

SOME VIEWS ABOUT SALES AND RELATIONSHIP MARKETING

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Abstract

Companies today focus on existing and new customers. Thus, business makes calculations over the long run rather than the short run. Relationship marketing influences customer loyalty. Organizations are pooling their efforts to achieve this goal in terms of products, pricing, distribution, incentives and services. Relationship marketing is based on the idea that important customers for a company need constant and special attention. The task of finding and retaining a client becomes increasingly individual. In the face of competition, it is important to know and constantly study your client; Not only to discover its advantages, to guess the hidden desires, but also to understand the reasons why some clients go to competitors. Research on these issues is important at the modern stage. The author discusses the different views of researchers-scientists regarding the mentioned problem, and also makes conclusions. The article contains several recommendations of the author.

Keywords: sales, personal selling, relationship marketing, salesperson, sales management

INTRODUCTION

Marketing, trade and sales are becoming an object of increasing attention in Georgia. At the current stage of globalization and the development of market relations in individual countries, the role of trade is increasing. It represents an important field of activity that is in direct contact with the population and ensures the satisfaction of its requirements (Todua N., Mghebrishvili B. 2017). The field of trade has changed significantly in recent years. The volume of sales and the number of employees in this area have increased (Mghebrishvili B., Urotadze E. 2016). Various forms of non-store trade are increasingly developing in the country (Mghebrishvili B., Seturi M. 2015). However, marketing, sales and trade had an interesting way of their development in our country. So for example, the main organizations in Georgian cities of the late feudal period were merchants' and craftsmen's guilds. The guilds performed their activities in a customer-oriented manner. Therefore, they focused primarily on the production of high-quality goods, the goal of which was not only to retain existing customers and attract new ones (Silagadze, A., Mghebrishvili, B., Keshelashvili, G., 2021).

In modern conditions organizations with smart leaders today focus on existing and new buyers, they are focused on the long-term perspective, not just the short term. Such companies combine their efforts in terms of products, prices, sales, incentives and service to achieve customer loyalty. Building customer loyalty is a key issue in relationship marketing. Good service creates loyal customers, that is, those who buy the company's products in the largest quantities. They also influence other customers to buy as well. Loyal buyers are satisfied with the purchase of the product (service). They pay money for the benefit of this company for a long time, maybe even for their whole life, which is very beneficial.

In companies following the marketing concept, the sales force helps customers to be satisfied with their purchases. Marketing offers much more than just needed products to the market. It helps to increase sales by offering the quality of service that customers expect (Seturi, M., Urotadze, E., 2017). Based on the marketing concept, the buyer is the main object of the company's attention. And the customer prefers to buy from the company that will give him the most satisfaction. It is very important to retain customers, but in most cases organizations focus on attracting new customers. One way to retain customers is to keep them completely satisfied (Seturi, M., 2019).

Relationship marketing is based on the idea that customers important to a company need constant and special attention. One of the most important tasks facing Georgia is to achieve economic growth, which is impossible without the growth of production of Georgian products and the development of business as the main driver of economic progress. And sales can play an important role in the country's economy.

Therefore, it is necessary to properly evaluate the role of personal selling. Sales directly affect the company's success in the market. Successfully completing the sales process and maintaining relationships with buyers is one of the most important tasks. The purpose of this study is to describe the theoretical aspects of personal selling and its role in the development of customer relationships and the company's success in the market.

METHODOLOGY

We got to know and studied a number of works of foreign and Georgian scientists in the direction of sales and relationship marketing. Based on the specificity of the research topic, we used secondary data in the process of work, namely: Internet sources, statistical data, information available on the website of Georgian companies and studied the current situation in Georgia.

In the process of working on this article, from a theoretical and methodological point of view, we relied on available sources that refer to trade in general, sales and the use of marketing approaches in it. In the process of studying literary sources and drawing conclusions, we used the methods of induction, deduction, analysis and synthesis.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Now more and more companies are trying to attract the attention of consumers. The work of companies in the market is becoming more difficult. With the help of marketing communication tools, companies try to provide information, convince and remind their products (services) to consumers in direct or indirect ways. Personal selling occupies an important place in marketing communications.

