

BCOS-186

Personal Selling and Salesmanship

BLOCK

4

Sales Report, Ethics and Career Opportunities

UNIT 11

Report and Documents in Sales

UNIT 12

Ethics in Selling

UNIT 13

Skills for Salesperson

UNIT 14

Career Opportunities in Personal Selling

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BLOCK 4 SALES REPORT, ETHICS AND CAREER OPPORTUNITIES

In the previous block, you have learnt about the sales process. In this block, you will learn about the sales reports and documents, ethics in selling, salespersons skills and career opportunities in personal selling. This block consists of four units.

Unit 11 describes about the preparation of sales report, types of sales report and documents, essentials of good sales report and process of writing sales manual.

Unit 12 discusses the ethical aspects in selling, legal issues in selling and compliance techniques to ensure ethical selling.

Unit 13 discusses the various important skills for salesperson: Communication Skills, interpersonal Skills, persuading skills, organizational skills, and customer service Skills.

Unit 14 discusses the career avenues in personal selling, measures for making personal selling an attractive career and self-employment opportunities in personal selling.

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Unit 11: Report and Documents in Sales

Structure

- 11.0 Objectives
- 11.1 Introduction
- 11.2 Objectives of Making Sales Reports and Documents
- 11.3 Importance of Sales Reports
- 11.4 Types of Documents in Sales
 - 11.4.1 Progress or Call Report
 - 11.4.2 Sales Work Plan Report
 - 11.4.3 Expense Report
 - 11.4.4 New Business Report
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 - 11.6.1 Benefits of Sales Manual
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 - 11.6.4 Process of Writing a Sales Manual
 - 11.6.5 Features of a Good Sales Manual
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- 11.10 Let Us Sum Up
- 11.11 Key Words
- 11.12 Answers to Check Your Progress
- 11.13 Terminal Questions

11.0 OBJECTIVES

After studying this unit, you should be able to:

- explain the Sales Report and its components ;
- describe the objectives and the importance of the sales report;
- describe the various types of documents in the sales ;
- enumerate salient features of the good sales report ;
- develop Sales Manual ;
- explain the benefits, contents, and essentials of the Sales Manual; and
- discuss the features of a good sales manual .

11.1 INTRODUCTION

Sales report is the document in which sales activities within a specific time frame are recorded. It is also called a sales document. It is a concise document which lists down all the activities performed by different people in the field. The sales report is prepared and sent by sales people to the higher authorities in their department for evaluation and formulation of strategies for the upcoming activities. The managers of higher stature expect their team to make value generating reports that would encapsulate all that is required for data analysis. Data such as competitive course of actions, customer related statistics, reactions based on policies of the company and its products as well as services and so on are presented. The performance of sales force is also listed down in the sales report in a comprehensible manner. The pertinent data such as number of leads generated, number of orders placed, territories covered, number of new prospects etc. are entailed in the sales document. To be aware of the sales statistics, it is important to know what the contributions are in the salesforce and which areas require more attention to reach its full potential. In the process of sales, there are various stages which requires strategic planning with respect to the previous patterns that have been found by analyzing the past records. Therefore, sales reports make the job easier for the business leaders to come up with solutions as to how the sales statistics could be made better in the days to come. A sales analysis report typically contains all the data pertaining to the sales funnel and indicates the performance of the sales representatives as well. Growth initiatives or measures for sales and its approach could be simplified using the help of real time sales reports. There are different kinds of sales reports which are based on several KPIs (Key Performance Indicators) and frequencies. The sales documents contain explanations to the sales figures and their possible impact on future operations in the sales department. Sales documentation gives an insight into the future course of action and find the scope to enter new markets for increasing the sales. The reports vary depending on the time frame and the

number of leads generated. The documents can be made on a daily, weekly, or monthly basis. These reports would describe the trends over a certain period. Analyzing the data would help the sales representatives to enhance the performance of the entire team and produce better overall sales results. In this unit, you will learn about the objective of formulating the data in a sales report format and its importance in the process of improving the business motives of different organizations.

11.2 OBJECTIVES OF MAKING SALES RELATED REPORTS AND DOCUMENTS

A business leader needs a reliable and real time information system to create a functional sales process and channelize it in the desired manner. The sales representatives are in constant contact with the customers and are aware of the competition they are facing in the market. Therefore, they are the ones who have access to the first-hand data available. The sales reps can formulate the information through sales reports and documents. These reports and documents could be mundane if not put in a structured format. The best way to describe a sales report is to make it comprehensible so that it can communicate the analysis to the audience in a right manner. Every single aspect of sales data cannot be illustrated in a sales report. Thus, the most important thing to consider is that it must be portrayed in a way that it helps to attain the goals of an organization and fulfil its objectives.

The sales documents provide a detailed information on performance of sales reports. Some other purposes of sales related documents are providing enough material to assess the details of prospects contacted and the follow ups made. Apart from this, number of orders taken, miles covered in the assigned territory, number of days worked, costs incurred and so on are also entailed in the report. The suggestions and grievances of the customers do have a specific space in the sales report. This helps the business leaders to change the policies and programs in accordance with the suggestions given by customers. Based on previous sales documents, a salesperson would be able to channelize the new ideas into new innovative ways for capturing a greater number of territories with the help of advertisements, promotions, campaigns and so on. The objective of formulating a sales document is to give a detailed information for monitoring the performance. It helps to establish the possible ways of determining business opportunities. Some other objectives are mentioned as follows:

- a) To monitor and analyze the performance of sales representatives
- b) To analyze the customer satisfaction based on the data collected on the responses and reactions of customers.

- c) To understand the competition in the market and be aware of the activities of the competing firms.
- d) To mitigate the problems encountered by the sales representatives.
- e) To predetermine the changes occurring in the market conditions.
- f) Sales policies are made based on the data collected.
- g) To improvise the techniques of fulfilling the sales quota and achieve a greater number of sales territories.
- h) To reduce the costs incurred in performing sales and control extra expenses.

11.3 IMPORTANCE OF SALES REPORTS

Sales reporting and documentation might seem to be a daunting task. However, it is quite insightful for any company and is pertinent enough for its success. The performance of individuals can be portrayed via the articulated reports. It would help to find the best performing sales person. The documents will give proper information on where the best leads would be found and how well qualified those leads are. The use of big data would help in segregating large volumes of data pertaining to sales and simultaneously create well-structured reports. The challenges encountered with the sales pipeline can be very well identified using the reports. Sales reports give the utmost important set of data about the representatives or sales executives of the department. It provides valuable inputs on market trends and competitive analysis with respect to other companies. Important questions are addressed in the sales documents such as who the customers are, regions from where the leads are generated, the reason for delayed responses or any other loophole, performance figures related to the campaigns, and the closing rate. Sales report not just addresses questions like this but is also important in certain ways. The major importance of sales reports are as follows:

1. **Evaluating the revenue generating products offered by the company:** The sales related documents make it easy to comprehend which is the best product or service that is generating huge amount of revenue and has the potential to gain a greater number of customers. The reason why it becomes easy to evaluate is the structured way of articulating the expenses, analyzing the sales, assigning value to the products, and keeping the track of money incurred by the process of selling the products or services offered by the company. It facilitates the sales funnel by identifying the profits incurred by each product. The reporting process enables a sales representative to fine-tune the efforts spent on marketing and selling the products. The data can be

used to promote and advertise the goods which are generating opportunities in terms of wealth and customer loyalty for future growth of the company.

- 2. Monitor the slow-paced products:** The sales reports not only provide information on the most prominent products offering huge benefits but also find a way for determining which product is generating the least number of profits. It helps to locate the products which are moving in slow pace in the product line and offering the least benefit to the company. The data constituted in the sales document will be able to tell us how to optimize the existing resources. It shall help the executives to support the managers in designing strategies beneficial to the organization. The risks of over stocking can be reduced by the help of available data. The cost of reducing is too high, holding inventory can overshoot the expenses and incur losses in the process. Using the data available in the sales report one can manage price changes and use the technique of introducing discounts on products which are incurring losses.
- 3. Determining most profitable consumers:** The same way by which the sales report was helping the managers to find the products incurring profits, it shall also help them identify the profitable and potential customers. This seems to be a data holding a lot of value as it becomes a decisive factor where a company should invest more in order to gain new customers and retain the existing ones. It serves the purpose of brand loyalty. Customers are an asset to the company and the entire success rate of the company depends on how many new customers a brand is able to attract. This pertinent piece of information from the sales data will allow the companies to improve their customer retention policies and build on the strategies enabling customer loyalty. This can be done through various processes such as discounting on specific products, bonuses for the loyal customers and VIP services to the existing customers, so that they are satisfied and share their experiences with the use of word of mouth.
- 4. Finding more suitable prospects and different consequences:** The data in a sales document presents various trends and patterns and by visualizing such patterns it becomes much easier to detect the potential challenges and opportunities pertaining to the territories covered. If the sales data of a particular product indicates a growth in its sales volume, the inventory must be stocked in correct amount so that the supply meets the demands. The distribution channels must have the products in store so that there is no compromise in meeting the demands of the customers. Well, on the other hand if a product experiences slowdown in the sales figures, the managers can

simultaneously lower the prices or give additional discounts to attract customers. More investment on such products could be done, if the report of sales indicates otherwise, this will help in popularizing the products and increase its sales.

Check your Progress A

1. Which of the following statements are True and or False:
 - i. Sales report is the document in which activities of all the departments in a business are recorded.
 - ii. The managers of higher stature expect their team to make value generating reports that would encapsulate all that is required for data analysis.
 - iii. KPIs stands for Key Performance Institutions
 - iv. Sales reports helps in monitoring and analyzing the performance of sales representatives
2. **Fill in the Blanks**
 - i. Sales report gives the utmost important _____ about the representatives or sales executives of the department.
 - ii. Sales report facilitates the _____ by identifying the profits incurred by each product.
 - iii. Monitor the slow-paced _____ is possible through the sales report.
 - iv. The purpose of determining most profitable consumers is the look for the customers who have high _____.
 - v. A business leader needs a _____ and _____ information system

11.4 TYPES OF DOCUMENTS IN SALES

11.4.1 Progress or Call Report

A sales executive must make calls for generating leads each day, week, or month. The representative makes a note of each, and every person contacted on the company's behalf and makes an entry in the sales document. This is a first-hand entry in the report and is valuable to the organization. The data consists of all the accounts pertaining to different territory. The information listed in the document is necessary as it contains order details, competing brands, suitable slots provided to touch base with customers, and the negotiations done with the

representative. An example of a document which contains such information to be stored as sales work plan report is given in figure 11.1

Hindustan Unilever Limited (HUL), Mumbai

Name of Salesperson- Date-Week

Day	Name of Prospect	Place	Object of visit

It is the kind of report where basic planning and outlining of future programs are done. A report related to the sales work to be done in the near future is formulated and kept ready for the next course of action in the sales work. The important information such as accounts to be called, territories to be covered, travel plans for sales purpose, hotels to be checked in, any new contacts to be made, routes to be travelled for various purposes are articulated in advance by the salesperson, so that the sales program is done in a smooth and efficient manner. This report helps in scheduling and planning the entire journey of a sales representative. An example of a document which contains such information to be stored as sales work plan report is given in figure 11.1

[illegible]

Figure 11.1 Sales Report

This is also known as reimbursement report, where a sales executive records all the information related to the expenses incurred by him/her during a sales work. During their jobs, they have to travel various places and deal with different clients and customers. Hence, each month they need to record all their travel and related expenses in expense report so that they get an easy reimbursement for their duties. This kind of a report is also helpful in finding

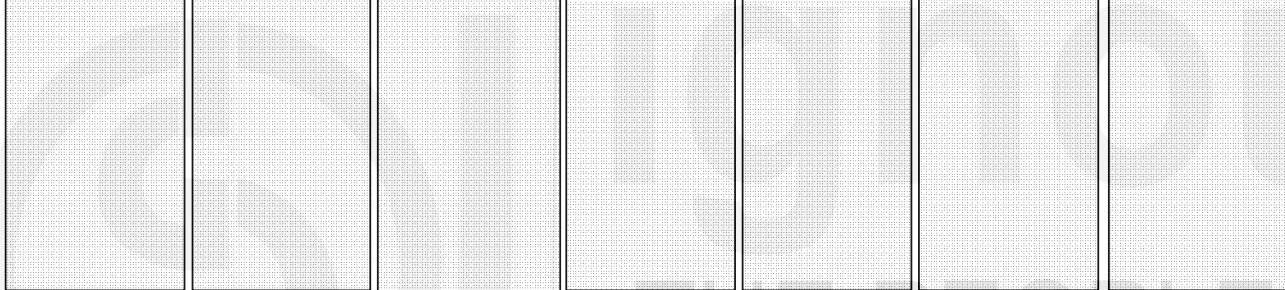


Figure 11.2 Expense Report

11.4.4 New Business Report

The new prospects identified are listed in such a report. The new business report consists of all the new businesses initiated during a certain time period. The performance of sales

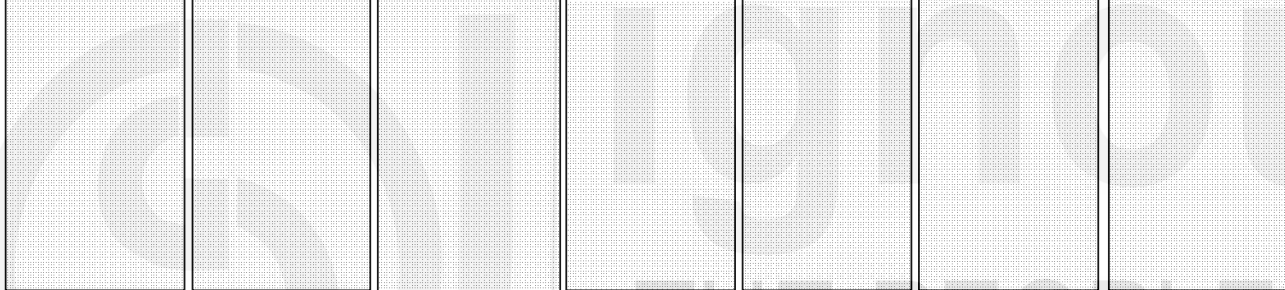


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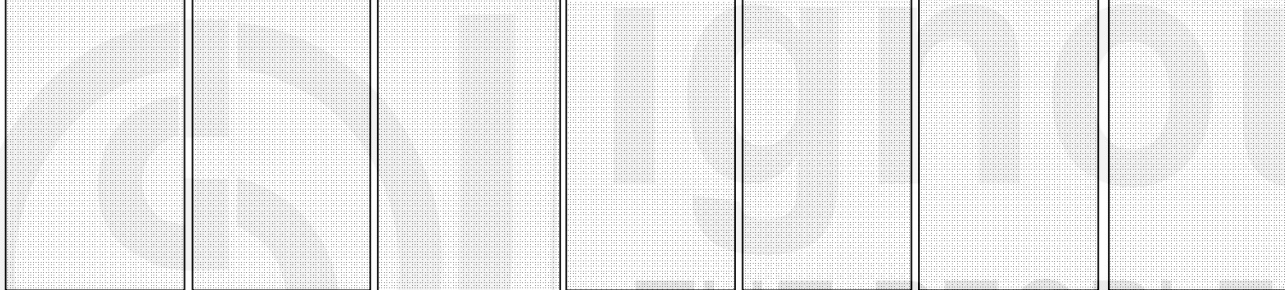


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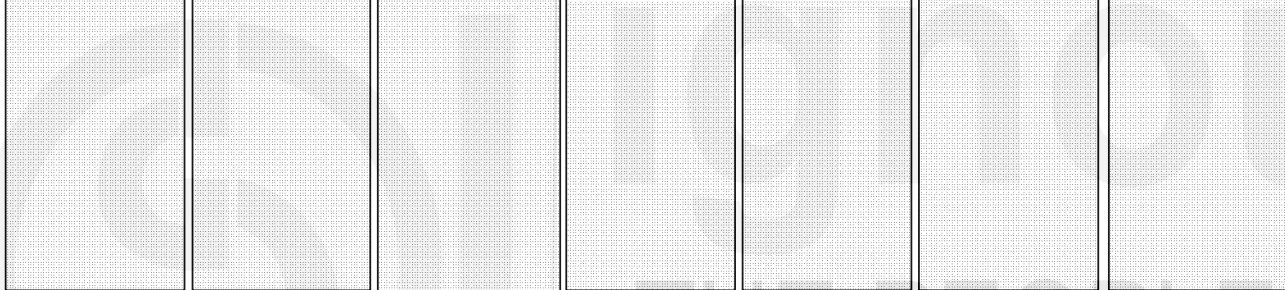


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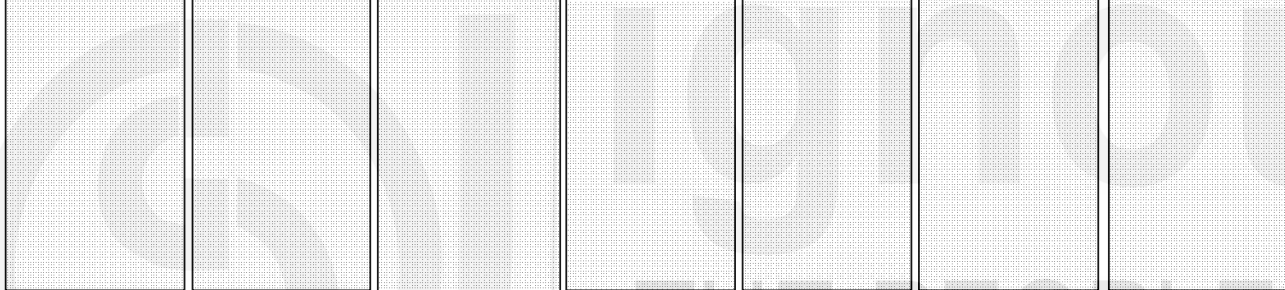


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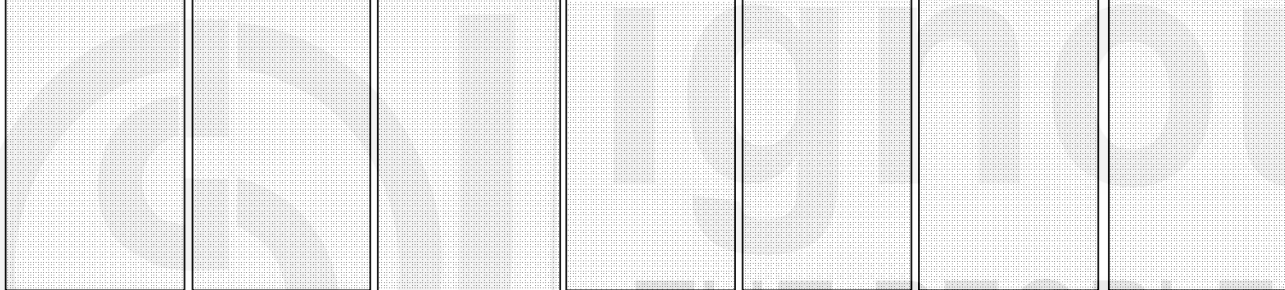


Figure 11.2 Expense Report

11.4.4 New Business Report

The new prospects identified are listed in such a report. The new business report consists of all the new businesses initiated during a certain time period. The performance of sales

information on preventing future losses by improving the sales techniques such as customer service improvement, salesperson training, improvement of products and so on.

