
UNIT 3 SALES PROCESS

Objective

After reading this unit you should be able to:

- Understand the relationship of personal selling in total scheme of marketing
- evaluate different theories of personal selling
- understand various components of personal selling to design the personal selling effort for your organisation
- understand each step of the actual sales process.

Structure

- 3.1 Introduction
- 3.2 Personal Selling and Marketing Effort
 - 3.2.1 Difference between Advertising and Personal Selling
 - 3.2.2 Significance of Personal Selling
- 3.3 Theories of Selling
 - 3.3.1 AIDAS Theory
 - 3.3.2 Right Set of Circumstances Theory
 - 3.3.2 Buying Formula Theory
- 3.4 Personal Selling Process
 - 3.4.1 Prospecting
 - 3.4.2 Preparation to Meet Individual Prospects
 - 3.4.3 Making the Sales Presentation
 - 3.4.4 Draw Attention
 - 3.4.5 Hold Interest and Build Desire
 - 3.4.6 Sales Resistance
 - 3.4.7 Meeting the Sales Resistance
 - 3.4.8 Closing the Sales
- 3.5 Summary
- 3.6 Self–Assessment Questions
- 3.7 Key Words
- 3.8 Further Readings

3.1 INTRODUCTION

When a sales person of Eureka Forbes contacts a house-wife and sells his vacuum cleaner, he is actually doing personal selling. When the sales person of Hindustan Lever visits a grocery store and sells Lux, Lifebuoy, Wheel, etc., he's also practicing the personal selling. When a candidate wants to be selected as a Marketing Manager in a company, he sells himself to his prospective employers and practices personal selling. A child asking for a favour from his mother by requesting her to buy him a chocolate or a pack of cookies is also practising personal selling. So vast is the scope of personal selling that everybody has experienced.

The goal of all marketing efforts is to increase profits through sales by offering need gratification to customers. Personal selling is a major promotional method to achieve this goal. In many companies, personal selling is the largest operating expense often totaling 7 to 13 per cent of sales. In contrast to this, the expenses on advertising on an average are just 1 to 3 per cent of sales for different companies.

In industrial product companies personal selling is the major selling force. The nature of the goods, in industrial products, often requires certain specialised knowledge, which is presented in person by the salesman. The value of the order generated by the sales person in such a situation is so high that it makes the hiring of the sales person an economical proposition. Apart from industrial products, the personal selling is a cornerstone of selling in organisations marketing products, which require specialised knowledge and skills. Such organisations are the ones marketing pharmaceutical products, medical instruments or electronic products, etc.

Let us also try to discover the need of personal selling effort in organisations marketing the fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG). In such organisations, the demand is often created



through advertising but it is met through the personal selling effort. For example, the sales person of Hindustan Lever Limited does not go door-to door to meet the prospects to create demand of his products. But he goes to the grocery store so as to ensure that the brands being advertised by his company are made available at as many retail shops as possible. Thus the objective of the personal selling effort in such a situation would be more of meeting the demand, already created by advertising or other promotional means, rather than to create it. as in the case of industrial goods or pharmaceutical products.

In order to make it easier for you to understand, we shall discuss the personal selling process in separate parts.

3.2 PERSONAL SELLING AND MARKETING EFFORT

Personal selling is one of the important parts of the total Marketing Mix, and an essential component of Promotion - Mix. We know that Marketing Mix comprises of 4 P's, which are; Product, Price, Promotion, and Place or Distribution.

The promotion mix , which is an important component of Marketing - Mix, also has four mix. parts. These are: Personal Selling, Advertising, Publicity, and Sales Promotions.

The above introduction would help you in understanding the significance of Personal Selling in the overall marketing scene. Since the Personal Selling effort is managed by Sales Management Personnel, the topic is discussed under Sales Management and not in promotion Management.

Personal selling is the process by which the representatives of the organisation (Management Manufacturing and Marketing) come in direct contact with the prospects (potential buyers) to convince and persuade them to purchase their products. Personal selling, along with other components of promotion mix and marketing mix, is a means to implement marketing plans and strategy.

Almost all the organisations, in any industry, involved in marketing their products employ sales representatives or sales personnel to directly contact the potential buyers and to persuade them to buy their products.