Personal selling is direct communication between a company representative and a potential buyer (Kotler P., Armstrong G., 2015). The seller's communication efforts are aimed at providing information to the customer and convincing him to buy the offered product. Personal selling is an effective tool for stimulation, because it involves communication with potential buyers and their response (Kotler P., Keller K. L., 2015).

Personal selling is an effective marketing communication tool that allows sellers to tailor their presentation to each potential buyer. They have the knowledge and skills to choose effective sales strategies. A salesperson can see the customer's reaction to his selling approach and adjust it if necessary. Which is impossible with advertising. Advertising attracts consumer attention and creates desire, but advertising cannot complete a sale. Sales presentation is an important part of sales job. The sales process includes a number of steps, including the presentation itself and closing the sale. The most difficult stage for most sellers is the closing. If the seller asks for a signature or agreement and the buyer does not respond, it creates a terrible feeling of defeat in the seller. Immediately after closing the sales representative must fill in the information provided to the customer with details about delivery times, conditions of purchase and other issues.

In the conditions of competition, it is of great importance to know and constantly study your own client, not only to reveal its advantages, to guess the hidden desires, but also to understand the reasons for which some customers go to competitors. Selling in the twenty-first century is no longer as easy as it was in the last century - when demand often exceeded supply. Today, the client is more demanding and the seller needs much more effort. A fake smile is not enough for buyers.

It is also worth noting that in modern conditions consumers and businesses are influenced by the Internet and social networks. Therefore, social media marketing can play a big role in the success of personal sales representatives and building relationships with customers. Professor N. Todua and B. Vashakidze, on the basis of research, determined the level of interest, awareness, reliability and satisfaction of Georgian consumers in relation to personal sales. They determined the frequency and reliability of consumer interest in personal selling information, identified the main types of consumers in terms of personal selling attitudes (Todua, N., & Vashakidze, B. 2018).

Based on the results of their research, the researchers note that in Georgia social media marketing is actively used in the process of personal sales. However, flexible mechanisms for its assessment are still underdeveloped. Georgian companies successfully use social media marketing tools to manage relationships with customers, including personal sales. Most Georgian consumers turn to social media quite often in relation to personal sales. Facebook, YouTube and Instagram are the leaders in this respect. It is true that personal sales representatives are quite active in social networks, but their activity is rated at an average level by Georgian consumers (Todua, N., & Vashakidze, B. 2020).

Salespeople involved in personal selling must be flexible, they must be able to adapt their strategies to customer needs, customer communication styles, relationship needs and strategies. This is followed by a comprehensive discussion of how to achieve effective sales and career development through planning and continuous learning (Stephen Castleberry & John Tanner, 2010).

Sellers provide potential buyers with information about the products they sell, so they can improve brand perception, which is of great importance in modern conditions (Seturi, M. and Todua, T., 2019).

The success of companies greatly depends on their sales departments, as they interact directly with customers. Therefore, they have the greatest impact on sales. The company needs to hire a salesperson with excellent communication and interactive skills. Success factors in personal selling can be measured by many indicators. Personal selling has features:

- Personal selling involves a direct and interactive relationship between two or more people, where each party can more closely observe the reactions of the others;
- Personal selling enables different types of relationships to emerge, from sales relationships to friendships;
- Reaction because personal selling forces buyers to listen to the salesperson (Fani Firmansyah, Margono S., 2019).

The total number of needs of potential customers is infinite, and sometimes it is difficult for salespeople to perceive and understand them on a customer-by-customer basis. Many marketers therefore find it useful to group customer needs into main types that focus on the buying situation and benefits. These general types of buyer needs are described as follows: situational needs, functional needs, social needs, psychological needs, knowledge needs. Categorizing buyer needs by type can assist the salesperson in bringing order to what could otherwise be a confusing and endless mix of needs and expectations (Ingram, T.; Avila, R., 2015).

