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## **BUYER-SELLER RELATIONSHIP-AN ANALYSIS OF CUSTOMER SERVICE EXPERIENCE WITH BARBER SHOP**

### **Abstract:**

It's broadly accepted that to understand customer is a problem. Hence every service providers attract different customer groups. This customer group's level of fulfillment will also change. It's normally observed that satisfied customer use to avail the repetitive services from the same seller or service provider. But other way around, there are also some customers, notwithstanding satisfaction from the existing service providers, they defect. It's fact that 100 % customer retention is not possible practically though seller try to retain the customers. This has an implication on the service provider's income, productivity and growth. The paper highlights the matters and policies which construct or destruct the buyer-seller relationship with especially reference to the Barber's services. On the basis of several situations which barber come across customer, that has been explained with reference to the diverse situations to which barber get exposed to.

### **Keywords:**

Buyer-Seller Relationship, Service Quality, Trust, Customer Defection, Relationship Strategies, etc.

**JEL Classification:** L84

## **1.0 Introduction**

### **1.1 Background**

Everybody wish to look good, feel good. Since long, human beings use to accept different methods to groom one's character. Underlying logic is that people like attractive personality. Such people get acceptance, gratitude and respect from society. The need to groom oneself may be internally or externally interested. Social conventions, traditions, values guide human beings to take certain steps. Occasionally, person's individual belief and values stimulates oneself to reflect behavior in different social contexts. From aesthetic, mental and health point of view, since time immemorial, the human beings use to avail the numerous services to improve quality of life. Barber facilities is one among them. Haircut, shaving, massage, face lifting, etc are some of the beauty and health care services commonly providing through Barber shop.

### **1.2 Customer Retention vs Defection**

It's really interesting to know why some people herd to some of the barber shops and why certain barber shops experience less customer circulation. The reasons overdue this may be many .It spans from service quality to inter personal relationship. Multiple customers think differently in diverse situations in different contexts. That is the reason that some of the customer stay loyal to the barber and some get deserted .Every barber shop wish to retain the customers by offering them the service quality. This service quality specifically depends upon the barber's ability, skills, knowledge and empathy. It's widely accepted that to know customer is an enigma. Hence every service providers attract different customer groups. This customer group's level of satisfaction will also differ. It's normally experimental that satisfied customer use to avail the repetitive services from the same seller or service provider. But other way round, there are also some customers, despite satisfaction from the existing service providers, they defect. Its fact that 100 % customer holding is not possible practically though seller try to retain the customers. This has an implication on the service provider's income, profitability and growth. This compels the barber to improvise the service quality as per the changing expectations of the customers. Service failure on behalf of barber results in customer dissatisfaction. Occasionally this dissatisfaction is voiced through complaints or sometimes customer defects without registering any complaints. Those customers who defected silently, the reasons of their dissatisfaction go unrecorded. To recover such types of lost customers is hard as they exit without raising their voice. Those customers who rapid their dissatisfaction, they should be taken seriously by the barber. This will help the barber to create on the various quality dimensions of the customer service. Such types of customers can be reassured for the service quality by nearly bring the changes in processes, people or shop environment. These customers which are prone to defect, they can be barred by building the confidence in relationship.

### **1.3 Confidence and Trust-A tool to develop relationship**

Confidence and trust plays vibrant role in building and strengthening the relationship among the service provider and the customers. Sureness is effect of past experiences. Involvement may be either positive or negative. Positive experiences helps in building relationship and negative experiences helps in declining the relationship. Hence confidence in relation between service provider and the customer only comes through actual service delivery as per the customer expectation. It's more noticeable and easy to understand as the situations and its result can be evaluated rapidly. Hence building confidence is first steps in emerging the relationship.

Trust's literal meaning is unity or similarity of values and beliefs in between the service provider and customer. Now the values are the deep rooted beliefs which are the results of one's experiences in past these rooted beliefs has effect on the perception. Perception is only how customer or service provider analyze, receives and assess the situations .As mentioned, belief is deep fixed and it's difficult to variation. Trust between the buyer & seller is largely based in their similar rational, attitude, morals and beliefs. Most of the times, trust is based on ignorance or newness of situations. As unawareness starts diminishing with the channel of time, knowledge pervades. These processes gradually weaken or strengthen the relationship based on the trust. In various contexts and in various situations, the concurrent occurrence of trust or distrust may be there. It's ambivalent and hence difficult to say that trust and distrust are opposite to each other. Hence sureness and trust which contributes relations as per the expectations of service providers and customers creates substantial base for strengthening relationship. Still, it's difficult to understand the many complex sizes of strengthened and broken relationship. Managing the confidence, trust and distrust in correct direction needs understanding those influential factors which affect the quality of relationship. The location of barber shop, skills of barber, no of barber, interpersonal skills of barber, shop ambience, type of services, culture, service charges ,service quality etc are certain of the major influential factors which affects the relationship.