It may be worthwhile to distinguish between personal selling and salesmanship. While personal selling forms an important element in total scheme of Marketing Management, salesmanship, on the other hand, is one of the skills used in personal selling. Thus, salesmanship is a part of personal selling in the same manner as personal selling is a part of the promotion - mix, and promotion is a part of the Marketing Mix.

3.2.1 Difference. between Advertising and Personal Selling

Let us try to understand the difference between advertising and personal selling also. so as to clearly distinguish between these two important components of the marketing mix.

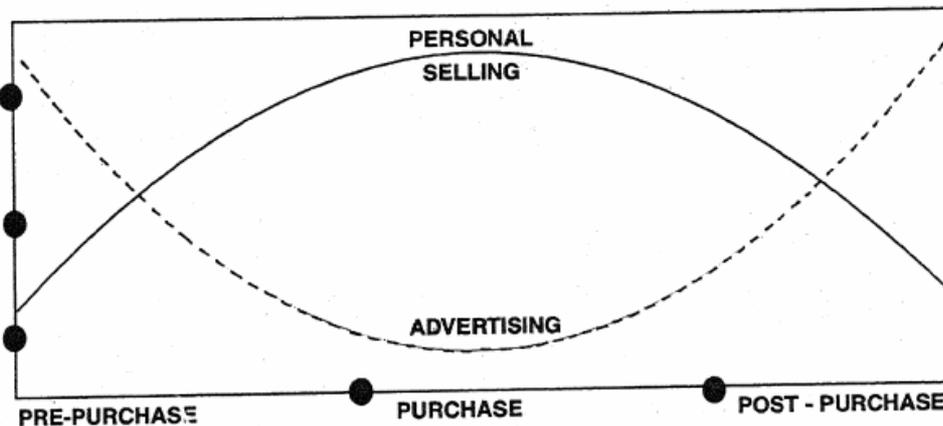
From a broad perspective, both - the personal selling as well as the advertising - are the means to communicate with the target customers for the product or service of an organisation. To be effective, i.e. , to produce results, in terms of sales or orders, both should be understandable. . interesting, believable and persuasive. We shall discuss the process of designing a personal selling effort involving all these four criteria of an effective communication.

However, there are some notable differences between these two means of communication. While the personal selling effort is a two-way communication process, the advertising is a one way communication. In the personal selling situation, as we have observed, the customer comes in direct contact with the sales person who, in turn, is representing an organisation. The customer can ask any number of questions so as to satisfy his/her quarries about the product, the sales person is offering. It is the sales person's, responsibility to satisfy his customer on the benefits of his product. If he does so, he gets the desired sales or an order. Thus, the result of the personal selling, whether positive in terms of an order or negative in terms of no order, is also quick and easily measurable.



In advertising, on the other hand, the customer does not come in direct contact with any representative of the organisation: Thus it is a one-way communication. The reactions, attitudes or perceptions of the viewers can not be immediately gauged in advertising.

Let us also understand a very interesting aspect of advertising and selling, about their relative importance of the two, during three different stages of a product/brand's market. The three phases can be the pre-purchase phase, the purchase phase and the post-purchase phase. The pre-purchase phase is characterised by the phase where the organisation is trying to convince the targeted customers on the benefits of the product/brand. The purchase phase is the time/duration when the customer is making his mind to actually buy the product. The post-purchase phase is one when the customer has bought the product and is evaluating the decision.



Advertising has a major role during the pre-purchase phase as the mass demand for product has to be generated. The advertising also plays an important role in post-purchase phase as it gives sound reassurance to the purchaser that he has taken a sound decision in buying that product. The personal selling, on the other hand, has an important role to play in all the three phases. It plays a major role in the purchase phase:

3.2.2 Significance of Personal Selling

It is important to understand the significance and objectives of personal selling effort in overall scheme of Marketing. More specifically it helps in the following manner:

i) **Personal Selling Implements the Marketing Strategies**

Whatever the Marketing Strategy of the company, it has to boil down to strategic communication, targeted at customers or prospects. The person who communicates with the prospects is the sales representative, though different companies attach different designations to them. It is the salesmanship of that sales representative which brings orders, the tangible results, to meet the marketing objectives.

