

THE ROLE OF SALES REPRESENTATIVES IN ENHANCING CUSTOMER LOYALTY

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research is to identify the role of sales representatives in enhancing customer loyalty, as sales representatives are the interface of the organization that communicates directly with its customers, and it is possible to influence their behavior and purchasing decisions. The questionnaire was a tool for obtaining research data, and the General Company for Vegetable Oils was chosen in the field for the research, and the sample size reached (37) individuals, and the research data was entered and analyzed using the ready-made statistical program (SPSS). Sales representatives and enhancing customer loyalty, and accordingly the researcher recommended the need for the organization to choose its sales representatives with high accuracy and according to a number of criteria that are consistent with the nature of its work, as well as providing all training programs necessary to improve their skills in a manner that suits the nature of its customers.

Keywords: sales representatives, customer loyalty, marketing, organizations, environment.

INTRODUCTION AND RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Sales representatives represent the field of connection between the organization and its customers, and therefore they play an important and effective role in enhancing the organization's ability to survive and compete against its competitors in the industry, and the term sales representatives was used instead of the term salesmen, after organizations began to use the female component in sales and promotion operations For its products in the markets, sales representatives affect the success of the organization through the information they provide to it, related to the needs and desires of customers, as the customer represents the primary material on the basis of which organizations decide what to produce and what to sell in the markets, and accordingly the customer's satisfaction and his desire to deal with the organization It is one of the indicators of success for the organization, so most organizations nowadays seek to enhance the loyalty of their customers to preserve them and reduce their desire to leave it and switch to deal with other competitors, hence the role of sales representatives in enhancing customer loyalty as they are the interface of the organization with which the customer communicates and deals with. In this research, we will try to identify the nature of the relationship and influence between sales representatives and enhance customer loyalty, through the researched sample, as well as About trying to present a set of topics directly related to research variables.

1. Research problem: Sales representatives are one of the basic and important parts of the marketing department, which plays a large and influential role in the organizations' ability to compete, survive

and grow in the work, as well as their role in enhancing customer loyalty and their desire to stay and continue to deal with the organization's products and not wanting to upgrade or replace them. As the customer is the main driver of all activities carried out by the organization, hence the research problem in neglecting the role of sales representatives in enhancing customer loyalty towards an organization. The research problem can be summarized by the following questions:

- What is the level of interest of the researched organization in selecting its sales representatives?
- Is there sufficient awareness among the management in the researched organization of the role of sales representatives in enhancing customer loyalty?
- Do salespeople contribute to the success of the organization by enhancing the loyalty of its customers?

2. Importance of research : The importance of research is evident as it deals with one of the important issues in the field of marketing management, which focuses on the role of sales representatives in enhancing customer loyalty, because of their important impact on the organizations' ability to survive and future growth in addition to their role in enhancing the organization's ability to confront The intense competition that the work environment witnesses by retaining its customers, as well as trying to identify the reality of the work of sales representatives in the researched organization and thus present a set of conclusions and recommendations that can be used.

3. Research objectives: The research objectives can be determined by the following points:

- Study the effect of sales representatives in enhancing customer loyalty through the researched sample.
- Identifying some of the factors affecting the enhancement of customer loyalty in the research sample.
- Identify the strengths of sales representatives and work to strengthen them in order to improve the level of performance of the organization as a whole.
- Identify the extent of interest of sales representatives in enhancing the desire of customers that their organizations deal with.

4. Research hypothesis : The research starts from a basic premise stating "the existence of a significant correlation and influence relationship between sales representatives and between enhancing the loyalty of customers who deal with the organization's products."

5. Society and sample research : The General Company for Vegetable Oils was selected in the field for the research, and the research sample was chosen by means of an intentional sample, and it includes a group of company employees who have direct contact with its customers, and the sample size reached (37) individuals.

6. Data collection tools: The research data was obtained through the preparation of a questionnaire consisting of (20) paragraphs, (10) paragraphs related to sales representatives, and (10) paragraphs related to customer loyalty, and they were prepared based on the ideas of a number of ready-made measures. The ready-made statistical program (SPSS) was used to enter and analyze the research data, and the following measures were adopted in the analysis:

- The arithmetic mean.
- Standard deviation.
- Spearman's correlation coefficient.
- Simple linear regression coefficient.