11.4.6 Complaints and Adjustments Report

It records all the important complaints and the modifications done in the policies related to products and services of the organization. The report generated by a salesman is evaluated and analysed by the higher authorities with respect to the complaints registered. The amount spent for complaint adjustment and all the complaints associated to a sales representative's work is analysed by the existing information in the report. The reasons in the form of specific clauses are mentioned in this document. The steps of resolving the problem, redressal of the grievances and complaints are recorded along with the complaints in the document. The adjustment report contains information about the response given with respect to the grievance mentioned in the report. The letter of complaint entails details about the request of the customers for compensation or refund of the damaged or defective products, bad services, or delay in delivering any service to the customers. The complaints which are made in person are recorded in complaints and adjustment reports. The reason behind this is effective and formal handling of the complaints such that these are not repeated in future. The diplomacy and dignity are maintained if the grievances are kept formal and recorded with respective dates and instances.

There are quite a few important points to keep in mind while documenting a complaint report.

The process to write a complaint or adjustment report is as follows:

- The reason for document the grievances or complaints is the priority and should be mentioned in the beginning. The details of the situation must be mentioned at a later stage.
- A description of the problem should be mentioned next along with the evidence.
- The compensation or any kind of solution which is demanded must be stated at this stage.
- The reason for accepting or granting the request could also be mentioned to make the report more detailed and structured.
- Suggestions or feedback related to the service has to be mentioned at the final step to make the organization aware of the consequences such as losing customer or reputation in the industry.

Adjustment reports are basically the solutions implied or the responses given with respect to the complaints registered. These must be handled carefully and effectively if in case the refund cannot be generated for a specific product or service. The letters for adjustment must be written in such a manner that it does not hurt the sentiments or trust of other people. The reference must be given according to the date at which the complaint was registered. In the adjustment document, concern must be expressed with respect to a specific grievance along with the solution given for dealing with the case.

11.5 SALIENT FEATURES OF A GOOD SALES REPORT

An ideal sales report follows the 4 C's - "Clear, Concise, Complete and Correct". There are several instances where a presentation based on sales reports are shown but they appear too confusing and are complex in nature. This kind of a presentation would lead to wrong interpretations and false expectations. Therefore, it is important to create the reports in a manner they are supposed to be presented, i.e., readable, comprehensible and must be interpreted in a proper way.

For appraising a sales team, a manager would require all the details pertaining to the sales made, prospects gained, revenue generated and so on. The sales department of any company is the most vital part of it. Since, the sales team is doing the groundwork of attracting customers and retaining them. They are the first point of contact with the customers. The details pertaining to the sales report shall give a path to understand which products have to be discontinued in future, how many employees to hire in the sales team, what number of bonuses to be paid and so on and so forth. This information entailed in a sales report are critical to the success of an organization. It is important that sales executives must create properly structured, clear, and comprehensible reports and documents of sales work so that they are able to show the pertinent information in order to save the company from losses and create a smooth path for continuous success and growth in the future.

The information stored in various places grows bigger and bigger in size and managers find it very difficult to sort it and analyse which information is useful and which is not. The managers must guide their representatives about the sales documents and the process of creating it so that they are aware about the nuances of it and are able to portray the information in such a manner that it becomes useful for the entire team and the enterprise at large. The audience must be known to the managers as well as the salespeople and the

requirement of specific information should also be determined beforehand. This would help in creation of a concise and clear sales report.

The data should be aligned with the vision of the audience and decision making must be based on the report to make sure that the enterprise is on the correct track. It is important to find the appropriate time to focus on, i.e., weekly, monthly, or yearly. The focus of the sales document will be identified by the time of the report. Annual reports give a comprehensive information about the trends of products and services of a company. Important information such as buying behaviour of customers, new initiatives of marketing, new product development, the fluctuations in the trend at various occasions are included in the report. The data allows a user to compare the results of sales and make improvements for the same.

The sales report should be easily perceivable, and it should have the ability to convey the interpretation just the way it should be. The data must be readable, comprehensive, and understandable at the same time. Through the help of graphs and pie charts, the data in simple tables can look much cleaner and the trend can be seen in a proper way. Only a reliable set of data in a sales report can be used to make it solid evidence for decision making. The size of an enterprise may differ but there is a need to install a reliable and robust software to track and analyse the sales data before crafting a report. Customer Relationship Management (CRM) helps a company to design the most important data sets inclusive of all the major aspects in a sales report. A well-adapted CRM gives an unparalleled set of information which is useful for many purposes.

The sales representatives might find it interesting to capture all sorts of data in a sales report. However, data such as number of calls made could be of less important to the higher management as compared to number of orders taken. Therefore, the main objective of a sales executive would be to show only that information which seems useful for taking action. The list would comprise of daily call report, productivity report, the sales pipeline, the forecast or prediction of sales and finally the sales forecast for the upcoming terms. The data can be forged, or the numbers can be twisted. These numbers would never tell a perfect story of the sales work done. Therefore, the sales representatives are expected to show the data in a way that it can be visualized by the management in an appropriate manner. The sales document must be made interesting with the use of graphs, pie charts, histograms and so on. The numbers must be aligned to the context. For instance, the sales of previous month went down tremendously, the management would look for a possible reason. The sales report must be

able to indicate that the sales went down because of tropical storm or any other reason and the impact was huge. It was the reason behind a smaller number of sales made in the territory which attracted a huge customer base. It should be shown that the predicted sales data shows a rise in the coming months. This kind of a story or a context should be attributed along with the predicted sales data. This will help the team to determine the actual trend followed.

Check Your Progress B

1. Which of the following statements are True or False:
 - i. A General Manager must make sales calls for generating leads each day, week, or month.
 - ii. A report related to the sales work to be done in the near future is formulated and kept ready for the next course of action in the sales work.
 - iii. Expense Report is also known as reimbursement report.
 - iv. The new business report consists of all the new businesses initiated during a certain time period.
 - v. Loss Sales Report contains all the required details bad debts.

2. Fill in the Blanks

- i. _____ records all the important complaints and the modifications done in the policies related to products and services of the organization.
- ii. Adjustment reports are basically the _____ implied or the responses given with respect to the complaints registered.
- iii. An ideal sales report follows the 4 C's - "Clear, _____, Complete and Correct".
- iv. The data should be aligned with the _____ of the audience to make sure that the enterprise is on the correct track.
- v. The _____ helps a company to design the most important data sets inclusive of all the major aspects in a sales report.

11.6 SALES MANUAL

The sales manual is guide stating the best policy, practices, procedures, and protocols that guide the salespersons throughout their sales efforts. Such manuals also set the standards for their performance. The sales representatives who generate revenue tremendously by showing their efforts are crucial for the company. Companies have seen success because of certain reasons. The sales team of a flourishing company has access to all the information required to bring about positive changes in an organization. They are updated with all the scenarios

which makes them more effective and smarter. The companies provide adequate and real time data to the sales personnel to support them with all the means for generating larger revenues by contacting a greater number of prospects. The trainings provided to sales team are indispensable for the growth of the company. The sales manual created by personnel of an enterprise is shared among all others and the sales team is most benefitted by such handbooks.

It is a key resource for the sales team as it is an essential part of the training provided to the personnel. All such information which is required by the team is present in the manual and it assures a trustworthy performance of the sales associates. The selling process of a company is taught through the use of sales manual. The sales personnel are educated through the handbook about the major benefits, advantages pertaining to the process and the way things are done in the organization. The associates can also be made aware of the competitive markets through the sales manual. It will serve as a guide that shall teach the associates about closing prospects.

The manual must be a living document and it should be updated in a timely manner. The manual has to entail all the ongoing sales processes along with the policies and practices of the company. However, the sales manual would not suffice, so the sales associate has to go through a rigorous on-the-job training to get a practical view of the things. The sales manual acts as a complement to the training via mentors and is an additional help given to the sales team.

11.6.1 Benefits of Sales Manual

The ever-increasing success rate of some companies is only because of a robust sales team which is well equipped with the resources, properly trained and knows how to deal with customers. The advantages of the products and services offered by a particular company should be known accurately to the sales teams. The key skills of negotiation, fluent communication skills and a positive outlook helps the sales team to connect with the consumers. However, this must be complemented with an adequate training which makes them aware of the functionalities of the department, the uniqueness of the products and the competitive advantage they have over others. The sales personnel of competitive firms are educated about the policies, programs, benefits of the products offered, and many other things which are imperative to the whole system. That is the sole reason why competitive

enterprises keeps the sales team updated. This is done by the sales manual as it provides the key metrics and standards of the performance expected. The sales document essentially provides a huge number of benefits. Some of which are listed as follows-

- a) **The perspective of the employees is common.** It is beneficial in keeping the personnel on the same page. When the goals and objectives are common, it is advantageous for any firm as there would be a smaller number of conflicts and the work would follow a smooth path. This paves the way for efficient and trustworthy communication across all the functional teams. The sales manual eradicates any miscommunication and eliminates any kind of confusion among the teams while they are contacting the prospects.
- b) **The priorities of the company are set straight, and the sales team is tactfully aligned with the objectives of the company.** The manual is also a one stop solution for the sales department to understand how is their performance benefiting the whole organization. The process of sales is repetitive and is recorded in the sales document to be followed by the team to enhance the system of on boarding and making the organizational culture effective.
- c) **Improving the arrangement of sales and marketing process.** The sales manual builds the developmental goals and helps to achieve the same. The sales and marketing process are aligned together and promoted for capturing the market and increasing the customer base.
- d) **It equips the sales team with the tools and techniques they need.** An appropriate sales manual gives the sales personnel the instruments they need to close, any additional arrangements they need for transforming the possible prospects into purchasers. The sales personnel will see how to conquer dismissals or rejections and address the organization's incentive. As time passes, this shall also assist the managers with expanding their deals and reach the main goal.

There are key resources required for performing better in any department. On this note, sales representatives also look for useful information which shall help them to take their performance to next level. The managers pass on important documents, handbooks, and manuals for their benefit. There is a huge competition in the market and companies are striving hard to give their best efforts in whichever ways possible. The sales representatives of several firms are trying to gain a competitive edge over others. Having said this, it is important to look out what would make the sales department of a particular company effective and what are the ways by which they can give the best results. The sales manuals

are such tools which gives an edge over others because lots of things depend on these manuals. The training of the sales personnel is somewhat dependent on these manuals. The manuals provide a concise and clear content to the personnel for understanding the plans better.

It is believed that the quickest way of expanding the business or growing sale of items is to teach the sales force the vital elements and advantages of the offerings, novel benefits of the item, how to sell the item, and the opposition or rivals in the market. The performance of the organization relies upon its sales group's performance and ability to make a mark on the consumers. That is the reason shrewd organizations keep sales teams exceptionally educated pretty much everything about the fundamentals, which is absolutely important for being savvy and compelling. They supply resources to the sales personnel so that their needs are met, and they are able to do the work outstandingly well and keep them all around prepared. The business manual teaches strategy, techniques, best practices and how-to direct the team and in which direction. It clarifies all the conventions and cycle of doing the job in a perfect manner.

It gives guidelines of performing sales. In all such cases, brevity and a good enterprise consists of a well-crafted sales manual. Such manual which is significant on the grounds that sales representatives do not have enough of time to read the information, and they need fast access to the data. It is important that the business manual is succinct and provides quality data.

11.6.2 Contents of Sales Manual

Contact information-The information pertaining to contacts of several people associated to different domains are articulated in the sales document. It incorporates telephone numbers and email address where salesman can get extra data about the product or service.

Selling strategies-“The outline target market, market size, sales cycle, ideal client profile, rundown of current clients, references, press notices and examples of overcoming adversity are included. In case this is a one-page sales guide, the data should be kept to one passage listed in bullet points.

These techniques incorporate objective market, market size, sales cycle, ideal client profile, rundown of current clients or consumers and references.

Products and demonstration of products-Positioning of the item, how does it squeeze into the general product offering, a listing of key elements and advantages, demonstration

features, highlights are most normal customer questions, and statements related to product updates. For a one-page sales guide utilize just the main three vital components and advantages. The positioning of products in the product line offering, key provisions and advantages, features, highlights, exhibits, most normal customer facing questions are the important aspects which needs to be looked closely. Hence, these are stated explicitly.

Competition-A list of key competitors with a component framework is the most ideal way of showing this important data. It is pertinent to remember to incorporate pricing of the products and services offered. Short reviews on key contenders including qualities, loopholes, and an outline of their system can be valuable only if there are a couple of competitors. Since numerous competitors fall into comparable classes one might need to picture a wider technique for going up against these key competitors in those classifications. One might likewise need to incorporate reviews of what the will competitor say to the existing customers.

The manual states the products, valuation, qualities, shortcomings, and techniques or strategies of main competitors. The manual includes:

- Pricing or valuation: Includes estimating, requesting and so on.
- Guarantee: Data sheets, leaflets, pamphlet, and white papers.
- Presentation of sales: Video or presentations which are made online is consistently helpful.
- Glossary: Terms and abbreviations related with the product or service.
- Record or index: If the business manual is extended, indexing is pertinent.
- Reference material: List of reference for more item information, similar to an organization site.

11.6.3 Essentials of an Effective Sales Manual

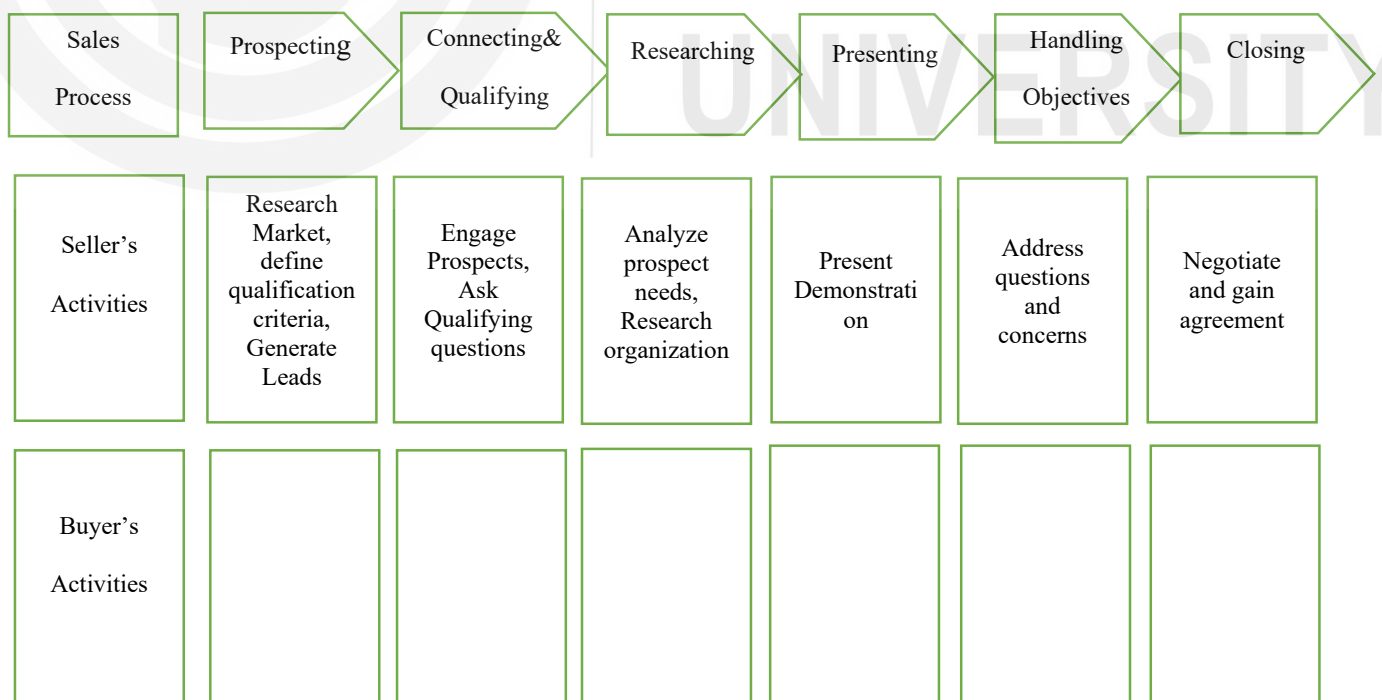
An intensive and very well-planned sales manual is a significant asset for the sales group's growth and success. It is through the sales manual that business partners get a major piece of their preparation and solid information structure. The manual should be reliable and important to guarantee trustworthy and efficient performance.

Few important aspects to keep in mind while creating a sales manual are mentioned below-

- a) **A spectacular format-** Nobody will peruse the whole manual. It is significant that the necessary data is introduced and presented to the audience in an attractive and attention

catching manner. There should be legitimate chapter by chapter list, clear headings for each area and subsections, index file and glossary terms. Utilization of charts, tables and representations be made to sum up the complex data.

We covered the sales cycle ventures above, and presently it is an ideal opportunity to walk through each progression in accordance with the business, products, and sales group. Analysing the customer interaction history is quite important. What steps were compelling, and where did the sales did not hit the targets, all these things considered, the number of orders taken, and revenue generated out of those. With the other sales representatives in the sales team, it can be planned simultaneously as to what actions can be taken and what are the things that have to be prevented during interaction with the customers. All these key aspects of Dos and Don'ts are mentioned in the sales report. For instance, Fred's sales group maps the six sales measure steps and formulates the moves they make inside each stage. Similarly, they survey the most recent a year of sales movement with respect to each territory they cover to get where they can further develop their new sales cycle to meet their new objective. The figure given below is an example of a process chart in a sales report, wherein the sellers and buyers actions can be noted down in a structured format.



- b) ***Concise and crisp:*** The length of the sales manual will fluctuate based on the main interest group and the nature and number of product choices available.
- c) ***Keeping in mind the buzz words:*** Any sales representative may be new to the trendy expressions of the business. Articulation should be made in such a way that it is basic, simple, and easy to understand. The fundamentals and glossary terms must be made clear if they are used in the sales manual.
- d) ***Properly defined consumer sections:*** Sales personnel will frequently duplicate pieces of the business manual and handover it to the consumers. Areas of the manual should be appropriately distinguished.
- e) ***Updating the manual consistently:*** A business sales guide, which is obsolete, is futile. A newly updated sales document keeps the sales representative educated with regards to the advancements inside the organization and new competitive declarations.