ii) **Personal Selling Brings Money to the Company**

It is the personal selling which collects money from the customers and brings it to the company. While other components of an organisation are money-utilizing' components.

iii) **Personal Selling Makes the Organisation Known**

All organisations are known to their customers through their sales staff, in every part of the market. Such companies invariably, do not advertise. For example, companies engaged in industrial products marketing or marketing pharmaceutical do not advertise much. Even in companies, which advertise, personal selling carries the same significance, as the sales representative creates goodwill for the company:



iv) Personal Selling Maintains and Creates Customers

The sales representative is the best overall manager of his territory. He has the responsibility of maintaining the current business, as well as developing it. He meets these objectives by maintaining existing customers and developing new ones at the same time.

v) Personal Selling is a Source of Feed back

A company is known at the market place through its sales representatives which the company also knows the market place through the its representatives. That is why the field sales personnel are considered to be an excellent source of market information.

vi) Personal Selling Makes New Products Successful

It is through the personal selling effort a sales-representative is able to provide adequate information on new products to prospective customers. Personal selling effort also ensures the availability of the product in the market place, widely as the sales representative has developed the relationships with the trade, i.e., retailers, wholesalers and other middlemen. The sales representative provides the information to the company on customer's response to a new product and the competitor's activities.

Thus it can rightly be said that an organisation sees and hears through the personal selling effort. Sales-representatives are the eyes and ears of an organisation.

3.3 THEORIES OF SELLING

Before we, discuss the actual process of selling, let us understand the theories of selling. There are three main theories of selling, which are as follows:

- AIDAS Theory
- Right Set of Circumstances Theory
- Buying Formula Theory

3.3.1 AIDAS Theory

This theory is based on the premise that during a sales presentation, the prospect consciously goes through five different stages. These are ATTENTION, INTEREST, DESIRE, ACTION AND SATISFACTION. In fact the name of this theory has been derived from the initial letters of these five words. The proponents of this theory believe that the sales person should design his presentation in such a manner, which takes care of all these stages of the process of selling. The details of five components of AIDAS theory are as follows:

Attention

The sales person should attract the prospect to his presentation before he actually goes into the details of the same. This is to ensure that the prospect becomes receptive to the presentation.

Let us understand the need for securing attention. We would all appreciate the fact that usually the prospect may be busy in his routine jobs or his daily assignments. Thus, before meeting the sales person the prospect's mind may be involved in something other than the topic which even remotely does not concern the product, about which that the sales person in going to talk about. .

Unless the sales person' involves the prospect's mind in the presentation his total effort may go unnoticed or unregistered. Drawing the propect's attention, therefore, tantamount to dissociating him from other assignments and involving him in the presentation, both physically and mentally, so as to gain maximum from the sales meeting.

Interest

Once the salesperson has successfully gained -the prospect's attention, he/she should maintain the interest of the prospects' throughout the presentation. In other words, the sales person should ensure that the prospect remains glued to his presentation throughout its length and that he does not wander away from the same. The sales person should be aware of the.



interest, likes, dislikes, attitude and motivation of the prospect and should proceed with the presentation, keeping in view all these factors.

Desire

The next step in the sales process, as per AIDA's theory, is to create a strong desire in the prospect's mind to purchase his product. The sales person should consciously try to bring the prospect into this stage of readiness to the point of buying his product. He should concentrate on projecting the benefits of his product to the prospect. He should go even to the extent of presenting benefits according to the motivation of the prospect.

The sales person should also be prepared to anticipate the resistance to his sales presentation in terms of objections or questions from the prospect. Not only that, he should be prepared with several answers and explanations to the anticipated objections.

Action

Once the sales person has been successful in taking his prospect through the three stages, as discussed above, he should induce the prospect into actually buying the product. It would be interesting for us to understand that even after going through the three stages of attention, interest and desire, the prospect may still have some doubt or some inertia which will stop him from taking the final decision of actually buying the product. Hence, it becomes an important task of the sales person to help his prospect in taking the final decision.