The company can use different approaches and means to retain the buyer. In this regard, it is possible to use the concept of “10 P”, which consists of the following components: price and discounts; purchases - incentives during purchase; points and system of accumulation of points (points); unification of partner companies to create a single system of points accumulation (partners); gifts and prizes; By purchasing the product, the buyer participates in various social programs (pro-bono); Privileges for permanent clients (privileges); personalization or individualization of services (personalization); participation of the buyer in the process of improvement of products (services); Speed (presto) - the speed and efficiency of solving the problems raised by the buyer (Kochlamazashvili, L., Kandashvili, T., 2011).

The use of various stimulating promotions has a positive effect on the increase in sales volume. Various short-term incentives or sales incentives encourage customers to buy a product or service and offer a reason to buy right now. The purpose of action-oriented marketing measures is to directly influence the behavior of the firm's customers (S. A. Chaharsoughi & T. H. Yasory; 2012).

Discounts and sales incentives greatly influence buyer decisions. However, this does not determine the loyalty of buyers. The importance of discount incentives for firms has been discussed in a number of studies. A key premise of these studies is that discounts affect consumers who are only interested in the economic value of the money saved. However, research and business practices show that this is not always the case. Therefore, it is interesting to ask the following question: are there any benefits other than monetary savings that give impetus to consumers (P. Bicen & S. Madhavaram. 2013).

One of the issues to be resolved by the company is the customer's loyalty to it, the formation of which is influenced by tangible and intangible factors. Material factors are focused on the customer's need to make a profit by saving money and time. They can be divided into traditional and software factors. Traditional material factors can be attributed to: location of trading points (close to home, close to office, on the route of daily movement of customers); Assortment of goods (presence of basic and necessary goods), its quality, etc. With these factors, repeat purchases are made by the customer not based on thoughtful and emotional loyalty, but "automatically". Programmatic factors of loyalty include: preferential discounts, gift with purchase, special loyalty programs (discount cards, etc.). The immaterial factors ensure the emotional satisfaction of the client with high-quality service and attention to the buyer (Kochlamazashvili, L., Kandashvili, T. 2011).

Attracting new customers is important, but so is keeping the existing buyer base satisfied. Therefore, it is important to evaluate the satisfaction of customers. Keeping customers satisfied is important because it leads to their trust. Unfortunately, many companies do not realize the importance of this issue. Professional salespeople see their customer base as an extremely valuable asset that cannot be ignored. To maintain and strengthen customer relationships, salespeople are involved in performing after-sales activities. Specific relationship-building activities vary substantially from company to company, but they are critical to building long-term relationships. These activities include: providing useful information, expediting orders and monitoring installations, customer service staff training, correct billing errors, customer recall after sale, complaint resolution (Ingram, T.; Avila, R. 2015).

When using relationship marketing, the company targets the most desired and main customers to whom it wants to sell the product now and in the future, shows its customers that if they develop strong relationships, they will be served exceptionally, and their wishes will be taken into account. But companies' levels of customer relationships vary. Many organizations just sell products to customers and then forget about them, while some organizations develop close relationships with their buyers.

Establishing a long-term relationship between a sales representative and a customer is facilitated by the establishment of trust between them. Consumers want to deal with a seller they trust. Trust is an integral part of the relationship between customers and vendors, which leads to increased revenue in the long run.

The most important issue in sales is consideration of ethical principles by sellers. It is worth noting that consumers buy not only under the influence of rational motives, but they are also influenced by emotional aspects. In the field of sales ethics, researchers have increasingly focused on the emotional elements of sales and ethics. Researchers Raj Agnihotri & Michael T. Krush developed a model based on an ethical view of the interaction between person and situation. They investigate the effects of a basic social emotion, empathy, as an important situational aspect, and the influence of trust in a sales manager on ethical behavior. They study the influence of a salesperson's ethical behavior on his sales growth (performance results) (Raj Agnihotri & Michael T. Krush, 2015).