### **2.0 Customer Experience and Relationship Strategies**

The situations illustrated under highlights what actually helps in construction and breaking the relationship and the strategy that should be adopted by the barber.

#### **Situation 1 Customer waiting time and service rate**

Barber shop is occupied with Barbers, Chairs, requisite infrastructure and substantial required to execute the services. Number of chairs in a barber shop decides the service rate. If the number of customers waiting in queue is more than the chairs occupied, the customers normally won't wait to avail services. In such instance, either customer will delay

availing services or wait in queue to avail services. The constraints on customer side here is time, earnestness, alternative options available, distance between the service provider and the locational base of the customer. If most of the time, if customer experience the situation that the no of customers to come are more than the no of chairs, the customer will find out alternative option. It means customer will defect owing to time constraints.

**Strategy to build relationship:**

- a) Provide convenient seating plan
- b) Prioritize customer's service level by keep customer database
- c) Offer preferential actions to loyal customers
- d) Customer's waiting time can be reduced by present them the sms/call services
- e) Entertain customer by providing audio, audio visuals, newspapers, magazines etc
- f) Create adequate shop environment through interior design, proper ventilation, drinking water facilities, cleanliness etc

**Situation 2** Chair is unoccupied, barber is not present or doing his own work

Sometimes customers visit a shop with an intention that the services will be existing but barber show disinterest in providing service. Reasons may be barber's own attitude, sincerity, concerned for customer service and long term prospectus for business growth. The level of customer satisfaction or dissatisfaction highly depends upon how the customer is received, preserved and respected in the barber shop by barbers. The soft skill features like empathy, respect, sincerity, honesty; integrity highly matters and deeply influences the depth and extensiveness of relationship at formal and informal level.

**Strategy to build relationship:**

- a) While enlisting barber, hire him for attitude and deep concern for customer service
- b) Offer them exercise and when adequate skills level is attained ,they should be gradually utilized for offering services
- c) Timely availalbity of barber is vital. Hence the qualities like work discipline, sincerity, tactfulness and friendliness should be inculcated

**Situation 3** Personal relationship of barber with Customer

Customers and barber's relationship depends upon similarity of thinking, region, beliefs, values and level of friendliness. If own relationship is strong, then chances are there that customer will stay loyal to barber. In case of chair occupancy, customer will either wait or either avail the services at the different time in a day or some another day deprived of defection.

**Strategy to build relationship:**

- a) Barber shop owner should take adequate care while hiring barbers for their shop for service delivery. The healthy culture of professionalism, familiarity and motivation to be maintained.
- b) Occasion specific gifts, rewards, calls, sms system to be developed
- c) Barber shop owner should developed personal relationship with all the customers who avail the services from their shop

**Situation 4** Service failure on behalf of barber

In an attempt to generate maximum business, if service quality is neglected, then customer is unhappy. When two customers are distinguished for offering the same service, then their ego gets hurt. Sometimes this is the reason that the regular customer get deserted as the service quality and the favorite treatment which they expect, they wouldn't accept.

**Strategy to build relationship:**

- a) Service quality delivery is an outcome of barber's skills and information. The quality delivered by the barber is an outcome of exercise and development in soft and hard skills.

**Situation 5** Shifted location base of either customer or barber

Customer is satisfied with the services of barbers but in case if customer moves location or if barber change location base which is inconvenient to avail services then frequency of exchanges gradually get reduced. After some times this regular exchange get converted into occasional conversation of services and later on relationship broke routinely.

**Situation 6** Replaced barber/Exit of existing barber

In barber shop it is observed that there are customers who are loyal to barber owing to their skills, personal relationship. If such barber exit /separate from the barber shop owing to sure reasons, then customer defection took place. The customer either move along with the barber or search for the novel service provider.

**Strategy to build relationship:**

- a) Initial habit among the barber to be developed to rotate the customers except and until specifically demanded by the customer

**3.0 Conclusions**

Buyer and seller understand the significance of service quality and effective service distribution in customer satisfaction. It's fact that the service delivered by majority of the sellers lacks in quality. It becomes difficulty in developing faith, confidence in the buyer seller relationship. Hence, listening and understanding the customers well and then refining and designing the key procedures which has substantial impact on the customer satisfaction. Accordingly, customized services can be presented by developing, construction and nourishing the relationship between buyer and seller.

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