11.6.4 Process of Writing a Sales Manual

A sales manual is a document helping sales associates in the department for transforming probable prospects into closed ones. Sales manuals must be working drafts and renewed consistently to show case the current approaches and practices. It is imperative for the sales associates to remember organizing and keeping in mind the length while making the sales manual. The personnel should track down all crucial information quickly and also in an effective manner.

The organization's sales manual is the department's methods for making the progress in the sales work. It tells the representatives about the products a company is selling, yet in addition "where, why, how and to whom". So, in the event that a manager does not have one, it is an ideal opportunity to think of one. The business is run by the sales force who is making a direct contact. A sales manual in any business will put new and prepared sales staff in total agreement. It shall help the sales team to adjust itself appropriately with the rest of the organization, the managers must instruct their salesmen on the advertising objectives and drives and furthermore motivate and empower them with the apparatuses they need to make it happen.

To get everything rolling, the sales managers should decide how do they intend to convey the sales manual to the sales team. It is pertinent to firstly, get coordinated prior to settling on

which parts to remember for the manual. Numerous managers believe that a format or an outline is a decent way of finding all the essential data in one place. Without getting sorted out and making a layout, they would probably overstuff the manual with unessential data. Therefore, it is necessary to carve a niche for filling in the valuable data as required.

In the draft for the sales manual, one must utilize the principal subjects one needs to cover as section headings, then, at that point, the significant focuses or steps as subheads must be listed down. For instance, “keeping consistent sales records, importance of record-keeping, tools for issuing, accurate sales receipts, follow-up using sales records”.

The manual must be filled with all the assembled and related material including duplicate of products offered, datasheet, presentation, market prerequisite, records, several other things. It is of importance to figure out which showcasing data needs refreshing or another one must be made. Investing energy with product managers who have done the sales calls and knows the product extremely well and getting pertinent data from them is a major step to make the sales manual. Role plays can be done if possible, spending time with experienced salesmen to know where they have been effective, spending time with new sales delegates and ask how they feel, writing a first draft of all material, logically evaluating segments as they are finished with the proper product supervisor, having a couple of sales representatives, survey the report for culmination, reviewing the draft with product manager and other fitting individuals, and finally writing the last draft and distributing the sales document. These would sum up the entire process of drafting an effective sales manual.

11.6.5 Features of a Good Sales Manual

Present day businesses must attempt to foster their products and services as a critical component of their development and achievement. Similarly, it is also significant that the sales staff is the vehicle that moves products and services under the control of the customers. It is proven that a sales manual improves the sales associates' ability to perform. Therefore, a well-formulated sales manual is a key to organization's success. It is imperative to compose a sales instructional booklet that will give salesmen the information, aptitude, and devices important to takeover the market.

An exhaustive and all-around planned sales document is a significant asset for sales associates' success. It is through sales manual that the sales personnel get a major piece of their preparation or training, solid data structure and reliable inputs in the manual are

absolutely necessary to guarantee an effective performance. An attractive format, proper concise length, effective pronunciation, and properly demarcated sections and regular updates in the manual are essentials of an effective sales manual.

11.7 ORDER BOOK

An order book is an electronic register of purchase and sell orders for all the product levels. It is updated regularly and is considered to be a significant record containing all the details of products offered by the company in the market. The request book assists sellers with checking the condition of the products at any particular instance. Order books have significantly worked on the steps at which orders are taken and in the process of being a value for commercial purposes. The purchase and sell orders recorded in an order book are guided along with the cost. The book additionally shows the number of offers and offers are at each product level. It can recognize any changes in orders on either during purchase or selling, giving obvious directions with regards to the changes in selling pattern of a product. The structure of an order book can fluctuate between the recorded guidelines. It typically comprises of a few important aspects as mentioned below:

Features of an Order Book

Customers and sales personnel's view of an order book: An order book is a market price register. It incorporates a buyer's view as well as the representative's view. They are the two most significant parties in a market.

Offer and inquire: Rather than understanding any party's view, some order books utilize the expressions "bid" and "ask." Buyers are the ones who "bid" for a specific number of offers at a predefined cost, and vendors "inquire" at a particular cost for their portions. As a guideline, the purchaser's side (bid) is on the left, and the vender's side (ask) is on the right, shaded green and red, individually.

Costs: An order book records the value of interest of the two sides. The number in the purchaser's or alternately the salesperson's segments address the sum they are offering or requesting and at what cost.

All out: The absolute sections are the total measures of the particular security sold from various costs.

Visual exhibition: Primarily, an order book comprises of a table of numbers comprising of costs and aggregate totals from different sides. To more likely address the connection among

purchasers and sellers, most of the request books accompany a visual presentation too. It tends to be a kind of detailed structure comprising of all the detailed information about the orders at all stages.

An order book is an organization's list containing different aspects such as orders from customers which are open, unshipped, client orders, ordinarily time-staged and esteemed at real individual request costs. This is additionally alluded to as sales request book. This book contains the subtleties of "sales request, the salesperson, and merchants name, sales request number, number of the voucher, type of the voucher, request reference number, request sum and so on".

11.8 CASH MEMO

In case the products are sold in real cash, the seller prepares a money reminder. In case there is an occurrence of credit sales, a receipt is already prepared. In any case, the meaning for both remains same. A cash memo typically contains the following:

- 1) Name and address of purchaser
- 2) Name and address of buyer
- 3) Serial number and date
- 4) Customer/buyer request number
- 5) Description of products
- 6) Rates and aggregate sum
- 7) Discount
- 8) Tax subtleties
- 9) Total sum in words and figures.

It is not quite the same as money receipt as the latter is an affirmation of the cash received.

Cash Memo is a business document given by the seller to the buyer when cash is accepted as a payment. At the point when a merchant sells any product for cash, he gives a cash memo and when he buys products for cash, he gets a money update. Insights about the things, amount, rate, and the cost are referenced in the cash memo. It functions as a proof of cash

instalment made. In straightforward words, we can say that a Cash memo is a record expressing cash received for products sold. It is paid as a token of bill for cash sales.

The contents of Cash Memo

The contents of the cash memo are as follow:

1. Date
2. Serial Number
3. Name and address of provider
4. Name and address of purchaser
5. Unit cost of merchandise
6. Amount serial number, date of travel, method of accommodation, motivation behind visit.
7. Discount (assuming any, both for exchange and money rebate)
8. Assessment (GST or other all things considered)
9. Aggregate amount received
10. Signature of the cashier.

11.9 TOUR DIARY

A tour diary is a little book kept up with by sales representative containing the subtleties of deals visits made by him or her during a given period. It helps the sales associate to report about the endeavors made by him or her. It might contain the following data:

- a) Names of spots visited (cities/states/country)
- b) Dates on which visit is made
- c) Mode of transport utilized
- d) Expenses caused on movement
- e) Names and details of imminent customers
- f) Result of visits as far as request, any kind of feedback and so on

Check Your Progress C

- 1. Which of the Following Statements are True or False.**

- i. The sales report is guide stating the best policy, practices, procedures, and protocols that guide the salespersons throughout their sales efforts.
- ii. The trainings provided to sales team are indispensable for the growth of the company.
- iii. The manual must be a living document and it should be updated in a timely manner.
- iv. The priorities of the company are set straight, and the sales team is tactfully aligned with the objectives of its competitors.

2. Fill in the Blanks

- i. The companies should provide adequate and _____ to the sales personnel to support them.
 - i. The key skills of negotiation, fluent communication skills and a _____ helps the sales team to connect with the consumers.
 - ii. Products and demonstration of products is one of the important contents of _____.
 - iii. An intensive and very well-planned sales manual is a significant asset for the sales group's _____ and _____.
 - iv. Sales manuals must be _____ and renewed consistently to showcase the current approaches and practices.
 - v. An _____ is an electronic register of purchase and sell orders for all the product levels.

11.10 LET US SUM UP

Planning a sales cycle shall help a sales group to close more prospects and convert a greater number of leads. This will surely guarantee that the sales team furnishes each prospect with a reliable service that is illustrative of the brand image of the company. It helps to conclude that the sales representatives must follow these means to make and guide a business interaction customized to the business, sales group, and clients to support changes and develop enduring connections in the present scenario. Whenever it is planned that a sales associate has to interact with customers, he or she has to make all supporting report formats, one must incorporate them into a full SOP manual. The next step would be to arrange the manual dependent on offices. For instance, they may have "sales," "activities" and "distribution" areas in the SOP manual. Each segment would then be separated further into the center cycles of that office, by and large in the request each center interaction happens in the

general conveyance of products. In the "Distribution" segment, one could have a few center cycles that incorporate "acquiring the order," "preparing for delivery," "transportation" and "following up with the customers or clients." It is imperative to arrange the SOP manual with a chapter-by-chapter list, and unmistakably list down every methodology in an intense title header. One might even incorporate tabs for colleagues to effectively flip through the manual, to assist them with finding appropriate SOPs in their areas of expertise. For any cycle, it is simpler for sales associates to follow a structure or agenda. Fostering a far-reaching format dependent on the planned interaction. On the off chance, a sales associate needs to gather explicit data at the customer interaction step, ensuring the layout has all necessary data spread out compactly. It is pertinent to accept the steps taken during the sales process and take actions according to all that is listed in the SOP, particularly when they are confronting a customer. Incorporating the plans and structures as an addendum to the sales manual, the process would be smooth and generate huge amount of revenue for the company.

11.11 KEY WORDS

Sales Report: Sales report is the document in which sales activities within a specific time frame are recorded. It is also called a sales document.

Most Profitable Consumers: These are the customers from whom the business gets maximum revenue. They are the loyal customers of a business.

Progress or Call Report: This report is the record of calls made by a sales executive for generating leads each day, week, or month.

The representative makes a note of each, and every person contacted on the company's behalf and makes an entry in the sales document.

Sales Work Plan Report: It is the kind of report where basic planning and outlining of future programme are done.

Expense Report: This report contains all the information related to the expenses incurred by him/her during a sales work.

New Business Report: The new prospects identified are listed in such a report. The new business report consists of all the new businesses initiated during a certain time period.

Loss Sales Report: There is a possibility of losing sales during a sales process. This document would contain all the required details of all such orders and customers lost during a given period.

Complaints and Adjustments Report: It records all the important complaints and the modifications done in the policies related to products and services of the organization.

Order Book: An order book is an electronic register of purchase and sell orders for all the product levels.

11.12 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

A. 1. i. False ii. True iii. False iv. True

2. i. Set of Data ii. Sales Funnel iii. Products iv. Brand Loyalty v. Reliable and Real Time

B.1.i. False ii. True iii. True iv. True v. False

2. i. Complaints and Adjustments Report ii. Solutions iii. Concise iv. Vision v. CRM (Customer Relationship Management)

C.1. i. False ii. True iii. True iv. False

2. i. real time data ii. positive outlook iii. Sales Manual iv. growth and success v. working drafts vi. order book

11.13 TERMINAL QUESTIONS

1. Define Sales Report. Discuss the various objective of making sales related reports and documents.
2. Briefly explain about the various types of documents in the sales
3. Write notes on the following
 - a. Progress or Call Report
 - b. New Business Report
 - c. Loss Sales Report
4. Draw the format of Sales Work Plan Report Expense Report and explain the meaning along with the examples.
5. Explain the salient features of a good sales report using suitable examples.
6. Define Sales Manual. What are the benefits of Sales Manual?

7. Describe the Contents of Sales Manual.
8. Explain the Essentials of an effective Sales Manual.
9. Explain in detail the process of writing a sales manual.
10. What are the features of a good sales manual? Explain.
11. What do you mean by an Order Book? Discuss the various features of an order book.
12. Write notes on the following:
 - a. Cash Memo
 - b. Tour Diary

SOME USEFUL BOOKS

Gupta S. L., 2008, Sales and Distribution Management, Text and Cases, An Indian Perspective, Excel Books, New Delhi. (Chapter 8, Chapter 12)

Still, R. R., Cundiff, E. W., Govoni, N. A. P., 2009, Sales Management, Decision, Strategies and Cases, Pearson Prentice Hall, New Delhi (Chapter 19)

Sahu, P. K., 2008, Salesmanship and Sales Management, Vikas Publishing House Private Limited, New Delhi. (Chapter 21)

Tyagi C. L., Kumar A., 2004, Sales Management, Atlantic Publishers and Distributors, New Delhi (Chapter 19)

UNIT 12 ETHICS IN SELLING

Structure

- 12.0 Objectives
- 12.1 Introduction
 - 12.1.1 What is meant by Ethics?
 - 12.1.2 What is Ethical Selling
- 12.2 Nature and Characteristics of Ethical Selling
- 12.3 Importance of Ethics in Selling
- 12.4 Types of Ethical Behaviour in Sales
- 12.5 Ethical Aspects and Legal Issues in Selling
- 12.6 Compliance Techniques to Ensure Ethical Selling
- 12.7 Developing an Ethical Sales Code of Conduct
- 12.8 Let Us Sum Up
- 12.9 Answers to Check Your Progress
- 12.10 Terminal Questions

12.0 OBJECTIVES

After studying this unit, you should be able to:

- explain the meaning of ethics and ethical selling;
- describe the nature and characteristics of ethical selling;
- discuss the significance of ethics in sales;
- enumerate different types of ethical behavior;
- develop an insight into various ethical and legal aspects in selling;
- appreciate the different ways and techniques to ensure selling ; and
- suggest how to develop a code of conduct for ethical selling.

12.1 INTRODUCTION

Ethics has gained a lot of importance in the world of business today. Ethics plays an important role in running a business and all its affairs in a manner that all the stakeholders are assured of transparency, adequacy and morality in the conduct of a business. Ethics is an omnipresent and inevitable part of every functional area of business including financial reporting, information sharing, tax payment, customer dealing and selling activities. It is not only implemented for the sake of others but also is beneficial for the business and the companies following it. In this unit, we will discuss the meaning of ethics and ethical selling, its nature and importance. Further, we will understand the different types of ethical behaviour and various ethical aspects of selling. We will also discuss the legal issues involved in selling alongwith different techniques of compliance that can help in ensuring ethical selling. Towards the end, we will highlight the ways to develop a code of ethical selling. The learners will be able to get an in depth understanding of the benefits that can help a business sustain itself in the long run by implementing ethical ways of business and selling in the market.

12.1.1 WHAT IS MEANT BY ETHICS?

Ethics refers to the field of study that guides an individual in deciding what is good or bad, right or wrong, fair or unfair. It is believed to be a set of principles based on morality about human conduct or behaviour across different situations. The term ethics has been derived from the Greek word ‘ethos’ which means character, ideals or standards. Ethics not only applies to personal lives but also are applicable to every domain of professional and organizational lives too.

In words of Dale S. Beach, “Ethics refers to a set of moral Principles which should play a very significant role in guiding the conduct of managers and employees in the operation of any enterprise.” Ethics, therefore, addresses the issue of what ought to be at the group or societal level as well as at the personal front of an individual.

12.1.2 WHAT IS ETHICAL SELLING?

Ethics in selling or ethical selling deals with all the moral issues related to a company’s efforts or activities that are made in the direction of persuading or convincing customers to buy the product of the company. It refers to a set of behavioural standards that ensure that every lead, prospect and customer is given a treatment of respect, fairness, honesty and integrity.

Sales Ethics ensures use of trustworthy sales practices, honest selling techniques, sharing accurate and relevant information with customers and showing honest concern for their needs when selling the products. In other words, ethics in selling represents a philosophy of a company to follow value-oriented, clean and transparent selling practices when dealing with the customers. It also directly or indirectly persuades the salespeople to maintain their professional integrity in every interaction with customers or the prospects.

Clarity in defining and communicating a proper code of sales ethics will help a business meet its ethical obligations. Implementing ethical sales practices is considered to be good business which helps it in earning customer faith, trust and loyalty and strengthens its goodwill. Ethical selling is a sort of promise to the customer that he will neither be overcharged nor will he be exploited by the seller or any of his representatives in any way.

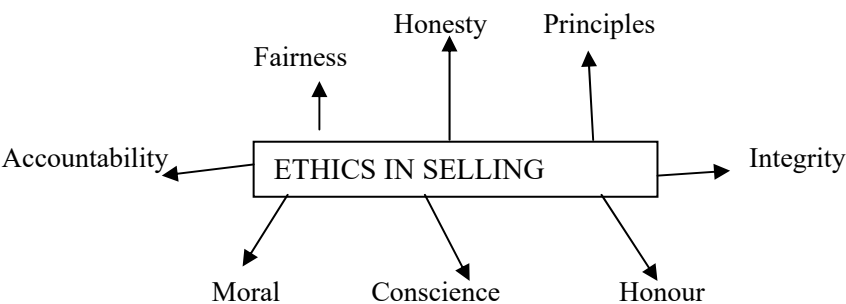


Figure1. Elements of Ethics in selling

In short, in case of ethical selling, the salesperson must try selling what customers want instead of selling by any means necessary to just sell. For example, in a selling situation, a salesperson can be ethical by being truthful about the features, usage and technical aspects of a product or service. This will not only be good for him in the present situation but also will be fetching him good results in future too. Being ethical reflects the personal and professional values of the salesperson in any selling situation.

12.2 NATURE AND CHARACTERISTICS OF ETHICAL SELLING

The characteristics of Ethical Selling in a business enterprise may be outlined as follows:

- 1 It is a **wide** term that encompasses all the activities related to sale of products.
- 2 . Ethics in selling imposes a degree of **self-imposed discipline** on the part of salesmen or sales representatives.
3. Ethical selling is a mark of **good corporate citizenship**.
4. It keeps **customers at the core** and respects them through **value-oriented** selling and business practices.
5. It is closely **related to Business Ethics** and Values.
- 6 The purpose of ethical selling is to be **honest and transparent** in dealing with customers at all the stages of an exchange transaction.
- 7 Ethics in selling may be implemented in different ways which **vary** from business to business.
- 8 Ethics reflects the **core philosophy, vision and attitude** of the organization.

12.3 IMPORTANCE OF ETHICS IN SELLING

Ethics holds great deal of importance in business. Business and its existence are dependent upon the support of customers and the society at large. Ethical selling makes sure that the business adopts right selling practices and gains customer support in the long run. There are several benefits that a business can enjoy by being ethical towards its customers and other stakeholders. Also not only the business but salespeople and even customers enjoy benefits if there is a system of ethics prevailing within the selling environment. The points to justify the importance of ethical selling include:

A) Benefits to the Company or manufacturer

1. Ethical dealings in selling **build a goodwill** that may be helping the

business in the long run. The business can enjoy good public image if it adopts ethical selling ways and techniques and thereby keep the customers assured of right business. It is in the interest of business itself to follow ethics in its practices.