At times, we ourselves also experienced that inertia, as a prospect. We might have liked the vacuum cleaner of Eureka Forbes during its presentation at our home by the company's sales person. He might have answered all of our objections quite satisfactorily. It is now upto us to take the final decision of placing an order to the Eureka Forbes' sales person. But we keep on thinking whether to go for the same or not. Try to recollect, what the sales person told you at that time. He must have said, "Sir, should I send the machine tomorrow or today?" or "Sir, we also have an attractive finance option whereby you can pay in instalments. or "Sir, only for you I can ask my sales manager for a 10% discount on the billing price."

As we have observed, the sales person tries to push us into a situation to take a decision. And he has exercised the technique of closing very skillfully. This is what is expected of a sales person in this stage.

Satisfaction

Once the prospect has placed an order, the sales person should ensure that the prospect carries the impressions of having taken the right decision. He should always thank the prospect and even go to the extent of saying, "I appreciate your choice sir, you have taken an excellent decision".

The sales person should also ensure that the delivery of the order takes place within the time frame and all other promises are kept, regarding installation, free servicing, etc. Moreover, the sales person should try to keep in touch with his prospects and should keep enquiring about the efficient performance of his purchase.

3.3.2 Right Set of Circumstances Theory

The advocates of this theory opine that all the circumstances, which led to the sales were appropriate or "right" for the sales to have taken place. In other words, if the sales person is successful in securing the prospect's attention, maintaining his interest and inducing his desire to buy the product, the sales will result. Moreover, if the sales person is highly skilled, he will take control of the presentation, which would lead to sales:

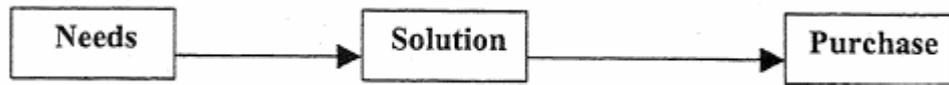
3.3.3 Buying - Formula Theory

In the earlier theories, emphasis was laid on the sales person or the seller. In this theory the emphasis is on the buyer. This theory emphasises on the needs or problems of the buyer. The sales person assist the buyer in finding an appropriate solution to the problem. This solution may be in terms of a product or service.

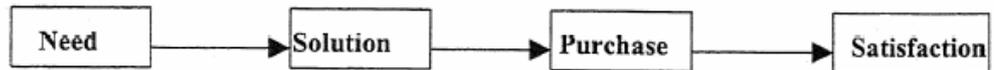


The Buying - Formula theory is based on the analysis of the sequence of events that goes in the buyers' mind during the sales presentation. Thus, the theory emphasises on the factors internal to the prospect and the factors, which are external, i.e., influence of the sales person on his prospect's decision to buy his product. The theory is based on the presumption that the sales person will take care of the external factors.

The sequence of events in a prospect's mind can be represented as:



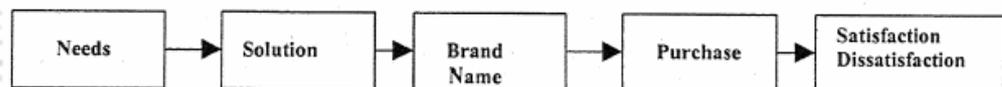
There are all the chances that a continuous relationship will develop between the prospect and the sales person. As a result of sales, the satisfaction will also come in the sequence. This sequence can be presented as:



Furthermore, whenever a need is felt, the solution is available in the form of a product or service or both. A product or a service belongs to some manufacturer or a marketing agency. The product, service or the manufacturer may also have a brand name.

For example, if some one is feeling hungry, he/she has a need. The solution lies in food. So the sequence of events in his/her mind will progress from need (hunger) to solution (food). The next step will be "What food," whether it is Indian, continental, or Chinese. This step will ensure the decision on the product (fast-food). Now the person will think about the brand in the fast-food category. It may be Narula's, Wimpy's, Chotiwalla's, Udipi's, etc. On taking this decision about the brand the person will purchase the food. His satisfaction or dissatisfaction will depend on the delivery time, taste, quality, seating space, etc.

This sequence of events may thus be represented as:



In practice, most of the sales presentations or the personal selling efforts are based on one or a combination of these theories.

