

# Business Process Improvement

A Detailed Report

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## **SUMMARY**

Sharpstone Jewelry Store embarked on this business process analysis and improvement project to achieve the following: to understand the sales process better; be familiar with the reason(s) clients delayed paying for a product they had confirmed interest in; figure out a way to eliminate the cause(s) of the delay; and implement changes that will encourage Sharpstone's online clients to make quicker payments for the products they had confirmed interest in.

The eventual improvement in the sales process involved an addition of three extra steps to the sales process workflow resulting in about 82% of clients paying within one hour of initial sales contact with the Client Service Associate (CSA).

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- Clear customer doubt and the uncertainty of the exactness of what to expect when he/she finally receives the physical product by providing extra, high quality, on-the-spot visuals that replicate the experience of wearing the jewelry in real time will.
- Create urgency that will accelerate client's need to own the product now.

## **CONTEXT**

At the inception of its business operations, Sharpstone Jewelry operated as an online e-commerce store but has, over time, added a brick-and-mortar component to its business model. Over 80% of its sales occur via its online platforms namely Instagram, Facebook, and WhatsApp through their messaging capabilities. When clients visit one of Sharpstone's online platforms a CSA (Client Service Associate is the designation for the client facing sales staff) communicates with them to help them reach a decision regarding the specifications of the jewelry they want. Often clients would go through these online platform pages or the website to find what jewelry article they want and choose from the available pictures. On other occasions, they may need the assistance of the CSA to make a choice. In this case the CSA will pull out product pictures, videos and other sales artefacts that describe what the client wants for the client to make a choice.

Payment for chosen jewelry items takes place from 30minutes of initial sales contact with the CSA to days, weeks, and months; sometimes, the clients don't return. The business noticed this trend and wanted to get to the root of why clients delayed payment beyond one hour of initial sales contact with the CSA.

## **PROBLEM OVERVIEW**

When clients delay payment, product turnover and revenue generation time rate is slower. The business managers thought it took too long for most clients to pay after having indicated a final interest and intention to buy a product. There seemed to be a hesitancy to pay after reaching a decision on the product they wanted. Delay in payment may be for hours, days, weeks, and months while some never returned. What might be the cause of this hesitancy? How do we help the client to overcome this hesitancy? Could it be something we were doing wrong? Can we do something to accelerate payment to within one hour of initial sales contact?

## **PROBLEM DEFINITION**

A focus group discovery session involving customers, key sales staff and inventory staff was embarked upon to itemize the issues and define what the exact problem was.

Additionally, to identify the cause of the hesitancy, the business conducted a survey of 405 of its previous clients who bought products but had delayed payment by at least two hours after initial sales contact. Consequently, the data was analyzed, and insights were uncovered.

## **ANALYSIS RESULT**

Of the 405 people who received the survey questionnaire, 247 people responded, which represented a 61% response rate.

62% were willing but doubtful: - some were unsure how the jewelry would look when worn by them. Others wanted to see a moving picture of the ring from all angles. Others wanted more detailed pictures and sharper videos.

27% had plans to buy in the future: - they had planned their engagements and weddings planned for some time in the future and were just sampling.

6% were just enquiring while 5% gave ambiguous responses.

## **FOCUS GROUP DELIBERATIONS**

Another focus group session involving CSAs, inventory personnel, clients and other members of staff that were integral to the sales and order fulfilment processes and well suited to provide meaningful input was conducted. The following conclusions were reached:

- Clients want to have a glimpse of how products will look when eventually worn by them.
- Clients want to see clear pictures and videos of the product worn by someone.
- Clients would not mind immediate, customized videos of their chosen products sent to them.

## **SOLUTION REQUIREMENT SPECIFICATIONS**

- Purchase a light box that will provide cinematographic light control and enable high quality pictures and videos to be taken in-store e.g., an on-the-spot picture or video of a ring on a finger in-store.
- Provide manicuring tools and artificial nails for CSAs to adorn while taking pictures or videos of the ring. This is aimed at accentuating the beauty of the picture or video presentation to the client and further improving product appeal and uptake.
- While a client has indicated interest in purchasing a product, the CSA should make a high-quality video on well-manicured hands in the light boxes while mentioning the client's name and showing the client how the product looks, thereafter, setting it in properly designed packages and sending a video to the client of the whole process immediately he/she has made a choice.
- Create urgency by telling the client that only a limited stock of the item in question is available.