

SUMMARY

PEPPERFRY.COM: MARKETING TO MANAGE CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE

- AIM: To help 20 million customers create beautiful homes by 2020
- Chief Marketing Officer- Kashyap Vadapalli
- Co- Founder and Chief operating officer - Ashish Shah
- Since Mr Ashish Shah was pleased with company's profitability, in September 2016, Pepperfy.com, India's pioneering furniture and lifestyle online retailer felt about expanding their furniture business.
- Pepperfry's first-mover advantage in the Indian online furniture market had helped the company to achieve significant milestones within a short time span.
- Pepperfry operated on a "managed marketplace" model—that is, it acted as a platform for artisans and merchants to showcase and sell their merchandise to millions of discerning customers.
- The company had become a platform to more than 1,000 merchant partners across India, enabling them to sell their craftsmanship and design skills. It had a range of more than 1 million units spread across various lifestyle and furniture product lines.
- Pepperfry manoeuvred into an online-to-offline hybrid business model, which became the foundation for the "Studio Pepperfry" experience centres. The idea behind Studio Pepperfry was to offer potential buyers an experience of the product and expert advice, not necessarily to sell any furniture. The studios were launched as customer meeting-and-learning points where the company supplemented the experience by offering advice on interior design and furniture choices.
- At the studio, customers not only became familiar with the brand but also made a direct sensory assessment of the products that they were interested in buying. To fortify the experience, instead of having salespersons, these studios had interior designers, who could convince a customer to become a buyer. To further enhance the customer experience, Pepperfry had introduced virtual reality tours of its studios.

- The 360-degree integrated campaign targeted the segment that had furniture made at home. Pepperfry focused its marketing efforts on airport lounges in India's Tier 1 cities, by showing customers the experience offered by the Pepperfry products and related services.
- Pepperfry gained a competitive advantage by inventing its own hub-and-spoke "large-item distribution model" that covered 97 per cent of the orders placed on the marketplace. This innovative distribution model allowed the company to expand its reach by providing the home delivery of bulky items.

Q1. How could the company's service design be leveraged to further enhance customer experience during the purchase process?

Ans: Customer experience can be enhanced during the purchase process by the following ways:

- By building a strong customer service team. Hiring the right kind of skilled workforce having empathy, patience, good communication skills and knowledge is very important.
- The company should appreciate the efforts of the customer service team by rewarding the good performers with incentives, thus encouraging and motivating the employees to achieve customer service goals.
- Seeking customer feedback is a very crucial part; telephone surveys, a feedback form sent via email or establishing a complaint system will enable the customer raise their issues.

Q2. How could Pepperfry leverage this improved customer experience to achieve a competitive advantage for customers' next decision journeys?

Ans: Implementing live chats, trying AI chatbots and investing in helpful content can help in optimizing the company's online presence in digital world. The company should focus on cultivating a customer service culture of friendliness and positivity, the stores should be places where people feel safe and happy. Learning from competitors and their mistakes, thereafter making improvements will help to enhance customer experience. Building up reputation can provide an edge over competition by making strategies including extended warranties, clear return policies and responding to complaints consistently.