3.4 PERSONAL SELLING PROCESS

In order to have a better grasp of the subject under discussion, we shall one by one discuss each of the following stages of the personal selling process:

- Prospecting
- Preparation to meet individual prospects
- Making the presentation
- Maintaining the interest and to arouse desire
- Fielding the objections
- After sales service

3.4.1 Prospecting

Prospecting is the first and the most important component of personal selling. Prospecting consists of identification of potential customers and then to rank them in order to select the customers with the purchasing power and the authority to make the decision, to buy the product.

To be more productive, the sales personnel should plan as many of their activities as possible. In other words, they should always do the proper home work in order to utilise their time in the marketplace, more productively. Hence, they should plan their travel and call-schedules so as to spend maximum of the available time on meeting their customers. Moreover, the time available to the sales personnel should not be wasted in making an effort to convince those



people about their products, who can not buy them. Thus, the planning which involves eliminating non-productive calls, is known as prospecting.

It goes, without saying that the time available should be spent on calling-on potential buyers rather than on non-buyers. The sales person who practice 'prospecting' ultimately emerge out as more productive than others.

In a nut shell, the result-oriented prospecting is a two step process. Firstly, the identification of potential customers and secondly, the process of selecting / ranking them.

Identification of potential customers can be done with the help of Sales Manager who has earlier handled the territory or has a good knowledge about the territory. It can also be done by collecting the list of prospects from trade associations, or by looking at the directories of individual customers' associations. The response to advertising (response coupon) other companies' sales personnel, and meeting in general, the potential buyers, are some other sources of potential customers.

Ranking of the identified prospects can be achieved by contacting the customers' present relationships at the market place. For example, a car manufacturer can find out about a customer from Citibank, in case the customer is already a Citibank card member. The objective of customers ranking is to avoid these customers, with limited a requirements of the company's products.

Activity 1

You are the Sales Manager of a company marketing consumer appliances. Enumerate various sources that you can look for enlisting the potential prospects for your products.

.....

.....

.....

.....

3.4.2 Preparation to Meet Individual Prospects

Before meeting a selected customer, the sales person should find out as much as possible about the same. In case of an organisation as a customer, the sales person should know what products the organisation is currently using and how his product is better than the one already in use. The sales person should also find out what is the purchase procedure in the organisation and what is the total budget earmarked by that organisation, for his kind of products. The sales person should also try to find out personal likes and dislikes of his prospective buyers so as to tailor make his presentation to suit the prospect. The sales person should also have a clear ideas about the questions that the prospect may ask so as to prepare himself to face them.

Now, the sales person is ready to contact the prospect and to make the presentation. It should be borne in mind that the sales person should take a prior appointment with the prospect so as to exercise a good time management. By doing so, he can save on his as well as the prospect's time.

3.4.3 Making the Presentation

This is a very important component of the total process of personal selling. In essence, it amounts to using all the information, knowledge and skills of the sales person, so as to actually make the sales. In this stage, a sales person draws ATTENTION of the customers, holds INTEREST in his offering, builds the DESIRE for his product and finally stimulates his customer to take a favourable ACTION towards his product, i.e., the prospect purchases his product. As discussed in the theories of selling, it involves implementing the AIDAS theory of selling.

3.4.4 Draw Attention

The prospects, attention can be drawn by asking a creative question, or by pointing out a startling new fact about the product. By finding out the actual need of the customer and then



phrasing the question in such a manner that it actually tells the customer that your product can meet the prospect's needs.

For example, if a printer (customer) is looking for a printing machine, which prints at double the speed of his present machine, the sales person can ask "Are you looking for a printing machine which prints at 600 prints per minute at the cost of 300 prints per minute of the currently available machine?"

A sales person, of a company marketing medicines, can ask a lady doctor who is looking for an antibiotic which is safe during pregnancy may ask the prospect, "are you in need of an effective antibiotic which is also safe in pregnancy"?

This technique of asking questions to the prospects with the objective of drawing his/her attention to the salesman's presentation is called the technique of probing. As we have observed from the types of questions cited above that the prospect can answer such questions in 'Yes' or 'No' (one word answer). Therefore, such probes are known as CLOSED PROBES.