2. It helps a business earn **public/societal support**. By being ethical and following right selling practices, a business earns public faith and support. The societal members are assured of justified conduct on part of the company through ethical selling.
3. Ethical conduct is helpful in enjoying a **competitive edge** over other rivals in the market. An ethical business enjoys public support and goodwill which, in turn, helps it gain an edge over its competitors and pulls more customers towards it.
4. Ethical selling is a way to enjoy **long term business revenue and profits**. With the help of support from customers and enjoying a strategic advantage in the market, the business may have a stronger and loyal customer base sustained in the long run. This may become the reason for a business' long term survival in the industry as it fosters repeat business.
5. Selling techniques that involve ethical conduct on part of salesmen is a reflection of **value oriented business philosophy** and is a mark of **good corporate citizenship**. This further helps the business **gain society's acceptance** and Government's support too.

B) Benefits to the Salespersons or salesmen

1. Ethical dealings help the salespeople **build a rapport** with the customers which in turn helps them in closing the deals easily.
2. Salespersons adopting ethical sales techniques can win **customers' faith** and therefore, they can take advantage of this situation in having a strong and loyal customer base under them.
3. Ethics in selling may help the sales representatives in **successful relationships** with customers that may last till long.
4. It ensures **repeat business** from the customers and this therefore, can benefit the salespersons to enjoy **greater commission on higher sales** levels achieved.
5. Ethical conduct shown during the selling process **spreads a positive word of mouth** and the salesman has a chance of having new clients added in his kitty.

C) Benefits to the Customers

1. Ethics is a cherished set of values which make the customers' work of **future purchases easier** and more convenient.
2. It **instills confidence** among the customers as they know about the ethical conduct of business and therefore, they are assured of right purchase decisions.
3. Customers' **interests are protected** and they enjoy **pleasant experience** while making purchases from an ethical seller following ethical selling practices.
4. It creates a **win-win situation** for both the seller and buyer and both enjoy

cordial long-term ethical relationship with each other.

The **Journal of Business Ethics** stated that “an ethical brand acts with responsibility, honesty, respect and accountability.” In their research, they found five major benefits for brands that engage in ethical behaviour:

- Commitment toward the brand: Customers are more emotionally attached and committed to brands they see as ethical, as well as less sensitive to price differences compared to competitors.
- Customer-perceived quality: Customers perceive the brand’s service excellence as superior compared to its competitors when they see the company as ethical.
- Empathy and satisfaction: Empathic employees are better at understanding customer needs, which also elicits greater positive emotions from customers and higher customer satisfaction.
- Customer loyalty: Ethical brands benefit from higher customer loyalty, repeat purchases and higher customer retention.
- Positive word-of-mouth: Ethical companies boost positive conversations about the brand.

Check your progress A

1. Which of the following statements are **True** and which are **False**?

- i. Ethics is only applicable at societal level.
- ii. Ethical conduct of a business is a reflection of good corporate citizenship.
- iii. There is no relation between Ethics and Business vision.
- iv. Ethical selling is beneficial for business, salespeople and customers too.
- v. Business can easily survive in the long run even if it is unethical.

2. Fill in the blanks:

- i. Ethics in selling may win customer _____ and _____.
- ii. Ethics may _____ from business to business.
- iii. Selling done through ethical ways may help the salesmen build a good _____ initial _____ with the customers.
- iv. Ethical selling creates a _____ situation for sellers and buyers.

12.4 TYPES OF ETHICAL BEHAVIOURS IN SELLING

In selling, ethical behaviour is something that may vary from person to person and situation to situation. There is no universal and exhaustive list of ethical behaviour. However, some selected behaviour as recommended by experts are discussed below:

1. Build trust and reliability with customers: Under the purview of ethical selling, every salesman must try through his actions and words to create an atmosphere of trust, faith and credibility in the selling transaction. This creates a pleasant experience for both the customers and the seller. To build trust, sales professionals must share accurate data and information with the customers, mention about truthful testimonials from other satisfied customers, take genuine interest in the concerns of the customers and show comfortable non verbal signs while being in the selling situation.

2. Be Accountable: A good sales professional is the one who shows that he is and will be responsible to solve the doubts and queries of the customers not only during but also after the sales has been made. Moreover, he must accept his mistakes due to which the customers faced problems.

3. Give Clear and true information: It may be easy for any salesperson to exaggerate information and facts about products or services to close the deal conveniently. But, this may jeopardize future sales and may break the trust of customers. Clarity of information and facts related to the product not only makes the understanding better but also helps the customers take right purchase decisions.

4. Be honest in giving competitors' information: In a selling environment what one's competitor is doing must be known and monitored carefully. While talking good things about the his products, the sales professional must try to highlight what sets his products apart from others in the market and in doing so, he must be honest in speaking about his competitors and their products. Special care must be taken to avoid criticizing or bad-mouthing competitors. Such behaviour can be perceived as unethical to customers. In other words belittling the competitors would not make the company look better in the prospect's eyes. Instead, they will see you as dishonest and unethical.

5. Have a solution-oriented attitude: To keep the customers satisfied and happy in future too, the sales professional must always try to show a problem solving attitude or a solution-oriented disposition while dealing with customers who have problems. This attitude will put the customers at ease and will assure them that their problems will be taken care of.

6. Fulfill the promises made to the customers: Ethical selling behaviour must be based on trust and faith. The trust is always sustained when the promises made are fulfilled and the results are delivered. Sales professionals must try to follow till the end to make sure that the commitments they made to the prospects or customers are met. Whether the commitment is about the promise of more information about a product, a follow-up call, or honoring a time that has been set for a meeting, keeping your word with the customers is a demonstrated ethical behaviour and should be a top priority.

7. Dealing with customer objections patiently: Ethics not only relate to being right and justified always. It also lays emphasis on being good and courteous to the customer or the prospect. Objections on part of prospects while discussing about the product, is an inevitable part of the selling process. However, the real art lies in how the objections are handled without disturbing the mood and without getting impatient with the prospect or customer in a selling situation.

There may be several other ways to depict ethical behaviour in a selling situation. In all such situations, ethics lays down the foundation for cordial long term relationship between both the customers and the sales representatives.

Caselet 1: Being Ethical always pays!

Raj has always been a good salesperson at Star enterprises dealing in selling of electronics which are not of any popular brands. The products are manufactured at the local factory and the customers are the ones who are fine with buying electronics of local make. Sonali who just shifted to the city where Star enterprises operate and Raj holds a sales territory, met him and enquired about

the prices and quality of electronics sold by the firm. Raj clearly mentioned that the products are not from any known brands and are locally manufactured. He did not hesitate in telling the fact that the products are mediocre in performance during his first meeting only and did not have the fear that his clear truth telling may spoil the first impression for the products of his company. However, later Sonali placed the order of all the electronics for her house with Raj . Not only this, she recommended Raj's name to many of her friends who later shifted to the same city.

Ques1: What do you think has made Raj as a salesperson so dependable for Sonali?

Ques2: What values are reflected in this case on part of Raj as a salesprofessional?

12.5 ETHICAL AND LEGAL ASPECTS/ISSUES IN SELLING

Selling is a profession that may create circumstances where, under pressure the sales professionals may be forced to adopt unfair means, follow shortcuts to meet targets and may compromise on values. Some unethical issues may be illegal too and fall under the category of ethico-legal aspects of selling. However, there is some difference between the both. While ethical issues are based on human values and principles that define right and wrong, legal issues are the ones which are based on legal standards set by the Government. For the convenience of understanding, we shall be taking ethical and legal aspects related to selling together.

Some of the most commonly seen and experienced ethical and legal issues in selling are explained as follows:

1. **Misrepresentation or hiding facts:** This occurs when the sales professional intentionally hides some important information or facts from the customer in order to close the deal quickly. Misrepresentation of facts can lead to wrong decision making on part of customers who may later on repent and regret after making a purchase decision on the basis of partially correct information or incomplete information as given by the salesman.
2. **Price Discrimination:** Under this, a salesperson may charge different prices from customers for the same product. It is an issue in which seller convinces the customer to agree upon a price which may be different for some other customer. The final price fixed depends upon the bargaining capabilities of buyers and sellers. In such situations where the prices are not common and same for all, there is a lot of probability for the salesperson to overcharge some customers.
3. **Bribes:** A salesperson may offer undue favours in form of bribes or gifts to customers at the expense of company to close a big deal to his advantage. Bribes fall under Contract Act, 1872 and Sale of Goods Act, 1930 as a legal issue related to sales of goods. Bribes are easy but unfair ways of getting the things done in one's favour. In selling situations, bribes may be small or substantial, but in both the cases, it is illegal and unethical

as well.

4. Tie-in sales: In this situation, a customer is indirectly forced to or required to purchase another product the same seller in relation to the first product he is purchasing from him. In other words, the seller requires that the buyer purchases both the tying product and the tied product from him only.
5. False promising or over promising/Exaggeration: In several selling situations, sales professionals and companies make use of exaggerated claims and undue promises initially to close the deals and to make selling convenient for themselves. However, the truth is something different and the actual product is not of the same quality or characteristics as promised earlier leading to an unethical situation.

Use of sales puffery, hyperboles or boastful statements is an easy way to exaggerate when promoting a product or service. Claims that vaguely frame products or services as being the 'best' or 'perfect' can create a false impression in the mind of customers or prospects. For example, advertisements saying that their products are the best in the country, or their products make a smarter you, etc. are unethical, though they cannot be objectively declared as wrong.

6. Selling hazardous and spurious products: Sale of low quality, duplicate, copied, fake or pirated products is both illegal and unethical in selling. Such products may be dangerous to use and may affect the health and well-being of the users. Imitations may also violate copyright act and are used by the sales professionals to earn greater revenues by selling low quality and cheap substitutes. This is one way of befooling the customers and is unethical in conduct.

7. Delayed deliveries: Delaying deliveries of consignments not only is wrong but also leads to bad impression of the brand or company among customers. Delayed deliveries may spoil the total goodwill and also may annoy the customers. Sometimes, the customer may need a product on a specific date. If the product does not reach them by that day, the purpose of buying the product will be lost.

8. Creating artificial scarcity of commodities: In many cases, the seller or sales professional may present a wrong picture about the availability of the product to make it falsely 'rare' or scarce in the market. This in other words may be understood as hoarding and is an illegal business practice.

9. Online selling frauds: In recent scenario, online selling transactions have become very popular and given a new picture to the whole business world. With a lot of ease of transacting from home or office, online purchases have made our lives very easy. However, this comes with an inevitable set of risks and problems including frauds of money, fake promises, misrepresentation of products and other ways of cyber law violation.

10. Compromised Quality or Quantity: One other ethical issue experienced by

many customers is receiving wrong quality or quantity of ordered product as against the promised one. The problem gets worse when the items received come with a 'not returnable' clause and thus, the customer gets trapped in the situation.

11. Invasion of privacy: In the recent past, the issue of privacy invasion has gained a lot of attention in the world of selling and marketing. Sending unwanted and huge number of mails, messages, or calls to customers as a way of aggressive selling and marketing is something disturbing and has now become ethical and legal issue too. In this context, the concept of permission marketing is becoming very significant nowadays.

12.6 COMPLIANCE TECHNIQUES TO ENSURE ETHICAL SELLING

In this unit, so far, we have discussed a lot of ethical issues and problems faced by customers in today's times. There needs to be a check on the business practices specially selling and marketing ones that have a direct impact on customers and prospects. Abiding by certain ethical principles, may help in the long run and may pull customers with high degree of loyalty. Before we discuss compliance techniques, we must understand what ethical compliance is. Compliance refers to conformity or adherence to laws and regulations. It is a means by which companies seek to ensure that it does not adopt any shady practices which may tarnish its long term reputation.

Now we shall study the ways and techniques that can be adopted by sellers and their representatives to ensure ethical ways of selling. To ensure that the system of sale and purchase remains ethical and justified, both the customers and sellers need to be value-oriented and careful while undertaking any such transaction.

Some ways or means to ensure that selling environment remains ethical are discussed below:

1. Hire Right Salespeople: At the very first stage only it is recommended that the company hires the right kind of salespeople whose values are in tune with the values of the company. This can be judged during interaction with the candidates who have applied for salesperson's job in the company.
2. Establish a code of conduct for ethical selling: There must be a proper code of conduct established to guide and regulate the conduct and behaviour of sales people. With an already established code of conduct, the employees will have a defined course of action which they will follow to depict values in selling situations.
3. Encourage open communication to facilitate understanding of goals and expectations: An effective leader is the one who communicates the expectations from the subordinates with clarity so that everyone knows what is to be done and what policy guidelines need to be followed.
4. Prepare cold calling scripts and email templates to be sent to the prospects: This may ensure that the values are properly implemented. This may also ensure that the sales people treat employees with ethics. It is recommended

to create calling scripts and mail content in synchronization with the values and ethics of the company that it seeks to get implemented.

5. Train people in the direction of Ethical selling: One very important way to mould and change salespeople’s behaviour in the direction of organizational ethics is to train them in the right way through right kinds of training programs. The learning gained through such programs will be helpful for the salespeople to understand the set of ethics that the company wants them to follow with the customers.

6. Avoid exaggerations and unverified claims: To make sure that customers do not feel cheated after they make transactions with the company, it is important that at the beginning of the transaction only, the salesperson does not make any false claims or does not establish any wrong picture of the company’s products. Unverified claims may put the sales professional and the company in a big problem later.

7. Create an overall culture of ethics in the organization: There is a need to develop policies based on the company’s mission and values that describe what is acceptable and what is not. Good ethical policies not only list or describe appropriate and inappropriate behaviors; they also describe the underlying principles. With such a culture of ethics prevailing through policies, a sense of discipline shall follow in a strong way.

The summary table:

DOs and DON'Ts of Ethical Selling

The Dos	The DON'Ts
Be transparent	Don't give false promises to customers
Respect customer privacy	Don't hide facts
Solve consumer problems quickly	Don't exaggerate
Be Truthful	Don't give wrong comparisons
Respect your target customers	Don't criticize competitors bluntly

In the field of selling, understanding consumer psychology holds a great deal of importance. A sales professional therefore, needs to possess the skills of persuading and the art of convincing prospects to believe in what they are saying and selling. This is also necessary as the job of any salesperson depends completely on prospects’ faith and positive attitude showing that they are convinced to purchase a particular product or service.

Some of the most commonly used **compliance strategies or techniques** are discussed below:

1. **Foot-in-the-Door Technique:** This technique was first understood by Jonathan Freedman and Scott Fraser in 1966. The idea behind the strategy was to convince the targeted person to say a ‘yes’ to a small request initially before getting him to say ‘yes’ to a bigger request later. The foot-in-the-door (FITD) technique is a compliance strategy that entails persuading someone to agree to a major request by first persuading them to agree to a small or moderate request. Making a minor request that is likely to be accepted before making your larger request is known as the foot-in-the-door strategy. The theory behind this method is that if you get a 'foot in the door' by saying yes to the first request, the person will be more likely to

agree to the second. The Foot in the Door technique is a persuasion tactic used frequently in marketing and sales. It works on the compliance and consistency principle, which states that if someone agrees to a little request at first, they are more likely to agree to a larger one later. For example, a door to door salesperson may request a house hold lady to try out a sample of a product initially and then can convince her for a longer conversation with him to show the whole range of products he is carrying.

2. Door-in-the-Face Technique: Another consecutive request method is the door-in-the-face strategy, which works in a reverse manner. It entails making an irrational request that the respondent is almost certain to reject outright in the beginning. Following that, the intended request is made with a better deal or offer.

This persuasion technique is occasionally employed in sales discussions. A car dealer, for example, may offer to acquire an automobile as a 'trade-in' for a new car at a fraction of its genuine value. The consumer will decline the offer, as anticipated by the salesman, and will later return with an offer that he considers reasonable. Even though the second offer is less than ideal, the customer accepts it since it appears to be acceptable in comparison to the paltry sum provided in the first offer. One of the explanations supporting the concept of the door-in-the-face technique is the way in which it plays on our sense of guilt. When we decline a person's initial request, we are left with a sense of guilt for not accepting a person or denying his request. When a second, more reasonable request is made, it is sufficiently reasonable for us to fulfill, and we view it as an opportunity to reduce the guilt that we experienced earlier. (O'Keefe and Figgé, 1999)

3. Low-Balling Technique: The low-ball technique involves making an invitation and gaining agreement from an individual, then changing the terms of the deal at the eleventh hour. In other words, it is a kind of unethical tactic through which a salesperson initially tries to win the customer's willingness to purchase the product. However, later changes the trade terms or the offer price by using excuses or some other vague reasons. This unethical method of gaining agreement from a person is usually found in sales negotiation scenarios. For example, A car salesman may tell a prospective customer that the worth of a specific car is \$10,000. The customer agrees to shop for the car, thinking that they need received an honest deal. However, just before they sign the papers to finish the acquisition, the salesperson tells them that the worth was incorrect, and he can only sell the car at \$12,000. The customer has spent an extended time within the office and does not want to start out their car search again. Therefore, they agree to buy the car at the higher price.

4. Norm of Reciprocity: Reciprocity can be understood as a socially accepted etiquette of respecting others to get respect from them. It is a kind of implied understanding to be adhered to. The norm of reciprocity works on the belief that an action done in favour of someone shall be reciprocated with a gesture of gratitude or thanks or in any way of appreciation in return. There is a sense of giving back or repaying when we receive any favour or gift from someone.

Marketers can use this strategy by giving small favours, gifts free trials and other benefits to customers before asking them to pay for the product. In reciprocation, the customer may feel obliged to make the payment immediately or may be somehow forced to purchase the product after the gift or free trial he has received from the seller. For example, some bed mattress companies offer free home trials of their products before the customer is asked to pay anything. By the top of the free trial, an individual may feel that they need personally gained from the free trial and will repay the generosity of the corporate by purchasing the mattress.

5. **Ingratiation:** Ingratiation is a compliance strategy that involves presenting yourself in a positive way to people you wish to persuade. First identified by social psychologist Edward E. Jones in his 1964 work, *Ingratiation: A social psychological analysis*; ingratiation covers variety of approaches to realize the favor of another party, many of which we use without even realising (Jones, 1964).

It is often seen that others tend to like us, if we are fond of them or like them or compliment them for their positive characteristics. When we overlook someone's weaknesses and highlight their positive aspects, they feel good and more confident. Another form of ingratiation requires demonstrating that you yourself are likable. Prosocial behavior, exhibited through confident body language, such as making eye contact whilst holding a conversation, smiling and remaining positive, can help to show that you are someone people can warm to. This technique can be used by sales professional when he is meeting a stylish or a high profile client and is trying to convince him about a product or a service. By being warm and presentable to others, the chances of acceptance get increased.

6. **That's Not All:** Using the 'That's Not All' persuasion technique, the sales professional can sometimes win the difficult customers who are undecided about making a purchase decision. In this technique, initially the sales person makes a small request and then reinforces the same by offering additional benefits so that the total offer seems to be very attractive.

