its GDP. India is one of the fastest growing retail markets in the world with 1.2 billion people. In this important, vital field, there are unlimited opportunities for advancement and success for the person with a desire to succeed and a willingness to work and learn.

Careers in retailing offer many people a challenging, satisfying, rewarding experience in living and working that they would not find in any other profession, business and trade. Therefore, in choosing a career in retailing, some factors should be considered such as educational requirements, the personal qualifications, the experience needed, and the opportunities for promotions and success in that vocation.

OBJECTIVE:

This paper discusses the different techniques of retail salesmanship that are used in retail stores, and how retailers are applying these techniques to reduce the problems of retail trading in order to compete in this globally competing environment.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY: This Study is based on available Secondary Data and Literatures.

HYPOTHESIS :

Techniques of retail salesmanship in store operations will provide a competitive advantage and improve sales

EXPECTED CONTRIBUTIONS:

This study will also helpful to those who are interested in the working and managing in the Retail Industries. It is natural that an enquiry has to be made by the retailers for their benefits. The present study is of great importance due to this reason. Implementation of salesmanship techniques will improve customer retention and it will also increase footfalls and customer conversion rate.

RETAIL SALESMANSHIP :

Satisfying the needs of the consumers has always posed problems and the person who has been most able in satisfying them has , through out time, been a successful shopkeeper. Whilst satisfactorily meeting these needs is the basis for the shopkeeper's success, it does not necessarily follow that this business can remain progressively prosperous on this achievement alone. Indeed, for his prosperity to continue he must move from satisfying needs to creating them. As his business continues in being, these two characteristics become more closely interwoven, and he soon arrives at the point where he must recognize the fluid characteristic of consumers' needs and admit his on ability to accept change as his ally in success.

The basic characteristics of the successful shopkeeper are :

- ❖ The ability to discern what his customers need
- ❖ The ability to create customers' needs, and
- ❖ The ability to remain constantly flexible in outlook and in shop keeping methods.

Addition to these the knowledge and the skills he needs in carrying out his tasks.

All this is quickly expressed, but it represents a formidable task in terms of education and training. It is not that shop keeping is fundamentally difficult, but it is exceptionally complex.

To educate and train people in complex skills requires a fair measure of favorable circumstances and a reasonable amount of time. The atmosphere of retailing does not always produce the favourable circumstances, and time is never on the shopkeeper' side. The dice are loaded against him from the beginning.

The majority of unsuccessful salesmen fail through ignorance of the principles of merchandising, failure to appreciate the relationships of customers, shopkeeper, and salesman, and consequent lack of interest in their work. They know what they are expected to do orders are showered upon them but they do not understand the why and wherefore, and consequently do not work intelligently or in the proper spirit.

TECHNIQUES OF RETAIL SALESMANSHIP :

In view of the above fact, it is necessary to develop the following salesmanship skills among retailers:

1.Skill of serving the customer (retailers' job) –

If you ask the average retailers to describe his job, he will probably reply, "Serving customers". This description is correct, no better definition of retailer's work has even been found than the single word "Service". Service is obvious in the case of the routine part of the retailer's work, i.e. the taking of orders, preparation, measuring, cutting off, weighing and packing of the material or goods, making out the sales checks or delivery instructions, taking money and giving change.

Service must also be the foundation of the finer points of the retailer's work i.e. the demonstration of merchandise to prospective purchasers, persuading visitors to make purchases and customers to buy more, making suggestions, answering questioning, and answering objections. This work of demonstration and persuasion cannot be successful unless it is done in such a way that the customers look upon it as a service to them. It is not part of the retailer's job to force unwanted goods or unwanted advice upon customers. Indeed, the worst mistake he can make is to sell a customer something they do not need.

2.The spirit of salesmanship –

The first and most important thing for the salesman to do is to get the right spirit into his work, to cultivate attitude of mind towards his job and in particular towards the customers.

If a retailer does not have the proper spirit of salesmanship, no amount of practical knowledge or experience will bring him success.

Different types of customer must be treated in different ways but there is one spirit in which the humblest of salesmen may approach the most dignified of customers – the spirit of helpfulness.

Attitude of mind has its effect upon every action of retailers and also retailers's turnover is amazing. There are four attitudes of mind in which a retailer can approach his customer --- sympathy, apathy, antipathy and fear.

Sympathy – by cultivating this attitude of mind and making a habit of it, one develops what is known as a charming personality. The retailer who has acquired the gift of sympathy sees a great deal of the joys and sorrows of human life in his daily work. The retailers to look at every transaction from the customer's point of view and that is why he success in his transaction.

Apathy – The trouble lies in the fact that so many retailers do their work in an apathetic frame of mind instead of a sympathetic one. Apathy, or lack of feeling, is a sickness of the salesmanship world.

Antipathy towards customers is not always associated with that “fed up” feeling. Sometimes retailers who are very keen on their jobs, and enthusiastic about their house and goods, suffer from the delusion that they are opponents of the customers, playing against customer in the game of business.