Though these questions help to draw the prospect's attention, these are not as effective as the questions, which give an opportunity to the prospect to come out with his real problem r needs/ requirements. Such probes are termed as OPEN PROBES.

The examples of such probes can be a sales man selling printing machines asking a prospect, "Sir, how do you feel about the printing machine which prints 300 copies per minutes?" Another example of an open probe can be a sales person from a pharmaceutical company asking a lady doctor "How would you react to the safety of currently available antibiotics, specially during pregnancy?"

As we can imagine such open probes will draw better attention of the prospects than closed probes. Not only that, the prospect will also be more interested in the salesman's offering due to an open probe, because the prospect has spent some time thinking about his/her problem while answering the salesman's probe. Thus, at times, an open probe is better than a closed probe in drawing the prospect's attention.

3.4.5 Hold Interest and Build Desire

After drawing attention the sales person should hold the INTEREST of the customer in his sales talk. Here there is no set pattern. Also there is no choice other than actually demonstrating the performance of the product. In such instances where the sales person can't demonstrate the performance of his product, he should creatively use various audio-video media to hold INTEREST of the customers. In a large number of cases the sales person uses various promotional inputs like literatures, gifts, visual aids, voice modulation, pitch, tone, body language, etc., to maintain the INTEREST of his customers in his presentation or the sales talk.

While making the presentation, the sales person uses various presentation inputs like brochures, literatures (as stated above). What should be emphasized here is that these inputs are just the promotional inputs, or the sales aids. Obviously they have no effect without proper use and effective handling by the sales man in presence of the prospect. Their effectiveness can be best utilised by a sales person possessing the requisite skills to use these presentation inputs, and without these skills they are mere objects.

So, what are the skills required for effective utilisation of these presentation inputs with the objective of holding the interest of the prospect? The skills are

- excellent communication ability
- good command over language
- excellent knowledge about the product and the competitors' product • ability to keep the presentation coherent
- good public speaking ability
- ability to win the customer by understanding his/her needs

Moreover, before he goes to make the presentation to the prospective buyer, the sales person must rehearse his complete presentation, several times at home. This will go a long way in



inculcating the necessary confidence in the sales person, which in turn, will help him in clinching the deal or getting an order.

The desire of a customer can be built by emphasising on those benefits of the product, which meet a customer's present needs, and promise the customer his value for money. For example, emphasising on high mileage per litre of petrol can arouse the desire of junior level executives to buy a fuel-efficient automobile. As we know, junior executives are comparatively less paid and an economical vehicle can be one, they are looking for.

In other words, the sales person should translate the features or attributes of his product into the benefits that the prospect is going to desire. The prospect is not interested in the features or attributes of the product. He is only interested in benefits and how the product is going to make his life better. For example, the aluminium engine in Maruti Zen car is a feature of the car. It makes the car lighter in weight and hence more mileage per litre of fuel is the benefit to its owner. The use of a Super Horn speaker in Samsung colour TV is only a feature. The benefit to the owner is a better quality of sound and a stereo effect. Similarly, a medicine works 24 hours in the body, is a feature. The benefit is that the medicine has to be taken only once in 24 hours by the patient. This is much better than a medicine which works for 8 hours, and has to be taken 3 times in a day.

This is the magic that translating features into benefits can create. It is an essential aspect of a salesman's functioning in the total framework of the selling process. The objective is to creatively establishes a desire in the prospect for the product.

Activity 2

Look for various brands of colour TV's in your area and list their attributes. Convert these attributes into potential benefits for the prospects as if you are the Sales Manager for these brands.

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

3.4.6 Sales Resistance

This part of the selling process is also a very important part: It concerns with tine resistance that the prospect exhibits during a sales call. Even after proper prospecting, preparation to meet each individual and making a winning presentation, the sales personnel can face some resistance from the prospects. Such a resistance may be exhibited, typically, in terms of objections. The objections are the sincere or insincere reasons put forth by the prospects in order to circumvent or the culmination of a sales call into the actual purchase. An objection, requires a tactful handling by the sales person at its best. Otherwise, it can spoil the sales person's total effort in securing order .the sincere objections are the real objections or real reasons put forth by the prospect for not buying the product. Insincere objections, on the other hand, are the imaginary or unreal objections.