For example, a sales representative may start a conversation by talking about the benefits of a product followed by an act of offering additional benefit such as special discount or some freebies with the purchase of that product. In this case, even though the added benefit is not one that the person would pay for separately, when it is added to the original offer, it makes for a more persuasive argument.

Check your progress B

1. Which of the following statements are **True** and which are **False**?
 - i. Puffery in sales is a kind of over promise made by salesperson
 - ii. Online transactions are free from frauds
 - iii. Changing the offer price is called Ingratiation
 - iv. Compliance techniques involve different approaches of persuasion

2. Fill in the blanks:

- i. _____ is a social norm used as a persuasion technique.

- ii. _____ is the other name for creating artificial scarcity of goods in ~~the market.~~
- iii. Sense of guilt plays an important role in the _____ technique of compliance in selling.
- iv. _____ is a way of Marketing used to reduce the intensity of invasion of privacy.

12.7 DEVELOPING ETHICAL CODE OF ETHICS FOR SELLING

The world of sales and Marketing is prone to unethical ways and practices. Amidst tough competition and frequently changing customer tastes, it is difficult to have a stable revenue inflow and profits. And therefore, to make their work easier, the sales professionals tend to follow short cuts and adopt unethical selling approaches many-a-times. However, as already discussed, compromising on ethics may tarnish the goodwill of the company and may lead to damaging consequences for the business in the long run. Hence, it becomes imperative for business to establish a strong and robust code of ethics which can be enforced to guide the actions of the sales professionals and can channelize their efforts in an ethical direction. Developing a code of ethics for business helps build a culture of ethical selling.

The code of ethics may simply be a cluster of statements reflecting the way the business functions, the way it takes decisions and treats customers, suppliers and industry peers. For example, your code of ethics might include statements such as:

- The business recognises that what it does is more important than what it says.
- It gives the customers and suppliers honest, accurate information.
- It makes sure that the customers' purchasing decisions are based on their preference, not pressure.
- The business is always ready to help customers even after sale of goods.
- The business competes in the market by building its own reputation, not by damaging the reputation of their competitors.

Developing a code of conduct for selling

Usually code of ethics is developed to monitor the working of salespeople.

Codes of conduct are designed to:

- describe desirable and undesirable selling behaviours.
- promote high standards of practice.
- reduce the risk of fair trading breaches and
- help staff make ethical decisions.

Writing a code of conduct

The business must write its code of conduct with its staff and customers in mind, clearly setting out the purpose and structure of the document. The code of conduct can be discussed before being getting finally drafted. It is important to involve the employees while laying down the code statements so that the people follow it religiously and also show accountable behaviour towards it.

Template for a sales code of conduct document

A reasonably good code of conduct can include the following information:

- overview – outlining why has such a document been created and what it will

do.

- statement of business values – including the code of ethics.
- ethical conduct sections.
- soliciting customers – identifying appropriate steps for finding and approaching customers.
- communicating with customers – stating communication principles that will guide the business's range of interactions with customers and industry.
- pricing – identifying ethical approaches to product pricing.
- handling complaints and conflicts – listing the principles that support the complaints handling policy and principles for resolving conflicts.
- lay-by agreements – stating terms for lay-by agreements with customers.
- selling methods – setting out appropriate selling steps and methods.
- bills and accounts – stating business' commitment to providing proof of transactions.
- warranties, refunds and repairs – identifying product or service guarantees the business makes to its customers.
 - procedures for identifying and responding to code of conduct breaches.
 - additional information – listing contacts and sources for more information.

The code of ethics and its contents may vary from business to business and industry to industry. However, the core aim of every code of ethics in selling will be to make the dealings transparent with full integrity and honesty.

Also, the code of ethics must not be drafted to include the provisions to penalize people. It should be done in a positive way to create a sense of order and discipline amongst the sales professionals who are in direct touch with the customers and therefore are true representatives of the brand or the business.

12.8 LET US SUM UP

- Ethical Selling or ethics in selling is the application of moral values, principles and guidelines that make selling efforts transparent, full of integrity and honesty. The main aim of ethical selling is to make the selling situations truthful and fair so that the customers remain loyal to the business and make repeat purchases from it.
- Integrity, Values, Character, trust, honesty, accountability, honour, fairness, etc. are major virtues defining ethics in selling and business as well. The field of sales ethics is a wide one and encompasses several dimensions at one go. It imposes self-discipline, is a reflection of good corporate citizenship, emphasizes honesty, fairness and is a manifestation of the organizational culture and vision.
- Ethical selling benefits not only the customers but also the company and sales professionals in different ways. There are many elements of ethical behaviour in selling as expected and ideal ones. Also there are many ethico-legal issues and aspects like sales puffery, false claims, exaggerations, bribes, tie-in sales, sale of hazardous goods, etc. that need to be taken care of by the business for a sustained survival in the market.
- In selling situations, it is imperative to have a system of monitoring through which ethical selling can be implemented to make the system fair and justified. The art of persuasion also requires effective compliance for which there are different types of compliance

techniques including Low Balling, Foot-in-the-door, Door-in-the-face, reciprocity, ingratiation and that's not all techniques.

- To ensure a good system of selling which makes sure that ethics is being followed properly, an ethical code of selling is highly recommended. It not only helps in making the selling practices ethical, but also helps in avoiding malpractices that may spoil the relationship of business with its customers.

12.9 Answers check your progress

A. 1 i. False ii. True iii. False iv. True v. False

2. i. loyalty and trust ii. vary iii. rapport iv. Win – win

B. 1 i. true ii. false iii. false iv. true

2. i. reciprocity ii. hoarding iii. door in the face iv. permission marketing

12.10 TERMINAL QUESTIONS

Q1. Explain with examples the application of Ethics in selling.

Q2. What is the meaning of ethical selling? Explain its features.

Q3. Discuss the importance of Ethics in selling for different parties.

Q4. Explain various ethical and legal issues involved in selling. Give suitable examples to substantiate your answer.

Q5. Discuss different types of ethical behaviours.

Q6. What is the purpose of compliance in selling? Explain different compliance techniques with suitable examples.

Q7. What steps can be taken to ensure ethics in selling?

Q8. Why and how would you draft a code of ethics in selling?

Q9. What are Dos and Don'ts of ethical selling?

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UNIT 13 SKILLS FOR SALESPERSON

Structure

13.0 Objectives

13.1 Introduction

13.2 Listening Skills

13.3 Communication Skills

13.4 Problem Solving Skills

13.5 Persuading Skills

13.6 Inter – personal Skills

13.7 Organization Skills

13.8 Customer Service Skills

13.9 Let us Sum Up

13.10 Key words

13.11 Answers to Check Your Progress

13.12 Terminal Questions

13.0 OBJECTIVES

After studying this unit, you will be able to:

- explain various skills required to be a successful salesperson;
- analyse the importance of each skill;
- explain the parameters for effective communication skill;
- describe problem solving skill;
- comprehend inter-personal skill;
- describe the importance of inter personal skills and ways to improve it;
- learn organizational skills; and
- explain customer service skills and its importance.

13.1 INTRODUCTION

Sales is one of the toughest jobs in all industries. This is because a salesperson has to face rejection over and over again and yet complete the targets they are given. To do this, the sales person needs to know everything about the products they are selling and the company they belong to. They need to understand their buyers and then find a middle way to make the sale. Thus, effective selling requires knowledge, sales strategy and sales skill. These are the components of a sales equation. If any of the component is missing, a part of sales advantage is lost. In this unit, you will learn

Knowledge: A salesperson is required to have thorough knowledge about his own offerings, his competitors, their offerings, market, trends and also about his prospects. Without complete knowledge about these aspects, he would not be able to present his offering and clarify the doubts of the customer, thus, he will lose his credibility in front of the customers, let alone closing the deal and further building long term relationship.

Sales Strategy: This refers to the strategy needed by the salesperson to position himself for the sale. It includes customer profiling, account strategy, identifying and persuading key influencers, relationship building strategy, negotiation strategy, prospecting and territory management. Successful salespeople plan for the conclusion of effective sales and analyze how they have progressed after each sales call.

Personal Selling Skills : These are the foundational tools that any sales person needs as core competencies including listening skills, behavioural styles, communication and influencing styles, rapport building and relationship building skills, the ability to read buying moods and much more.

There are some sales people who achieve targets much more easily than others. Just classifying them as Extroverts is not enough. These sales people use a combination of personal selling skills which help them over a period of time to become very good salespeople. They are able to connect to their clients, convince them and convert them.

In the present chapter, we will discuss the various personal skills that are important to become a successful sales person. The good thing about these skills is that they can be learnt. The salesperson must strive to inculcate these skills in himself/herself if he/she is not born with these qualities.

Essential Skills of a Salesperson	Listening Skills
	Communication Skills
	Problem Solving Skills
	Persuading Skills
	Inter- personal Skills
	Customer Service Skills
	Organization Skills

Figure 1: Essential Skills of a Salesperson

13. 2 LISTENING SKILL

A

Most people think 'selling' is the same as 'talking'. But the most effective salespeople know that listening is the most important part of their job.

-Roy Bartell

successful relationship between a buyer and a seller develops when the seller is able to solve the problem that a buyer is facing. However, a seller can solve buyer's problem only after he listens carefully and understand the problem. Experienced salespersons understand the value of careful listening of their customers. Salespeople who do not listen miss out the chance to identify customers' problems and needs. Let them know and feel that they understand their issues and build a stronger relationship with them.

Nowadays, with a quick search on internet, the customers can gain as much details about the products as the salespeople have. Thus, there is a little room for salespeople to show their expertise. And if they fail on

their part to show expertise, they might lose on their credibility and interest of the customers. In this scenario, investing time in listening to the customers can be of great help to the salespeople. However, it is hard to find patient listeners these days. Many times salespeople find it very difficult to listen patiently to their customers.

To adopt active listening, the salespeople should focus on the following key aspects:

1 Pay undivided attention: Successful salespeople always try to ensure that they give an undivided attention to the prospect. This can make a huge difference by encouraging prospects to open up more, and fostering trust and commitment. The prospects need an assurance that the salesperson is truly listening to them. By observing auditory, visual, and physical clues as well as the prospect's words, a salesperson can truly begin to understand the plight of their prospect and put themselves in the buyer's shoes. He may use the following techniques to learn how to pay close attention to the prospect:

- a) The salesperson should try looking straight in the eyes of the speaker.
- b) He must concentrate and try to understand fully what the speaker is saying.
- c) He must listen patiently and wait to frame the response until the speaker finishes talking. For a while, he should forget about his own script, pay attention and not worry about what he is going to say next.
- d) He should make sure that the environment does not distract him and avoid any side conversations in case he is in a group.
- e) A good listener knows that listening is done not only by ears but by eyes also. Listening helps only to get half of the message. An active listener should notice the body language, facial expressions, tone of voice and various other gestures that the prospect is making, to understand carefully the feelings of the prospect conveyed in these non-verbal messages.

2 Give acknowledgements: In case of face to face conversations with the prospects, the salesperson has the opportunity to give various verbal and non-verbal acknowledgements to give proof that he is actively listening to them. For acknowledging the customers, the sales persons should be very alert and perform following behavioural gestures:

- a) nod from time to time, when appropriate, make eye contact.
- b) use appropriate facial expressions.
- c) monitor own body language to match speaker's state of mind and underlying meaning. Try to remain open and relaxed instead of closed and tensed.
- d) use small comments like 'hmm', 'huhh', 'yes', 'right'.

3 Give feedback : After the prospect finishes speaking about their problems and needs, it is beneficial for the salesperson to give verbal response to acknowledge that they are listening, understanding, and engaged in what the prospect has to say. This gives assurance to the prospects that the salesperson is listening actively to them and thus helps in building empathy and trust. Verbal response is all the way more important in case of non-visual communication such as on a phone call, where non-verbal tools are very hard to use.

Following approaches may be used to give verbal response:

- a) **Repeating verbatim:** This approach involves repeating exactly what the prospect said. Thus, the prospect can confirm their meaning or clarify their statement. However, this approach can not be overused as it can cause doubts on the understanding of the salesperson. (Parrots don't actually understand.)
- b) **Paraphrasing :** This approach is better than simply repeating verbatim as it involves condensing the whole speech of prospect into something more concise. This assures the speaker that the listener listened carefully. However, oversimplification should be avoided as it may lead to leaving out details and the prospect might have doubts regarding salesperson's attention.
- c) **Putting into own words :** This is better than the previous two approaches. It involves putting the speech of the prospect in own words tactfully. This act leaves immediate impression on the

prospect and they will appreciate salesperson's ability to listen effectively and summarize. The salesperson can start like- "If I am not mistaken, you are saying that...."

- d) **Asking questions to clarify:** the salesperson can also try asking questions so as to clarify the statements of the prospect. Questions can be framed like- "Can I ask you why....?" or "If I understand you correctly, you have a problem with....?". Follow – up questions can also be asked. Open ended questions which make the prospects share their goals and plans are favourable. "When reps take the role of a curious student rather than an informed expert, buyers are much more inclined to engage" – Jeff Hoffman

The whole idea behind giving feedback is to convince the customers that they have been heard and understood which help in building empathy and trust.

4 Do not interrupt: In most of the cases, interrupting the customer while he is speaking is considered rude. Moreover, details and interesting cues can also be missed out on interruption. Prospects generally have many things to share about their problems, goals, challenges and plans. If given chance to speak and an assurance of being heard, they might share intricate details. These details can be missed out if they are interrupted.

The other time it is okay to interrupt if you did not hear something or want to clarify. But even then, you may want to make a note to clarify later once the person completes speaking to avoid impeding the flow.

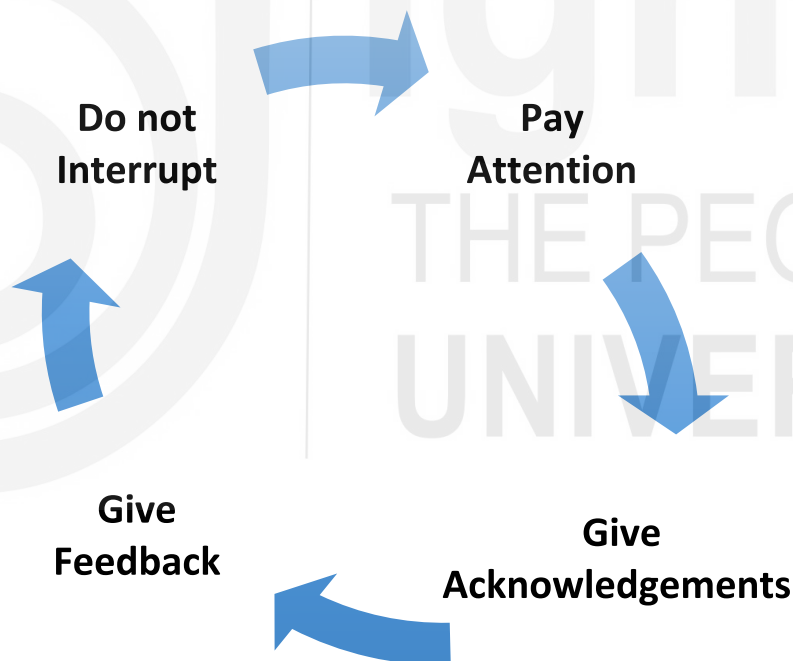


Figure 1: How to Improve Listening Skill

13.3 COMMUNICATION SKILLS

Effective communication is crucial to success of sales. While the knowledge about the market and the best selling techniques is the theoretical part of being a salesperson, the practical part is effectively communicating this knowledge. The effective communication may help in successful completion of sales. Knowledge and communication are only complimentary to each other. Therefore, having knowledge about client, market, trends, etc. is insufficient without effective communication skills.

A conversation consists of moments where you talk and where you listen, but most people might forget about the latter. Listening is part of communicating. In fact, active listening precedes speaking for any communication to be effective.

Apart from active listening the following aspects should be considered for effective communication:

1 Make sure to speak the same “language”: It is not sufficient to speak the same literal language as that of the customer. The choice of words, kinds of phrases and idioms used in the speech, humour, empathy, etc. all determine the communication style of the salesperson. For example, many people find it difficult to understand sarcasm and feel offended by it while others find it a trait of intelligence.

The salesperson should try to be just the right amount of technical, formal, informal, etc. He should avoid being too confusing, and that both of them are on the same level of closeness. He can follow their lead a bit by seeing how they approach you, and how open they might seem to analyse how formal he must be.

2 Watch your body language: Imagine two salespersons giving the same sales speech. However, one smiles, looks straight in the eyes of the listener, sits straight or stands with an open stance, use nice hand gestures. The other salesperson keeps looking away from the listener, remains frowned with furrowed eyebrows and uses monotonous voice tone. It is not hard to understand which salesperson will make higher sales.

It is not just the words and the verbal language which is important but also the body language. No doubt, it has been termed as a ‘language’. The non - verbal aspects of the communication are equally important as the verbal aspects. In fact, if the words in the speech do not match the body language like facial expressions, eyes and hand gestures, in most of these cases body language remains more influential for interpretation by the listener. Thus, the salesperson should always watch his own body language as well as that of his prospect as he might be telling them something which he does not realize and they might be showing something without them knowing it, too.

3 Master the nuances of voice tone: Voice tone consists of the pitch, speed and volume of the voice of the speaker. Like the body language, the voice tone of the speaker also affects the interpretation of his choice of words. For example, the speed with which the salesperson speaks affects his understanding. If he is a fast speaker and the listener prefers a slower tempo, he might be termed as hurried and dismissive.

One of the ways in which a salesperson can make impression on the customers using his voice tone is first to observe carefully how the customers speak and then emulate their speaking patterns be it the speed or the pitch. The level of formality should also be matched to make the customers comfortable.

4 Be empathetic: For a salesperson, empathy means showing the customers that he cares for their need and problem. He understands the challenges their customers face at their work and home on day basis and that he intends to help them resolve it. Being empathetic to the customers is not only appreciable, it also raises the chances of closing the deal. The salesperson must always try to see things from their view point. However, amateur salespeople sometimes try to agree on every opinion of the customers. Empathising does not mean to agree with each and everything the prospects say. Experienced salespeople listen and respond something like, *“I understand what you mean....”* and then they offer the product or service which is the best solution to their problem.

5 Be as clear as possible: Miscommunication happens when things are not as clear as you think they are, leaving room for confusion or misinterpretation. This is closely related to the first tip about speaking the same language. Salesperson should try to be straightforward and informative, not flowery or prosaic. They should ask simple questions and provide unambiguous answers at all times. He may also keep a checklist or script handy for

everything he needs to address as he proceeds to cover the necessary details with each communication.

6 Research constantly: Research on a client, on the market, on trends, and even on communication skills is one of the best ways to be prepared every step of the way. The salesperson should not hesitate in admitting he does not know something. It is best not to say that too often since customer might think about the salesperson as unprepared and therefore, unreliable. Being up to date on every trend, technique, and everything else related to sales should be one of the main goals of the salesperson, as it can be quite a differential from the competition.