Personal selling is an important element of any organization's marketing mix. The primary function of personal selling is to generate revenue and provide service to help customers be satisfied with their purchase. Personal selling builds the relationships necessary to succeed in a competitive market. After receiving the initial order, the sales representative should schedule a return visit from the customer to ensure that all promises regarding installation, training, and service have been fulfilled. Which will reveal any issues during this time, alleviating any doubts and concerns that may arise after the sale is complete. The seller visits the buyer again to make sure he is satisfied and will continue to buy in the future (Olariu, Ioana., 2016).

Thus, if the company wants the buyer to return to it, it must satisfy the customer and provide a high quality of service. The subjective satisfaction assessment by the buyer depends on the quality of service. Even when customers get the products they want, they may not be completely satisfied if the level of service is poor.

We should also mention that, the professional activity of sales staff is difficult and requires a lot of effort. Sometimes people have negative attitudes and opinions towards sales staff. However, such an attitude is not always unfounded. When sellers mislead consumers, it negatively affects consumers.

Personal selling can make a buyer want to buy. Personal selling influences customer demand for a product. When an organization's sales representative is viable and competent, there is a positive increase in customer demand. The term competency refers to the basic qualities expected of a sales representative. This includes: courage, cleanliness, fluency in communication, deep knowledge of the products themselves, etc. When this happens, consumer demand for the product increases (Adewale, A. G., Adeniran, A. J., & Oluyinka, S. A. 2019).

The motivation of the sales staff is one of the important issues. Increasing the wages of sales workers in direct contact with customers can bring positive results. Sales personnel serve other people, contribute greatly to the well-being of people, help consumers make purchasing decisions. Unfortunately, their salaries are very low in our country today. Only a truly motivated sales force will be able to put customer needs first (Seturi, M. 2020).

Motivating salespeople has always been one of the main challenges for sales leaders and, for companies as a whole. Recently, such challenges have intensified in the way sales organizations have traditionally operated. Dramatic changes have occurred in the role of the salesperson and the accompanying competencies due to the expanded role associated with the need for technological know-how (Khusainova, Rushana & Jong, Ad & Lee, Nick & Marshall, Greg & Rudd, John., 2018).

A salesperson must possess the art of a good sales presentation. The core of a sales presentation is the discussion of the product, marketing plan, and business proposition. With a great presentation, sales personnel can ethically serve others, build long-term relationships based on truth. Sales personnel work in different ways. They deal with many cases. Each customer contact presents a unique challenge for salespeople. Personal qualities that salespeople need to build long-term relationships: caring for customer, joy at work, harmony in the relationship, patience in closing the sale, kind to people, morally ethical, faithful to word, fairness in the sale, self-control in emotions (Charles M. Futrell, 2011).

CONCLUSIONS

Thus, production organizations must orient the work of each of their sales representatives in such a way as to ensure an increase in demand for the product to be sold. Because even a quality product cannot be sold on its own, but with the help of a sales representative and personal selling, the product can be sold best. However, there are frequent shortcomings in this direction, for the correction of which we have the following recommendations:

- Using more virtual and online forms when sellers interact with customers and the development of relationships will help to reduce costs, for example, reducing costs related to travel and business trips, etc.;
- Customer loyalty is influenced by the sales force, but the best and long-term results are not achieved by the sales force alone. For this, it is necessary that the entire organization itself be focused on the buyer. This involves taking the following measures: the image of the company should be attractive to the client, customer service standards should be developed, service standards should be implemented and controlled, etc.;
- Because the business is developing rapidly, the competition in the market is increasing, it is also necessary to rely on basic and fundamental issues. Only promotions cannot help companies to retain buyers;
- Further retention of customers is carried out by fully satisfying their needs. The customer evaluates and determines the degree of satisfaction. And customer satisfaction is the result of the company's overall activity.

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