A few examples of real objections are, -I have no surplus cash at the moment to buy your product, though I am convinced about its utility". "I have recently bought a similar product". Sincere objections can also be put by the prospects to gather more information about the product, like, "What will you guarantee about the product", or "How quickly your service network responds," or "How much time your service personnel usually take to attend complaint."

The examples of insincere objections are "Why did you go for a green colour cough medicine, had it been red. I would have purchased it," or "The weight of you printing press is amore, I do not think our floor can accommodate its weight."

3.4.7 Meeting; the Sales Resistance

An objection indicates that the customer has, , attentively listened to the presentation and the sales person has been effective upto this stage. However , in order to handle the objections effectively , following objection handling system can be applied:



- i) **Listen to Objections:** Usually the sales persons do not treat customers' objections as opportunities. They treat them as customer's resistance. In protecting themselves from such a resistance, the sales persons leap on an objection even before the customer has completed the same. However, the sales persons must listen to the objections very carefully. Otherwise, if he is not a good listener, he may inadvertently irritate his customer and may lose a winning sales. Moreover, a careful listening will also give an opportunity to the sales person to analyse the objection. whether it is sincere or insincere. Accordingly, then he can handle the objections.
- ii) **Ask for Details :** If the objection is not clear to the sales person, he should ask the customer to elaborate on his objection. Here the sales person must avoid sarcasm and have patience. If nothing else, this technique will give more time to a sales person to think how to utilise the opportunity.
- iii) **Answer the Objection** More often than not the sales persons who have good knowledge on their product, competitors' products, and customers, can answer the objections, effectively. All objections are questions and only a knowledgeable sales person can provide the answers.

After having carefully listened to an objection, and having analysed it, the sales person should answer it politely but firmly. If it was a sincere objection like "I have no surplus cash to purchase your product" and if the sales person has a finance option he can answer "Sir, in that case we can provide this product to your on a deferred payment plan or an instalment plan." To a details-gathering question, like, "How quick are your service personnel to attend to a complaint", the sales person should answer "Sir, I appreciate your concern about a quick service. Sir, I may inform you that we have one of the largest fleet of mobile service controls. As soon as, your complaint is registered at our central complaint cell, it is communicated to the mobile service centre of your area, to immediately attend to your complaint."

The sales person should be sure about the truthfulness of the information being provided to the prospect in response to his sincere objection. The sales person should not give wrong information to the prospect under the lure of securing an order. If he does so, he may secure this order but he will lose a customer for future. Not only that, he will also lose his face and his organisation's name. There is a possibility that you can ; o b. caught telling a lie or exaggerating the facts.

While answering an insincere objection, the sales person has to exercise more of tact than depending on his knowledge. To an objection on green colour of cough syrup, the sales person may answer, "I appreciate your taste for colours and I also feel that the product should have been in red colour. But our marketing executives conducted a market survey in which the same preparation was shown in various colours to various doctors and most of the doctors liked the green colour. That is why our organisation decided for this colour."
- iv) **Confirm the Answer:** An effective sales person should not leave the objection by answering it. He should confirm whether the customer has understood the answer or not. The customer may have missed the point. He might have been thinking of something else at that point of time. To confirm the answer, a sales person can ask the customer, in specific statements like; "Now that's settled entirely, isn't it?" or "That solves your problem with (my brand), isn't it?"
- v) **Immediately go to the Next Step** After the answer has been confirmed with the prospect, the sales person should move on to the next step of personal selling process and that is to close of the sales call.

Activity 3

"Objections are the opportunities for a sales. person to culminate his sales presentation into an order". Critically analyse this statement.

.....
.....
.....



3.4.8 Closing the Sales

Closing a sales is nothing but helping prospects to take decisions. Unless a sales person bases his actions on this understanding he would be trying to build success on false premises.

Let us recognise the fact that usually the prospects have an innate feeling to oppose the decision to buy a product. Even after the excellent presentation, and effective handling of his objection by the sales person, the prospect may mentally try to dissociate himself from placing an order, not because of a valid and sound reason but just because of that innate feeling to oppose the decision of buying a product. Unless the sales person manages to push these prospects into taking the decision to buy his products, he can remain without getting an order. A sales person skilled in the technique of proper closing just does that. He pushes the prospect into a buying decision.