7 Do not lie: One of the key factors behind successful long term relationship between the seller and the buyer lies in being honest with the customer. It is great to have professional expertise and knowledge about the market, trends and prospects but it is impossible to being able to clear each and every doubt of the customer. The salesperson can occasionally tell the customers they do not have information on a particular issue rather than pretending to be expert all the time. The customers sense it when the salesperson is telling the truth and when he is lying. Thus, the salesperson must try to be open and make honesty an integral part of his selling approach which ultimately leads to successful relationships.

8 Know how to greet and how to say goodbye: As the saying goes, “you do not get a second chance to make the first impression”. How the customer is greeted by the salesperson, along with succeeding interactions, make lasting impressions. It is a low-cost investment to improve the customer experience and yield serious results. The way a salesperson starts an interaction can make or break a deal; the way he ends it can either burn a bridge or bring him more opportunities in the future.



Figure 2:Communication Skills

Check Your Progress A

1. What are the communication skills needed by a Salesperson?
2. What are the essential skills of a salesperson. Name them.
3. Write True or False:
 - i. In case of face to face conversations, the salesperson should not nod from time to time. (True/False)
 - ii. Paraphrasing is not better than simply verbatim. (True/False)
 - iii. Empathy means showing the customers that he cares for their need and problem. (True/False)
 - iv. Sales person should try to be straight forward and informative. (True/False)

13.4 PROBLEM SOLVING SKILLS

The

Selling is really about having conversations with people and helping improve their company or their life. If you look at it like that, selling is very admirable thing to do.

Lori Richardson

most effective problem solvers are the salespeople. One of the key conditions to achieve success in the profession of selling is to become a problem solver before becoming a seller. Effective salespeople possess an attitude to meet challenges with strength, understand the problems and find solutions. Following points summarize why is selling more of problem solving:

1 Products are invented to solve problems: Think of innovations like ready to eat food, baby sitting services, Ola cabs. The first two came into the market due to the changing demographics of consumers like increasing proportion of working women. The working women are increasingly facing the problem of making food every day and taking care of babies. Ola cabs services were started keeping in view the problem of daily commuters like heavy expenses of car owners and inconvenience of commuters by bus, train or metro. The point is that, every product/ service invented was designed to solve some kind of problem. Think of any product or service – wheel, light bulb, engine, television, microwave, vacuum cleaner, etc., it is very obvious they were created to find solutions to problems, even if it is for a few people or even if it is for a psychological satisfaction.

Before these products were met with heavy competition on the market, they were easy to sell based on the obvious problems they solved. In today's market, heavily saturated with competition in every industry, salespeople have to be more creative than ever to demonstrate that their brand solves the problem more efficiently than the others. For this reason, successful salespeople are not only able to solve people's problems, but they are critical thinkers as well.

Salespeople should know each and every detail of their product. Also, they must have deep understanding of their prospects as well. They become successful by looking for unique ways their product can solve the specific problems their prospect is facing.

2 People do not buy products, they buy solutions and convenience: How do you sell ice to Eskimos, which is abundant free of cost in their native places? A seller knows the answer. He can get the ice broken and carved into ice blocks and make an offer like:

Thus, Eskimos are able to save their time and get convenience. The same approach goes with any other product or service. Successful salespeople can always find ways to solve problems people did not even know they had by asking the right questions, connecting with their prospect, and finding ways their product creates more convenience. Think of food delivery start ups like Zomato in the same way!

Whether you think you can or think you can't, you are right.

Henry Ford

Having a growth mindset is not about being perfect. It's about being open to failure. It's about understanding that failure is not the end, but a necessary step in the process of learning and growth. It's about recognizing that every challenge is an opportunity to learn and grow. It's about understanding that the only way to truly succeed is to embrace the unknown and to be willing to take risks. It's about understanding that the only way to truly learn is to be open to feedback and to be willing to change. It's about understanding that the only way to truly grow is to be open to new ideas and to be willing to challenge the status quo. It's about understanding that the only way to truly be a leader is to be open to the needs of others and to be willing to put them first. It's about understanding that the only way to truly be a team player is to be open to the strengths of others and to be willing to support them. It's about understanding that the only way to truly be a successful entrepreneur is to be open to the needs of the market and to be willing to adapt. It's about understanding that the only way to truly be a successful leader is to be open to the needs of the team and to be willing to listen. It's about understanding that the only way to truly be a successful team player is to be open to the strengths of the team and to be willing to support them. It's about understanding that the only way to truly be a successful entrepreneur is to be open to the needs of the market and to be willing to adapt. It's about understanding that the only way to truly be a successful leader is to be open to the needs of the team and to be willing to listen. It's about understanding that the only way to truly be a successful team player is to be open to the strengths of the team and to be willing to support them.

1 Find out the problems of the customers and how to solve them

2 Put yourself in their shoes: To understand the problem and issues of another person, we need to step out of our shoes and get into their shoes. We need to understand their point of view. This means that the salesperson should see his customer as a real person not as someone to sell a product or service. He must strive to relate to the issues of customer to be able to find how may his offering add value to them.

3 Focus on benefits rather than features: People do not buy features, they are interested in what benefits are they going to get from their purchase, how it will solve their problems and what emotions will it make them feel. Marketing research says that in most of the cases, buying decisions are made first on the basis of emotional reactions and then the rational left brain uses the supporting features to back the decisions already made emotionally.

Thus, the salesperson should try to think of the benefits as what kind of emotional connection people can make with the product. The “So what.....This means that” technique may prove helpful to the salesperson to translate the features into benefits. Before detailing about any feature of his product, he must imagine the customer asking him “So what?” and then he must be able to answer “This means that....”. For Example, salesperson sells insurance and tells the customer that his policy has a feature of ‘flexible maturity date’, the customer might ask “So what?”. The customer must be able to explain that this means that the customer can choose an insurance maturity date that meets his needs.

4 Stop selling: This is not much difficult to understand that when the salesperson is selling more rather than focussing on the problem of the customers, they can sense it, and they come to the conclusion that he simply wants to sell them something regardless of whether they need it or not. The salesperson should consider himself to be a problem solver rather than a seller. Nobody wants to be sold, they want solutions to their problems. Everybody has a different reason for a purchase decision, yet the common thing is that everybody wants that after the purchase, the problem must be solved. Thus, while engaging with customers, the salesperson must focus on solving their problem and stop selling to them.

13.5 PERSUASION SKILLS

In problem solving skills, we talked about why a salesman should be more of a problem solver than a seller. Nobody wants to be sold to. Everybody wants a solution to the problem. However, in today’s competitive market places, various sellers can solve the problems faced by the customers. Customers have a vast choice among which seller may prefer. However, a good salesman should have persuasion skills to encourage customers to prefer his products or services over the competitors’.

The salesperson must learn the persuading skills. He must understand the point of view of the customers and then provide information on the benefits of his offering. Focussing on benefits rather than features is important in persuading customers.

The salespeople must focus on following aspects to strengthen their persuading skills:

1 Demonstrate Your Understanding : Putting oneself in the customer’s shoes lets the salesperson look at the scenarios they are facing and helps them to concentrate on finding the best solution. The salesperson may ask questions that demonstrate that he is well-informed about their business, their needs, and how can his organization help them to be more successful in their own business.

2 Generate a Friendly, Responsive Environment

Do not underestimate the impact of being friendly and responsive. Your attitude in working with the customer, meeting their needs, and handling their requests says a great deal about you and your organization to the customer. Plus, your responsiveness – how quickly you respond and how well you meet their expectations – will be an important decision point for any customer. One good rule of thumb is to under-promise and over-deliver for your customers. You will be demonstrating an exceptional level of customer service that they will want to experience again in the future.

3 Provide Evidence: You need to be able to demonstrate to your customer that you, your organization, and your product or services are the best choice for the customer. You should be able to explain precisely how will your offering benefit the customer better than the competitors. Give the customer testimonials from other customers and show them before and after scenarios that prove how has your product or service made a difference for other customers and how can it do the same for them. No matter what you do, be sure that anything you share is fully verifiable.

4 Demonstrate Your Expertise: Who would be more apt to buy from – someone who knows the basics about your industry or someone whom you consider as an expert in your field? As you work with the customer, demonstrate that you understand what you are presenting to them. Share information that shows you understand their field, the upcoming trends, and the challenges people in that industry are facing. You will instil confidence in the customer to choose your product or service over the next provider.

13.6 INTERPERSONAL SKILLS

Interpersonal skills are more than just communication skills. These are the ‘people skills’ that seem to come to some so naturally, while others may struggle to acquire them. Interpersonal skills in the salespersons help them to work with their customers and build rapport with them. Interpersonal skills also help to build the type of long-term relationships that are important in maintaining customers over time.

Some interpersonal skills include:

1 Courtesy: It has been said that good manners cost nothing, and that is the truth. There is no reason to be anything but courteous when dealing with customers and colleagues. It fosters relationships and shows that you care about making the other person comfortable.

2 Respect for others: The ‘golden rule’ of maintaining relationships is to treat others the way that you would like to be treated. The true expression of respect is something called the ‘platinum rule’ – treating others the way that they would like for you to treat them.

3 Ability to see things from others’ perspectives: Customers who are upset with some issue might over react with the sales person. In this situation, the salesperson needs to be able to understand what has happened and what is affecting his customer. For example, for some customers arrival of order one day late is perhaps not a big issue, but for others it might lead to lost sales and embarrassment in dealing with his own customers, or any other problem. In such situations, the salesperson must understand and express this understanding so that the customer feels that the salesperson is at least acknowledging his mistake and assuring him of non - repetition of such mistakes.

4 Ability to understand various communication styles: Everybody has a way of communicating with the world. A customer’s way of communication may be different from that of the salesperson. For example, a person who may be perceived as being rude or cold may simply be reserved or shy. A person perceived as intrusive or forward may simply be interested in people in general and does not mean any disrespect. This is just one form of keeping an open mind when working with others. This is a huge factor in interpersonal skills. It is very obvious that a customer will never try to adjust his communication style according to that of the salesperson. Thus, it is only the salesperson who needs to adjust himself and if he does not, it may create barriers in the communication process as well as relationship building.

13.7 ORGANISATIONAL SKILLS

Salespeople have to keep a track of a lot of things. To start with, they need to track information on their own products and services, information on customers and their businesses, information on prospects that

might become customers, and any other information that their organization might provide. In addition to this, they need to track of any sales they make if they are paid by commission or quota, information on internal promotions and procedures, as well as information on how to use any data, tools, or software to be used in selling. They also need to have a calendar to keep track of involving any meetings with clients or internal support people.

Many salespeople spend more of their time on administrative tasks than they spend on actual selling. Sales time management teaches the salespeople, the tasks they should be doing and also the tasks they should not be doing. The salespeople need to focus as much on eliminating the tasks they should not do as on the ones they should do. Time management in decreasing sale and to how to prioritize and maximize the sales time each day. Instead of working more hours, a few easy-to-use organizational habits can help improve efficiency. The salesperson should develop following organizational skills:

1 Reduce Administrative Tasks: Administrative tasks are the number one thing preventing salespersons from spending more time in the field, where they should be. Salespeople should look for the administrative work that can be automated through one tool or another. This, apart from just saving time, will make them feel less frustrated by the number of things weighing on them on a daily basis. This will allow sales people to divert more of their energy and attention away from mundane tasks, and focus on things like running demonstrations or answering questions that show buying potential. A salesperson may use the following to save on administrative tasks:

2 To-do List: The habit of making a to – do list is very helpful to develop organisational skill in any person, whichever profession he is in. Creating a ‘to-do’ list at the end of the workday, of things that need to be done the next day, labelling them in order of priority, moving the leftover tasks to the next day’s to-do list helps in effectively completing the tasks with in the dedicated timeline. Any person can use a to- do list app which uses AI to learn users’ personal productivity habits and schedule their overdue tasks accordingly. In other words, the app will figure out the optimal time to get everything done.

3 Use a contact management system software: A contact management software system can be used to keep track of time of speaking to customers or sending mails to them as well as when they need to be contacted again. Microsoft Access or Excel may be used to create one’s own content management system. Sorting can be done by different values that are important in determining how and when you contact each customer (size of organization, type of industry, current products the customer has, date(s) you promised to follow-up with customers, etc.).

4 Stop Procrastinating: Procrastination is extremely detrimental to field sales people. It is most often associated with the tasks salespeople despise, like updating their CRM and other administrative work. Utilizing time blocks is a great way to eliminate procrastinating. Breaking the whole work down into smaller steps is also an effective sales organization tip. Being detailed in daily tasks is another technique that has proven effective. Focus can be maintained by knowing exactly what needs to be done throughout the day.

Ways to Stop Procrastination

1. Break Your Work into Little Steps
2. Change Your Environment
3. Create a Detailed Timeline with Specific Deadlines
4. Eliminate Your Procrastination Pit-Stops
5. Hang out with People Who Inspire You to Take Action
6. Tell Others About Your Goals
7. Seek out Someone Who Has Already Achieved the Outcome
8. Re-Clarify Your Goals
9. Stop Over-Complicating Things

5 Create a sales pyramid: The salesperson may create a sales pyramid to track which stage of a sale his customers are. An example of a sales pyramid is shown in Figure 1 below. The numbers in parentheses represent the number of customers in each stage of the pyramid. For each of the customers at each stage, a spreadsheet or a file should be made, in order to track while moving them from stage to stage through the funnel.

The pyramid should represent a specific period of time such as a month or quarter, at the end of which should be evaluated how well is the salesperson doing at moving customers towards a sale.

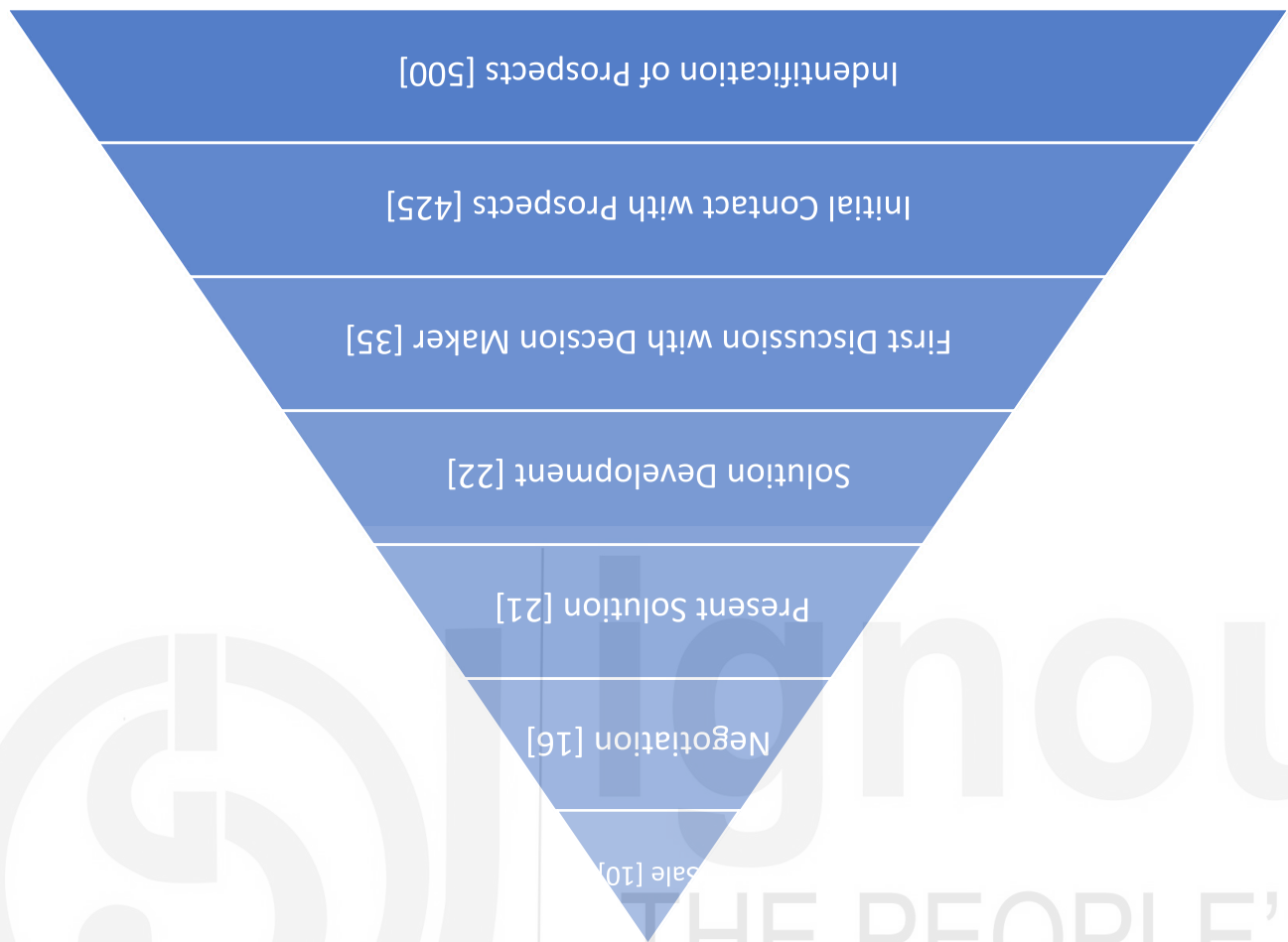


Figure 3: Sales Pyramid

6 Avoid The Urge to Multitask: The perception that those who are blessed with the ability to multitask are more productive workers could not be farther from the truth. Multitasking is a productivity facade. Just checking off more boxes of the to-do list may lead to not being able to putting forth your best work. It will increase the quantity of work but decrease the quality. Studies show that we make more mistakes while multi-tasking than we make while doing one task.

The reason is that our mind operates far better when it can focus on one thing at a time. Each type of task requires us to think in a unique way. Switching from one to-do to another leads to confusing the brain. So, instead of switching from one task to another, we should get comfortable with one task and settle one thing at a time.

13.8 Customer Service Skills

Customer service is not just a series of steps to be completed. It is an attitude and a way of looking at customers that enables the salespeople to provide the best level of service that they and their organization are capable of providing. The power of customer service cannot be underestimated when it comes to making sales and keeping customers. Many customers are willing to pay a higher price or go without certain features if they know that they have access to excellent customer service people who will be responsive and effective whenever they are needed.

So what does it take to provide excellent customer service skills? The answer to that question could fill books of its own, but here are a few tips on some main points:

1 Recognize the power of word of mouth: Take responsibility for the customer's experience – from first contact and beyond the sale. Customers might only make one purchase from you – or they might make repeat purchases over time. Even if they do not ever buy from you, they can carry an impression of your customer service with them and tell others about you – the good and the bad.

2 Put yourself in their shoes : The salesperson might have dealt with an issue a hundred times with hundred different customers, however, the customer with whom he is dealing is facing it the first time. Thus, the salesperson needs to put himself in their shoes and try to understand how their problem is affecting them and their business.