The fourth attitude of mind which a salesman may have towards the customer is fear. It is not a itself a very serious feeling because a few pleasant experiences with customers will soon cure any obvious “fright” or nervousness.

It is advisable to point out how quickly the four attitudes of mind are communicated to the customer. The retailer must have a real liking for his job, a love of his fellow creatures, faith in the house, and interest in his goods. And the spirit of salesmanship is one of helpfulness.

3.Skill to be trained in Salesmanship –

The retailer who learns by experience will naturally discard any saying or action which he finds is annoying to customers, or a waste of time and opportunity but in this respect a great deal depends upon his powers of observation.

A number of practical men have spent the best part of their lives studying salesmanship and selling methods and by their concerted efforts have established the principles of salesmanship. The retailers should learn these principles of salesmanship, etiquette, character delineation and study, personality and self development, memory training, health, and elementary psychology that will help him to understand human behavior and to develop his own personality.

4.Skill to be recognized the goods :

The need for a retailer to study the goods he has to sell has been emphasized in the preceding points, where it has been pointed out that a knowledge of salesmanship is not enough; the retailer with no technical knowledge of his goods or his trade is an unskilled man. The fact of salesmen having technical knowledge makes for more sales, larger orders, faster selling, better service and greater satisfaction to customers.

5.Skill to be studied the customers : Every retailer should be a student of human nature, analyzing his customers' personalities for selling opportunities just as he analyses his goods for selling points, and he must make his analysis in a kindly and constructive manner, seeing the best in his customers as well as seeing the best in his goods. The extent to which careful individual treatment of customers opens up opportunities for selling is amazing.

6.Skill to receiving the customers :

We now pass from the retailers' studies to his work of serving the customer, and must start with the customer's entry into the shop. The responsibility of receiving or greeting the customer is a very heavy one. Different types of customers have adopt an unnatural air in visiting a shop for the first time. Some of them behave pompously, others suspiciously, and others disparagingly, but these are nearly always symptoms of nervousness which will disappear as soon as the customers is put them ease. When the smile should be backed up by an attitude of attention and preparedness, evidence that the retailers is ready to serve.

If it is a return visit from a regular customer the same need for a friendly welcome exists, indeed the customer will probably expect to be recognized.

7.Skill to sales persuasion :

In retailing work of sale persuasion the expert retailer draws upon his knowledge of the goods and salesmanship and profits by his study of the customers. His success depends upon his ability to say the right things in the right place and to the right person. He must suit his words to the occasion and the customer. Sales persuasion must be gentle – so gentle as to be unrecognized by the customer. Do not appeal, do not

enforce and do argue with customers for buying the goods.

8. Skill to sales demonstration –

Sales demonstration is a very important methods of selling, much neglected by the average retail salesman. Most articles of merchandise are sufficiently attractive in themselves to make an appeal to the eye of an interested customers, and in these days people are accustomed to learn and gain impressions from eye rather than the ear, so that the appearance of the article itself often makes a stronger appeal than the retailers' words.

GOVERNMENT ROLE IN SKILL DEVELOPMENT IN RETAIL SECTOR :

India has a great opportunity to meet the future demands of the world, India can become the worldwide sourcing hub for skilled workforce. The challenges for India get magnified, as it needs to reach out to the million plus workforce ready population, while facing an ever increasing migration of labour from agriculture to manufacturing and services. With the government launching a number of schemes to empower the young workforce, the challenges magnify as there is a need for effective implementation of the schemes at the grass root level with equal participation from all the stakeholders concerned.

RASCI – Retailers Association's Skill Council of India -is playing a pivotal role in this, as it is a not-for-profit, independent public limited organisation established under Section 25 of the Companies Act. We have been funded by the Government of India along with Equity participation from Retailer's Association of India, Reliance Retail Ltd., Future Retail India Ltd., Shoppers Stop Ltd., Globus Stores (P) Ltd., Trent Ltd., Infiniti Retail Ltd. and Connaught Plaza Restaurant (P) Ltd. to function as the Apex Skill Development Council for the Retail Industry. It represent the retail industry in India.

RASCI is a collaborative and comprehensive source of retail expertise and independent advice for industry, training organizations, educational institutions, certifying bodies, employees, students or jobseekers about skills development in the retail industry.

CONCLUSION :

The present paper try to made an analysis of Retail Salesmanship Skills for the young retailers who may pursue their professional life in retail sector. The study tries to answer a few question like 1) what is the significan of retail salesmanship skills in retail sector 2) how can these skills be integrated with workplace knowledge in the retailing process. It is well understood from the study that there is a significant relationship between salesmanship skills and management skills. The analysis indicate that retail salesmanship could play a vital role in synergizing the efforts of retail industry in grooming young graduates towards better employability options in retail industry.

Finally, all retailers must fully exercise themselves in building up their businesses on a secure foundation. Expanding their particular sphere of activity, by the constant exercise of courteous efficient service. Every activity being tinged with that measure of dignity becoming to those who are ever ready to render SERVICE in its widest sense to their fellow men.

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