These are some well-tried and tested techniques for effectively closing the sales. Some of these are:

Alternate Close	<p>The Sales person asks the customer to choose from the two options.</p> <p>Sales person: "should I send you two boxes of 50 bottles each (of a cough syrup) or one box of 100 bottles"? Customer "One box of 100 bottles would do."</p> <p>Sales person "Sir do you want the refrigerator to be delivered at your residence in the morning or in the evening. Customer: Only date in the evening.</p> <p>What has happened? The customer has actually bought your product.</p>
Summary Close	<p>In this type of a close, the sales person summarizes all his product benefits and asks for an order.</p>
Picture Close	<p>Here the sales person tries to imprint the brand name more firmly in prospect's mind and at the same time asks for an order.</p> <p>Sales person " "Sir, you know, our company has products with the brand METRO But for ceiling fans. it reads in the reverse order, that is ORTEM. Isn't it interesting?"</p> <p>Customer: "Yes that is interesting, Please send me two set of fans".</p>

Apart from these types of "closes" an effective sales person should also remember two more important characteristics of the 'close'. Firstly to close with empathy and secondly to close through their eyes. A sales person should sincerely try to make his customer believe that he is making a good decision in buying your product and that he actually needs your product. As a matter of fact, an average person can not make decisions about investing in anything without help. It is this help which should be provided by the sales persons. This is the rational to close with empathy. .

A sales person should see the benefits and features in his product from his potential customer's viewpoint. He should also see the limitations of his product through his customer's viewpoint. He should close on the benefits, which his customer gets. This will help a sales person improve his credibility in the eyes of his customers which in turn will not only get him this sales but also get him a promise of future sales too.

3.5 SUMMARY

.Personal selling is an important component of overall marketing effort of an organization The association of personal selling in total scheme of things in the overall view of marketing



is that it is an important component of 'Promotion Mix', which in turn, is one of the constituents of 'Marketing Mix'.

Its significance in total marketing effort can't be underestimated as the Personal selling implements the marketing strategies, brings money to the company, makes the organisation know, maintains & creates customers, makes new products successful and works as a feedback source.

The personal selling process is a scientific process involving the creative utilisation of various steps like prospecting, preparation to meet individual prospects, making the presentation, and meeting the objection to closing the sales. It is the creative implementation of the concepts of drawing attention, holding interest, building the desire and stimulating the action, which makes the presentation very effective.

An effective sales person should close a sales presentation when:

- The customers have mostly been listening, and suddenly start asking a lot of questions.
- When the customers favour an alternate close.
- When the customers give a positive stimulus at the right time.

This completes our discussion on the process of personal selling. It goes without saying that a sales person who practices various steps of this process, sincerely and diligently, would definitely become an ace sales person.

3.6 SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

1. How does Personal selling relate to the marketing function of an organisation.
2. What are the various theories of personal selling. Compare and contrast them with each other.
3. What are the various steps involved in the sales process. Discuss brief, the importance of each.
4. It is said that closing a sales call is important, like the other steps of the sales interaction. Discuss.

3.7 KEY WORDS

Prospect : A potential customer with not only the need for the product but also the purchasing power and the authority to make the decision.

AIDAS Theory: It suggests that the prospect goes through five different stages of Attention, Interest, Desire, Action and Satisfied during a sales presentation.

Buying Formula: It emphasises the needs and problems of the buyer and suggests that the sales person must assist in finding solution to those problems.

Probe: A technique of asking questions to be prospects with the objectives of drawing his attention to be contents of salesman's presentation is called probing.

In response to the question the prospect can answer in specific words (like 'yes' or 'no'), such probes are called closed probes.

Those questions which give an opportunity to be prospect to come out with real problem, needs, requirements etc., are called open probe.

3.8 FURTHER READINGS

Allan L. Reid, *Modern Applied Selling* (New Jersey, Prentice Hall, 1996).

Frederic A. Russel, Frank H. Brach, Richard H. Buskirk and Bruce D. Buskirk *Selling Principle and Practices*, (New York: McGraw Hills, 1995).