3 Communicate: The salesperson needs to be in touch with his customers to let them know any news, be it good, bad or anything interesting. Many times a customer will be understanding about a situation as long as you keep them informed about what is going on.

4 Honour your word: When you make a promise, be sure that you can deliver on it – and hopefully, exceed what you have promised. Your word is very fragile with customer. It takes only one time of failing to deliver on your word for you to destroy the reputation that you have built with the customer.

Check your progress B

1. What are the customer service skills that a salesperson need to develop? Name them.
2. How does a Salesperson builds a sales pyramid?
3. Fill in the blanks:
 - i. When you make a, be sure that you will deliver it.
 - ii. or Excel may be used to create one's own content management system.
 - iii. The habit of making a is very helpful to develop organisational skills.
 - iv. One good rule of thumb is to under-promise and for your customers.

13. 9 LET US SUM UP

A seller can solve buyer's problem only after he listens carefully and understand the problem. Experienced salespersons understands the value of careful listening to their customers. Salespeople who don't listen miss out the chance to identify customers' problems and needs, let them know and feel that they understand their issues and build a stronger relationship with them. To become an active listener, the salesperson should pay undivided attention, give acknowledgements from time to time, give feedback and should not interrupt.

Effective communication is crucial to sales success. While the knowledge about the market and the best selling techniques is the theoretical part of being a salesperson, the practical part is effectively communicating this knowledge, ultimately to close the deal. Knowledge and

communication are only complimentary to each other. Therefore, having knowledge about client, market, trends, etc. is insufficient without effective communication skills.

One of the key conditions to achieve success in the profession of selling is to become a problem solver before becoming a seller. Effective salespeople possess an attitude to meet challenges with strength, understand the problems and find solutions. The salesperson should try to find out the problems of the customers and how to solve them, put themselves in their shoes, focus on benefits rather than features and stop selling and begin problem solving to become an effective salesperson.

In today's competitive marketplaces, various sellers can solve the problems faced by the customers. Customers have a vast choice in which seller to prefer. However, a good salesman should have persuasion skills to encourage customers to prefer his products or services over the competitors'. He should demonstrate his understanding, generate a friendly environment, provide evidence and demonstrate his expertise to the customer. The salesperson must learn the persuading skills if he does not possess. He must understand the point of view of the customers and then provide information on the benefits of his offering. Focussing on benefits rather than features is important in persuading customers.

Interpersonal skills are more than just communication skills. They are the 'people skills' that seem to come to some so naturally, while others may struggle to acquire them. Interpersonal skills in the salespersons help them to work with their customers and build rapport with them. Interpersonal skills also help to build the type of long-term relationships that are important in maintaining customers over time. Some interpersonal skills include courtesy, respect for others, ability to see things from others' perspectives and ability to understand various communication styles

Salespeople have to keep a track of a lot of things. Many salespeople spend more of their time on administrative tasks than they spend on actual selling. Sales time management teaches the salespeople, the tasks they should be doing and also the tasks they shouldn't be doing. The salespeople need to focus as much on eliminating the tasks they shouldn't do as on the ones they should do. It is advisable to reduce administrative tasks, use a contact management system software system, stop procrastinating, create a sales pyramid, etc.

Customer service skill is an attitude and a way of looking at customers that enables the salespeople to provide the best level of service that they and their organization are capable of providing. The power of customer service cannot be underestimated when it comes to making sales and keeping customers. Any customers are willing to pay a higher price or go without certain features if they know that they have access to excellent customer service people who will be responsive and effective whenever they are needed.

13.10 KEYWORDS

Listening Skills: Ability of the salespeople to careful listening to their customers.

Communication Skills: Ability if the salespeople to effectively share the knowledge about products, service, market, trends, etc. tot the customers.

Problem Solving Skills: this is the ability to find out the problems of the customers and to solve them.

Persuading Skills: the salespeople must be able to convince the customers that his offering can solve their problems better than competitors’.

Inter – personal Skills: this is a social skill that helps a salesperson in facilitating interaction and communication with the customers and building long – term relationships with them.

Organization Skills: salespeople should learn sales time management by focussing the tasks they should be doing and also the tasks they shouldn’t be doing.

Customer Service Skills: Customer service skill is an attitude and a way of looking at customers that enables the salespeople to provide the best level of service that they and their organization are capable of providing.

13.11 Answers to Check Your Progress

A. 3.i. false ii. False iii. True iv. True

B. 3.i. promise ii. Microsoft iii. To-do-list iv. Over-deliver

13.12 Terminal Questions

- a) Explain how problem solving skill and persuading skill to inter – related.
- b) What are organization skills? Why they are important for a salesperson? Suggest some ways to enhance the organization skill of a salesperson.
- c) “Listening skill is the most important skill required to become a successful salesperson”. Explain why.
- d) Is inter – personal skill same as communication skills? How are they different from each other?
- e) “Customer service skill can help building enduring relationships with customers”. How?
- f) Suggest the ways to enhance communication skill.
- g) Why a salesperson needs to be more of a problem solver than a seller?
- h) What is the importance of integrity in the profession of sales?
- i) Discuss the importance of body language in communicating with the clients.

UNIT 14 CAREER OPPORTUNITIES IN PERSONAL SELLING

Structure

14.0 Objectives

14.1 Introduction

14.2 Why Do You Choose a Sales Career?

14.3 What Does a Professional Salesperson Do?

14.4 Types Of Sales Jobs Based On Industries

14.5 Changing Role of a Salesperson

14.6 Criteria for Success in a Sales Career

14.7 Measures for Making Personal Selling an Attractive Career

14.8 Let Us Sum Up

14.9 Key Words

14.10 Answers to Check Your Progress

14.11 Terminal Questions

14.0 OBJECTIVES

After studying this unit, you will be able to understand:

- analyse how a sales career can benefit you;
- discuss what does a salesperson do;
- explore what are the major industries offering a lucrative sales job;
- describe the changing role of a sales professionals;
- discuss the criteria for success in a sales career; and
- explain the measures for making personal selling an attractive career.

14.1 INTRODUCTION

David Mackenzie Ogilvy, the father of advertising, once said “We sell or else”. What he meant was that the ultimate purpose of business is to sell something to someone and establish exchange transaction. Without selling the whole purpose of establishing the business remains incomplete. Selling is so prominent for business that in spite of growing digital marketing and e-commerce, it is the effort of sales force of the business that has an impact on virtually every other area of business. Despite new technologies, tools, and business models, the skills and competencies of sales people will always be crucial for building relationships, closing deals, and finding new opportunities. Selling is an honourable, challenging, and rewarding career.

Selling is not just for sales professionals; it is a skill everyone of us needs to learn. Even if we never actually hold a sales job, we do need to sell during a range of activities like selling an old car or selling yourself in a job interview. The competitive world today demands good interpersonal skills and, the lack of selling capability can put anyone at a disadvantage. The skills and knowledge gained from a selling course can be used by a student who plans to go into virtually any field, such as law, medicine, journalism, or the military, or by those who start their own business.

In this unit, you will learn the reasons why do people choose selling profession as a career, the types of sales jobs, the responsibilities of a salesperson, the criteria for success in sales, whether a person is suited for sales career or not and measures for making personal selling an attractive career.

14.2 WHY DO YOU CHOOSE A SALES CAREER?

A career in sales is worth exploring for individuals who look for a flexible, competitive and challenging work environment, high earning potential, and an opportunity to continuously develop and adapt oneself in skills according to the changing environment and grow their professional capabilities. The major reasons for choosing a sales career are:

- 1 Earning Potential of a Sales Career:** Sales is a performance-based career. The more you sell, the more incentive you receive. The sales career is best for those who like competition and who like to work hard to stay ahead of others. The reward for the hard work generally comes in the form of monetary measure like periodical bonuses, prizes, trips, commissions, and various other incentives. There are very few other fields which provide earning potential which most of the sales careers do. The employers hire the sales professionals to earn revenue and they know very well that sales is the ultimate purpose of their business, without it business might soon be shut. Thus, the employers are willing to provide higher incentives to these sales professionals to keep them motivated towards their organisation.
- 2 The Flexibility of a Career in Sales:** Sales field is one of those fewest fields which provide highest level of flexibility in work schedule. While the degree of flexibility depends upon the particular type of sales job and the company, most of the sales professionals have the freedom to manage their daily schedule as long as they meet their targets. This helps the sales people to maintain their work – life balance.

This flexibility provides individual an opportunity to manage between household tasks and professional assignment. He can quickly run an errand like meeting a doctor and simultaneously fix an appointment with a client. He might also want to avoid morning – evening peak rush hours commute to office while preferring to pick and drop kids to school. This flexible arrangement permits him to follow a comfortable pace at work and choose a work environment that optimizes his productivity.

When a person feels a greater sense of control and ownership over his life and work, he will have better relationships with his boss and co - workers as well as feel more motivated and less stressed out.

- 3 Job Security:** It is a fact that the employees who are more valuable for the employer are less likely to be terminated, laid off or replaced. However, in time of an economic downturn, if the industry is hit hard, every employee loses value. However, the situation with sales professionals is a little bit different in the sense that in struggling times, sales people are the last ones to be laid off as they carry out the task of bringing in revenue with profits for the business which is the ultimate goal of business. Effective salespeople with an ability of bringing in business and building relationships have huge market value. So, any employer would hesitate to lay off successful salespeople till the moment it becomes extremely difficult to run the business. There is no other department or business function that has a greater impact on the development of the all-important cash flow than the sales department.
- 4 Psychological Satisfaction:** Most of the people like to win and to feel as if their work makes a difference. For a salesperson, closing a deal is a moment of delight if it brings substantial incentives. It can be more rewarding if the deal helped the client solve a business or a personal issue or if it beats out the competition and helps secure his job. The psychological rewards may range drastically from one sales job to another. The excitement of victories and the fact that you are creating and securing employment for others, makes the sales career a very attractive option.
- 5 Career Stepping Stone:** Sales is a challenging and dynamic field to work in. It requires the sales professionals to constantly learn new skills and brush up the old ones. There are ample opportunities in a sales career to learn, grow and develop new skills. Modern techniques, methods and technology turn up dynamically which need to be learnt and practiced to be able to have an edge. Thus, it shows that a sales job provides a stepping stone for many other careers. Researchers say that a lot of business managers, marketing and technical professionals, trainers and college professors come from a prior field of sales and acknowledge the skills they acquire in their sales job. Thus, graduates, young professionals, or career switchers having a dream job in mind but lacking skills like communication and interpersonal skills, presentation and persuading skills and who could not find an entry point in their career may try to first get into a sales job and then switch to desired field.
- 6 Mastering In-Demand Skills:** There is a great importance of soft skills in a sales job. Soft skills are a “combination of people skills, social skills, communication skills, character or personality traits, attitudes, career attributes, social intelligence and emotional intelligence quotients, among others, that enable people to navigate their environment, work well with others, perform well, and achieve their goals.” In today’s competitive world, these skills need to be learnt and practiced more than the hard skills. Building up these skills may be the best investment one can make in his personality and thus, his career.

Creativity, persuasion, collaboration, adaptability, time management, conflict management, stress management, customer service, emotional intelligence and storytelling are some of the most important soft skills that a person in sales career can acquire very well. A sales job helps building up and mastering skills that are applicable to many roles which may be taken up by the individual in his career ladder.

- 7 Challenging Job:** In a sales job, a person can test his mettle every day. They need to prove themselves every day and in front of every customer. Each customer is an opportunity to prove oneself. The rewards associated with each target keep the job more challenging. The person learns to face challenges in everyday life. Selling provides immediate feedback on salesperson's efforts. The reactions from buyers leave no doubt of salesperson's performance. He can use that feedback to improve constantly. Every time he presents himself and his offering, he has a chance to sharpen his skills.

14.3 WHAT DOES A PROFESSIONAL SALESPERSON DO?

The salesperson's tasks and assignments can vary from job to job and organisation to organisation, depending upon various factors like the nature of product and service that he is selling. For instance, the tasks of a salesperson selling Amway products through multi – level marketing are similar but somewhat different from the tasks of a salesperson selling automobiles for Maruti Suzuki.

People believe that the job of a salesperson varies from presenting and demonstrating to closing the deal and follow up. However, in today's marketplace, there is much more to his credit. As manager of a territory, the salesperson has the responsibility to:

- 1. 1 Create new customers:** The first and foremost task of a salesperson is to keep increasing the sales or replacing the customers that will be lost over time. This requires continuous prospecting which means identifying the potential customers. Thus, in a way, it may be said that prospecting is the most important part of sales. The salespersons require the ability to apply their judgment, for identifying the people or organizations that have the potential to buy their products.
- 2. 2 Sell more to present customers:** For increasing the market share, the company not only needs to create more customers but also to sell more occasionally and in more quantity to existing customers. Research says that creating new customer is far costlier than satisfying existing customer. Thus, building up loyalty of customers towards own products/ services becomes very important for the salesperson.
- 3. 3 Build long-term relationships with customers:** Research says that selling to a new customer is much costlier than selling to an existing one. Thus, satisfying the existing customers become all the more essential. After sales service and regular communications with them is necessary to build long term relations with the customers in order to sell them again and again.
- 4. 4 Provide solutions to customers' problems:** Latent or apparent, people have needs which can be met. They have problems or issues which can be solved by purchasing goods or service. This is where salespeople's another role comes in. They look for existing or latent needs or problems of their customers and show how the use of their products or services can satisfy needs or solve problems.

5. **Provide service to customers:** After selling, the salespeople provide a lot of other services to their customers like grievance redressal, returning damaged products, giving free samples to be distributed to customers, suggesting new business opportunities, and suggesting promotional programs to help the customer to promote the firm's products.
6. **Helps customers resell products to their customers:** Many times sales person's job is to guide and help the customers to resell the products and services to their customers. They provide assistance to their wholesale customers to sell products to retail customers and helps retail customers sell products to consumers. Consider a salesperson selling spices to grocery wholesalers. For selling his product to wholesalers, he must also need to contact the grocery retailers, take up their orders and send the orders to the wholesalers. If required, the salesperson might also assist the customer by working at his place. A salesperson selling a vacuum cleaner may make an arrangement for its demonstration at his customer's (wholesaler or retailer) workplace.
7. Thus, with the help of this salesperson, the wholesalers sell and deliver the product to the retailers. The salesperson also develops promotional programs to help the retailer sell the firm's products. These programs involve supplying advertising materials, conducting store demonstrations, and setting up product displays.
8. **Help customers use products after purchase:** This is especially in case of sales of technical products. Many times, the customers need to be demonstrated how to obtain full benefit from the product. For example, on the sale of a new software to an organisation, the technical specialists need to provide lectures/ classes to the employees of that organisation to show them how to run and use the software effectively.
9. **Build goodwill with customers :** The salesperson needs to build professional yet friendly and personal relationships with his customers and even their influencers. A salesperson's job also include a continuous manifestation of integrity, trustworthiness, high ethical standards, and a sincere interest in solving problems to each of his customers.
10. **Provide company with market information:** Another important task of a salesperson is to collect market information and pass it on to the organisation. He may collect information about latest trends and preferences of customers, their reaction, complaints, grievances and suggestions on new launches, number of competitors in the market and their activities and new marketing techniques and methods prevailing. This information can be collected from wholesalers, retailers or the customers themselves. Thus, salespeople are a prominent part of information system for any organisation.

14. 4 TYPES OF SALES JOBS BASED ON INDUSTRIES

Sales is inherent in any kind of industry or business organisation. No industry or organisation can exist without the sales job. For nearly every industry that exists, there is a corresponding sales career, each having its pros and cons. One may consider various factors like personal liking, education and experience requirements, pay scale, perquisites, working conditions, working hours and many more to choose a particular industry for sales career. For those interested in either starting a sales career or changing from

one sales industry to another, there are many choices. Following are some of the industries in which sales takes a major role so that sales career may be lucrative, although the list is not exhaustive and definitive:

1 IT Industry Sales Careers

The salespeople in the IT industry enjoy two major benefits - a high income potential and job security. However, a constant threat of ever changing technology also looms over them. If the salespeople in this industry do not adapt themselves to the dynamic technological environment, these benefits may vanish quickly. Thus, they need to commit themselves forever to learn new techniques, skills and methods.

An IT sales professional has the following major tasks to perform:

- speak to customers, either face to face or over the phone.
- gain an understanding of customers' diverse and specific business needs and apply product knowledge to meet them.
- ensure quality of service by developing a thorough and detailed knowledge of technical specifications and other features of employers' systems and processes, and then documenting them.
- carry out cold-calling in order to create interest in products and services, generate new business leads and arrange meetings.
- identify and develop new business through networking and follow-up courtesy calls.
- prepare and deliver presentations and demonstrations of software to customers.
- market and promote a portfolio of products by writing and designing sales literature and attending industry events.
- maintain awareness and keep abreast of constantly changing software and hardware systems and peripherals (e.g. keyboard and mouse).
- provide technical advice to customers on all aspects of the installation and use of computer systems and networks, both before and after the sale.
- advise on software features and how can they be applied to assist in a variety of contexts such as accounting, manufacturing or other specialist areas.
- handle hardware or software problems and faults, referring on to specialist technical colleagues where appropriate.

2 Real Estate Agent

Real estate sales agents, also sometimes called as property dealers or agents, help their customers in buying, selling, and renting a house, shop, land or other properties. While agents do much more than just sell homes and other properties for and to people, essentially their job is to close deals. The rewards for successful agents can be unlimited, however, like any other sales profession, there is no success without hard work. A very critical combination of right personality, marketing skills, time management, knowing how to figure out clients' needs and wants, negotiating, etc. is required to become successful in this field.

Some countries like USA require the aspirants to clear state and national level exams to get the license. However, in India, there is no such requirement of education or clearing of exams. Sales agents may work as an employee in a company or as an independent contractor.

Real Estate Agent's Responsibilities:

- Appraise property values by comparing a property with similar properties that have been recently sold to determine its competitive market price.
- Advise clients on market conditions, prices, mortgages, legal requirements, and related matters.
- Promote sales of properties through advertisements, open houses, and participation in multiple listing services.
- Accompany buyers during visits to and inspections of property, and advise them on the suitability and value of the property they are visiting.
- Prepare documents such as representation contracts, purchase agreements, closing statements, deeds, and leases, coordinate property closings, overseeing the signing of documents and disbursement of funds.
- Confer with escrow companies, lenders, home inspectors, and pest control operators to ensure that terms and conditions of the purchase agreement are met before closing dates.
- Contact property owners and advertise services to solicit property sales listings.
- Arrange for title searches to determine whether clients have clear property titles.
- Attend conventions, seminars, and staff and association meetings to remain knowledgeable about real estate markets.
- Advise sellers on how to make homes more appealing to potential buyers.
- Investigate clients' financial and credit status to determine eligibility for financing.
- Develop a network of attorneys, mortgage lenders, and contractors to whom clients may be referred.
- Inspect condition of premises and arrange for necessary maintenance or notify owners of maintenance needs.
- Evaluate mortgage options to help clients obtain financing at the best prevailing rates and terms.
- Rent or lease properties on behalf of clients.

3 Health Care Industry Sales Careers

Health care industry provides much security as it is one of the growing industries of all. It is such a diverse industry, that the options for growth can be tremendous. With medical technology booming, there are so many different niches in this industry: surgical equipment, nanotechnology and durable medical equipment to name a few. The pharmaceutical industry is another branch in this industry. An aspirant needs great customer service skills, knowledge of industry and patient protocols, time management, and patience. These salespeople have the major task of making cold calls to their potential clients including public and private hospitals, doctors' offices and medical centres.

Primary responsibilities or skills of health care industry are:

- Communication skills are quite important while dealing with patients, their family and colleagues.
- A healthcare worker should be very flexible for working hours.
- The ability to co-operate with others is an advantage in health care industry
- Strong work ethics, dealing with pressure, time management, team player are some skills which a health care provider must possess.
- Making cold calls to their potential clients

4 Food Service Sales

The sales people in food industry are responsible for selling food and food-related items to establishments that help people meet their need of eating food.

Food service sales person may work as a restaurant supply distributor or exclusively for food distributors. No matter who a foodservice sales person works for, they should expect stiff competition, a lot of networking and a job that extends beyond the normal working hours.

Primary responsibilities of a foodservice sales person are:

- Sell food, food ingredients, and food services to businesses and individuals.
- Sell food for the purpose of re-distribution and to get the food into the market.
- Sell food to restaurants, caterers, event planners, etc.
- Manage and develop new customers, while maintaining existing sales within assigned customers and a given sales territory.
- Develop a daily/weekly call list and maintain information accuracy monthly and review daily sales reports.
- Review monthly the best monitoring sales report with management to determine if goals and objectives are being met.
- Coordinate sales with food service producer to ensure demand is met.
- Communicate trends/pricing issues and other unique issues as it relates to sales.
- Participate in marketing events such as seminars, trade shows, and telemarketing events.
- Coordinate shipping schedules and delivery of merchandise and services.

5 Pharmaceutical Sales

The pharmaceutical industry is poised for rapid growth, with an aging population in need of medication and healthcare, as well as a rise in the number of drugs receiving government approval.

Successful sales representatives in the pharmaceutical industry will need great customer service skills along with product knowledge. They will also need some basic medical knowledge, patient protocols, and best practices, as well as knowledge of trends in the industry.

Major tasks for pharmaceutical sales persons are:

- Finding new customers by cold calling or walking into hospitals, medical centres, doctors' offices, and HMOs.
- Meeting frequently with healthcare professionals to describe the drug's chemistry, uses, side effects, and potential interactions.
- Following leads and target potential new customers within an assigned geographic region.
- Presenting at industry conferences, establishing networking events, and conducting workshops to cultivate potential sales.
- Most pharmaceutical sales representatives specialize in promoting certain drug classes, such as analgesics, antibiotics, antidepressants, or beta blockers.
- Undertaking administrative tasks like taking purchase orders, establishing new accounts, reviewing product literature, and resolving consumer complaints.

6 Insurances Sales Agents

The sales people in insurance companies help their employers enlarge their customer base by searching for potential customers and selling them one or more types of insurance and related services. Insurance sales agents explain various insurance policies and help their clients choose plans that suit them. They generally sell one or more types of insurance, such as life insurance, medical insurance, automobile insurance, stock and property insurance, etc.

Insurance sales agents typically have the following tasks to perform:

- Making cold calls to prospective customers to solicit new business.
- Interviewing potential clients to get their relevant financial information and existing coverage.
- Introducing the prospective clients the various policies available with him.
- Analysing the clients' existing policies and suggest additions or changes.
- Customizing the policies to suit individual needs.
- Handling policy renewals.
- Maintaining clients' records in soft and hard form.
- Helping the clients settle their claims.

7 Loan Officer

Although it may not be a traditional sales job, loan officers are generally in the business of selling loan products services to the clients. They are typically employed by banks, non banking financial institutions and mortgage companies to evaluate, authorize and recommend loan applications for various kinds of customers – businesses or individuals. Loan officers may have various kinds of specialization. They may be commercial loan officers (who specialize in making loans available to businesses), consumer loan officers (specializing in making loans available to individuals) or mortgage loan officers (who specialize in loans used to buy real estate, property and buildings). Within these three fields, the loan officers may specialize as Mortgage loan officers or Loan underwriters.

Generally Loan officers have the following tasks to perform:

- Making calls to prospective clients to generate new business.
- Arranging meetings with the applicants to gather and verify their personal information and financial information such as credit score and income level.
- Introducing various types of loans available, according to the needs of the clients and handling their queries.
- Guiding the customer through the application process .
- Analyse the loan applications according to the terms and conditions of the employer and government norms.
- Approve loan applications or refer them to management for a decision.

8 Sales Engineers

Sales engineers are those sales persons who sell complex scientific and technological products or services to businesses. These salespersons must have in depth knowledge and experience of how to handle the complex products. They must be aware of all the products' parts and functions and must understand the scientific processes that make these products work. They often work under stressful conditions because their income and job security depend on successfully completing sales. Some may work long and irregular hours to meet sales goals and client needs. Still, this can be a rewarding career for those who want to work in a fast-growing field.

Sales engineers typically do the following:

- Prepare and deliver technical presentations that explain products or services to customers and prospective customers.
- Arrange delivery engineers to assess equipment needs and system requirements.
- Collaborate with sales teams to understand customer requirements and provide sales support.
- Secure and renew the orders of the customers.
- Help clients solve problems with installed equipment and ask for technical requirements for modifications.
- Help the marketing team in market research.
- Plan and give suggestions to production team to modify products to meet customer needs.
- Recommend improved materials or machinery to customers, showing how changes will lower costs or increase production.

9 Securities, Commodities, and Financial Services Sales Agent

These salespeople are responsible for selling a variety of financial services, like advising on or selling mutual funds, various types of insurances, retirement plans, investments or tax saving. Working in the fast-paced industry of the financial markets can be attractive to those who thrive in high-pressure situations and want to work in a competitive field. These sales agents are responsible for selling securities and other financial products to customers, providing financial and purchasing recommendations, and conducting trading activities.

They contact potential clients to explain their services, which may include: foreign trade job, retailing job, textile, fashion, industry, the handling of checking accounts, loans, certificates of deposit, individual retirement accounts, credit cards, and estate and retirement planning.

Financial services sales agent have the following primary responsibilities:

- Sell financial services to businesses and individuals.
- Recommend certain services such as life insurance, retirement income, investments, and long-term care insurance.
- Build relationships with clients and communities.
- Provide solutions for short and long-term financial goals.
- Help clients achieve financial security.
- Determine clients' financial needs and areas of improvement.
- Determine security risks and advise customers regarding expected fluctuations.

- Develop prospects from current commercial customers, referral leads, and sales and trade meetings.
- Prepare forms or agreements.
- Sell trusts, investments, and check processing services.
- Make presentations on financial services to groups in order to attract new clients.
- Use financial, tax, economics and accounting skills to review a client's personal data and recommend investment strategies that are appropriate to the client's goals.
- Advise a client on whether to buy certain types of stocks, bonds and mutual funds.
- Evaluate financial reporting systems, accounting and collection procedures, and investment activities, and make recommendations for changes to procedures, operating systems, budgets, and other financial control functions.
- Determine whether loans must be obtained to meet cash requirements or whether surplus cash can be invested.
- Solicit business, authorize loans, and direct the investment of funds, always adhering to Federal and State laws and regulations.

14.5 CHANGING ROLE OF SALES PEOPLE

Earlier, the major task of sales people was to communicate all the detail of their products/ services and their comparison with the substitutes to make the prospects understand how their product may benefit the customers and solve their problems. Those were the times, salespeople used to persuade people into buying their offerings and many times into wrong purchases just to hit their targets.

However, in the recent years, technological innovations have changed the marketplace. Now the product information is available on internet in abundance. In fact, some website have the sole purpose of providing information and making comparisons easy. Does this mean that the sales jobs are redundant and the salespeople will be out of the ark? And, now should the companies not hold their salespeople accountable for the revenue quota?

More experts believe that selling is so prominent for business that in spite of growing digital marketing and e – commerce, it is the effort of sales force of the business that has an impact on virtually every other area of business. Despite new technologies, tools, and business models, the skills and competencies of sales people will always be crucial for building relationships, closing deals, and finding new opportunities.

However, the role of a salesperson has been changing ever since the inception of digital marketing and e – commerce. The information technology has not only brought threats but also opportunities for the salespeople. The world of selling now requires a completely different mentality and skill set. It is no longer about persuading people into buying something they do not need, do not want, or can not afford. It is about being there as a trusted advisor to help guide them through the buying process. The salesperson's role is evolving to be that of a consultant. The role of the business-to-business salesperson is changing from “product information provider” to “business success coach”, from “always be closing” approach to an “always be helping” approach, from a “traveling figure” to a real “relationship manager”. It is about being there as a trusted advisor to help guide them through the buying process.

Armed with wireless technology, sales people can provide prospects and customers with increased service, in less time, from anywhere around the globe. Sales people will travel less and use online audio and video conferencing more. Thus, the technological advances which enabled the buyers to research suppliers and find products, also helped to make the sales force more productive.

For example, prospective customers may have instant access via the Internet to information about a company's products and those of its competitors. They will still however, need a salesperson's personal contact and expertise to help them diagnose their specific needs and decide on the best solution to satisfy them. Therefore the role of sales person has been changing. The domain of sales activities has been expanding. The sales persons must be equipped with the required skills to manage there changing scenario of sales job.

14.6 CRITERIA FOR SUCCESS IN PERSONAL SELLING

To become successful in a sales career, like any other career, there are some basic demands which need to be fulfilled. These are:

- 1 **Love of selling:** One of the most important conditions to become a successful salesperson is the love of selling. If the salesperson loves his job, finds it challenging and motivating, and if he believes that the product or service that he is selling will solve the customers' problems and will provide them great value, he is surely in the right field of career. The love of their work keeps the people devoting more and more to their job and it is one of the characteristics of successful people.
- 2 **Willingness to work hard, work smart, then work some more:** A pre- requisite to enter a sales career is the willingness to work hard and smart. A positive attitude towards work is really needed. A career in personal selling commonly requires 10 – 12 hours work days including many Saturdays and Sundays. It is their love of work and their need for success that motivate the top sellers to bear with hectic schedules. This also requires persistence which comes the ability to go beyond normal limits.
- 3 **Have an optimistic outlook:** A positive outlook towards work, organisation, customers and in general, towards life, provide the strength to survive and excel in tough times. A sales job provides a number of such benefits which other jobs may provide. However, they too face many challenges and threats like hectic schedule and dynamic environment. Yet, their optimistic attitude helps them face periodic problems. They persistently find ways to improve their performance even in tough times. In no other field is the necessity of having a positive attitude more prominent than in sales. Successful salespeople are enthusiastic, confident, and constantly think of themselves as successful.
- 4 **Be knowledgeable:** For a salesperson knowledge means information about the customers, their demography, tastes and lifestyle, their existing and latent needs, the various substitutes available in the market, the competitors- their characteristics and market share, latest marketing techniques being used in the market, etc. Knowledge also includes awareness about the latest techniques, skills and ideas used by other salespeople while dealing with customers. To become successful, salespeople need to focus on having thorough knowledge in all aspects of their business. This boosts their confidence and helps in building a professional image as well as trust with customers.

As goods and services become more complex, companies place greater emphasis on training their salespeople and on salespeople training themselves. It is no wonder that corporate recruiters seek above-average individuals to fill their entry-level sales positions.

- 5 Be ruthless about time:** One of the greatest mantra to become successful in career and life is to kill procrastination. Any kind of talent in a person is wasted if he/ she is not able to utilise it because of procrastination.

Successful sales people do not use the word *someday*. They realize that what you do today determines your tomorrows. Thus, *tomorrow* is today! They always think of today as a new opportunity in their lives. They are do-it-now people. They pick up the phone, mail a letter, or make a sales call today to be successful tomorrow.

- 6 ask questions and then listen to uncover customer needs:** People nowadays do not like the kind of salespeople who speak a lot and do not let them speak about their problems. One of the most important skills that salespeople need to learn is to listen carefully to what his customer is telling him. They need to ask questions then pay attention as the prospects answers the questions to uncover their needs.

- 7 Serve your customer:** Customers never like to be sold. They need the customers to solve their problems. They like to believe that the salesperson care for them and will always give them the best advice about the products and services which can solve their problem. Customer service is not just a series of steps to be completed. It is an attitude and a way of looking at customers that enables the salespeople to provide the best level of service that they and their organization are capable of providing. The power of customer service cannot be underestimated when it comes to making sales and keeping customers. Many customers are willing to pay a higher price or go without certain features if they know that they have access to excellent customer service people who will be responsive and effective whenever they are needed. Providing service to customers also help the salespeople to gain respect from their customers.

- 8 Be physically and mentally prepared:** Even in the times of e – commerce and internet marketing, still many of the sales job are of primarily of travelling in nature. Salespeople need to meet their clients on a regular basis in order to give presentation and fix their problems. Regular travelling and hectic schedule demands the salesperson to keep himself physically prepared. With physical preparedness comes mental strength. Exercise elevates the mood by increasing energy and simultaneously secreting adrenaline-like substances in the body that act as stimulants and antidepressants, according to the medical community. This increased feeling of well-being transmits itself to the body and mind. Knowing that you are in shape to deal with today and tomorrow is an important component of being successful.

14.7 MEASURES FOR MAKING PERSONAL SELLING AN ATTRACTIVE CAREER

Despite providing some exceptional benefits, the sales profession has not gained much importance amongst job seekers. Thus, there is a need to make this profession attractive and measures need to be taken by the academicians as well as the employers who need people for their sales department.

Suggestive Measures to be taken by Academicians:

Classroom/training exercises: Academicians need to be aware that the perception about the career in marketing in general and sales in particular starts building up during their graduation and post graduation when they make a choice among various fields of subjects. Marketing professors and trainers need to

incorporate classroom/training exercises, role plays, and other experiential methods to eliminate the negative perceptions wherever possible and reinforced the positive perceptions. Students from different backgrounds are likely to be different and the classroom instruction or the training program needs to be adjusted to the characteristics of each group of students.

enlightening the students about sales career: the students may be assigned the task of interviewing a sales person. Those who have family members in sales, they can present their experience/feelings about the profession to the class. Inviting sales persons or managers as guest speakers in the class will also help students develop correct perception of the profession.

Developing the skill set: Among the skills set for sales people, sales presentation skill is very important. Apart from oral communication, the students must be provided the opportunity to develop listening, persuasion and negotiating skills. Development of these skills should be woven into the fabric of business curriculum since these skills are useful to all managers not just the sales professionals. Educators and trainers have to stress repeatedly the positive aspects of presentation and communication skills. Sales careers are primarily communication careers with business skills becoming the substance used in the transactions. Educators should create measurable standards to assess students' progress.

Suggestive Measures to be Taken by Employers

Training: Companies need to provide adequate training to the new comers about their organisation, their products and services, as well as competitors. They also need to provide refresher training to existing sales force for making them acquainted with the new techniques and methods of selling arising in the dynamic market.

Adequate perquisites: Sales people are the representatives of the organisation to the world. They carry the flag of the brand in front of the customers. The level of their motivation will reflect in their relationship with the customers. Companies need to continuously provide adequate perks to their sales team to attract and retain talent. They need to make the job of sales motivating for the sales force.

Guidance to Universities: Human resource and sales management need to focus upon the skills needed in the sales profession. They need to pass it on to universities, colleges and training institutes so that, with this information, they can adjust their curricula to ensure that students and sales trainees get the proper training that their profession requires.

Check your progress

1. What are the responsibilities of a professional sales person?
2. Who are sales engineer?
3. What are the measures to make personal selling an attractive career?
4. What are the major reasons for choosing a Sales Career?
5. True or False
 - i. Employees who are more valuable for the employer are likely to be terminated or replaced. (True/False)
 - ii. There is a great importance of soft skills in a sales job. (True/False)
 - iii. The role of a salesperson has been changing ever since the inceptions of digital marketing and e-commerce. (True/False)
 - iv. Among the skills set for sales people, sales presentation skill is not very important. (True/False)

14.8 LET US SUM UP

Selling is not just for sales professionals; it is a skill every one of us needs to learn. Even if we never actually hold a sales job, we do need to sell during a range of activities in professional as well as personal lives.

A career in sales is worth exploring because of the benefits like earning potential of a sales career, the flexibility of a career in sales, job security, psychological satisfaction, career stepping stone, and mastering in-demand skills.

The salesperson's tasks and assignments can vary from job to job and organisation to organisation, depending upon various factors like the nature of product and service that he is selling. As manager of a territory, the salesperson has the responsibility to create new customers, sell more to present customers, build long-term relationships with customers, provide solutions to customers' problems, provide service to customers, helps customers resell products to their customers, help customers use products after purchase, build goodwill with customers, and provide company with market information

Sales is inherent in any kind of industry or business organisation. No industry or organisation can exist without the sales job. Some of the industries in which sales takes a major role so that sales career is lucrative are Information Technology, real estate, pharmaceutical, health care, food, and financial services.

The role of a salesperson has been changing ever since the inception of digital marketing and e – commerce. The information technology has not only brought threats but also opportunities for the salespeople. It is no longer about persuading people into buying something they do not need, do not want, or can not afford. It's about being there as a trusted advisor to help guide them through the buying process. The salesperson's role is evolving to be that of a consultant. Armed with wireless technology, salespeople can provide prospects and customers with increased service, in less time, from anywhere around the globe. Salespeople will travel less and use online audio and video conferencing more.

14.9 KEYWORDS

Digital marketing – It is a type of marketing in which the marketers use internet to promote their products and services on mobiles, computers, laptops and other digital media and platforms.

E – commerce - E-commerce (electronic commerce) is the buying and selling of goods and services, or the transmitting of funds or data, over an electronic network, primarily the internet. These transactions are business-to-business, business-to-consumer, consumer-to-consumer or consumer-to-business.

14.10 Answers to check your progress

5.i. False ii. True iii. True iv. False

14.11 Terminal Questions

1. Discuss why a college graduate should choose Sales as a starting point of his/ her professional career.
2. What are the primary and secondary responsibilities of a Sales professional?
3. Discuss the changing role of a sales professional in light of increasing digital marketing.
4. Which industries offer lucrative sales career? What are the responsibilities of a sales person in these industries?
5. Suggest the measures that may be adopted by education providers as well as employers to make a sales career attractive for job seekers?