THEORETICAL REVIEWS

In this paragraph, the concept of the basic variables for the research will be introduced, and the most important topics related to them, as follows:

Sales Representatives

There are many issues related to the concept of sales representatives, as the job of sales representatives includes selecting, training and rewarding sales representatives, determining their sales areas, and setting their own pathways. That is, they act as feedback in the sales system (Patwardhan, 2016). Sales representatives were defined as the entirety of the individuals assigned to sell or stimulate demand for the organization's products, and their names differ from one country to another and from one organization to another. It directs and directs it, while the other part of it works outside the organization (Anderson et al, 2009). Sales representatives must also have a number of characteristics to enhance customers' confidence in them, the most important of which are the following: 1- Orientation towards customers: Here, the salesman must emphasize the customer's benefit and the benefit of his organization through a balance between the two benefits and with an emphasis on not paying the product to The buyer if he does not need it. 2- Efficiency: It includes the ability and knowledge of the salesman of the product, a reference for meeting customers and how to deal with the product in terms of technology and its applications. 3- Reliability: It is everything related to relying on the salesman by his organization to reflect the image of the organization through the actions and words he performs and the high professionalism he enjoys. 4- Frankness: it is what the salesman enjoys of honesty and sincerity in his speech, words and situations. Where proof is used for valid and credible cases. 5- Preference: through the establishment of a strong relationship between the seller and the buyer, and through the salesmen following familiar methods, depending on the emotional and perceived factor of the customers (Lieb & Brandtönies, 2010). Sales representatives have many important and critical tasks that have a direct impact on the future of the organization as they represent the direct link with customers. In general, the most important of these functions are identified as follows: 1- Promotion of the product: Sales representatives play an important role in promoting the commodity and services at the level of the customers who contact them only And that by providing information on products, providing advice and guidance, and helping them make a purchase decision. 2 - Sales promotion: Sales representatives have the possibility to promote sales in a planned and programmed manner by the Marketing Department and in accordance with the powers granted to them and the nature of factors affecting the market, by giving a discount to prices or by providing gifts and other incentives that work to strengthen the relationship with customers and push them to Repeat the purchase process from the

same outlet. 3- Realizing the process of exchange and holding interest (Fickweiler et al, 2017 : 1-2). 4- Sales representatives represent an important source of information through identifying the needs and desires of customers, the nature of the factors affecting the market, the nature of competing goods, the reasons for the customers' appetite for a commodity or the reasons for their lack of acceptance and collecting the necessary information and then submitting it to the Marketing Department for the purpose of using it in preparing and implementing its marketing activities Different. 5- Urging and persuading customers to buy and working to raise demand for the products he offers. 6- Providing all information that customers wish to know, especially with regard to durable goods. Including electrical and electronic devices and others. 7 - At the present time, there are many organizations in developed countries that set up for each selling force a website and address on the Internet and has its own e-mail that enables it to achieve direct and effective contact with customers, limit their needs and respond to them (Shi et al, 2016). There are seven mental laws of sale. These laws explain how your thoughts and perceptions can control and influence the external events surrounding you 1- The Law of Cause and Effect: This law states that each event results from a specific cause that drives it to happen. The other six sales laws are related to this law, as they explain why certain causes lead to certain outcomes. 2- The Compensation Law: It stipulates that you will receive a fair compensation for your efforts. Little effort is matched by little compensation, and great effort is matched by large compensation. 3- Control Law: You will be satisfied with yourself if you feel that you are in control of your life, and you will not be satisfied with yourself if you are not in control of your affairs. Only do what is consistent with your goals and helps you achieve them, so your attitude is positive and you become optimistic (Evanschitzky et al, 2012). 4- The Law of Certification: What you sincerely and passionately believe about yourself turns into your truth. Believe that you are a great seller you become a great seller. 5- The Law of Concentration: What you keep on grows and extends throughout your life, and whenever you think in a positive or negative way about something, this matter actually turns into what you thought about it to the same extent. Think of positive things and positivity will dominate your life, and vice versa. 6- The Law of Attraction: Success attracts success. The more successful you are, the greater your success, and the more positive and enthusiastic you are, the more successful you are. 7- The Law of Similarity: Your external world is a reflection of your inner world, where your external world reflects what you really are. If you are positive inside, and see others in a positive way, your pursuit of success requires effort and planning (Kou & Vigil, 2019).

Customer Loyalty

The concept of loyalty includes a different set of ideas, all of which accept the idea that loyalty is the process of retaining the customer for the longest possible period, and customer loyalty is defined as a strategy aimed at increasing customer satisfaction and increasing their interest in the purchase process and their affiliation with the same organization without other competing organizations. Loyalty is also defined as the full performance by marketers and suppliers, and the fulfillment of promises by

organizations towards their customers (Dickinson, 2005). On the other hand, loyalty is defined as the customers' intention to perform behaviors that indicate motives in maintaining relationships and communication with the organization. The marketing literature states that customer loyalty initially included the behavioral concept of repeat purchase and over time addressed the attitude of the customer towards the organization's products. It is also known as the behavior of customers represented in buying back in the organization and their feeling of loyalty to it, and the absence of any intention to switch to other service product brands (Chandrashekar et al, 2007). In building a relationship with the customer, the organization aims to build loyalty to its products or its brand in order to ensure the return of a loyal customer. And there must be high flexibility in meeting customers' requirements, and it should be noted that the Internet facilitates increasing the chances of customers communicating with the systems they deal with to obtain the services they want and within the framework of a circle with a wide place and time, and all this leads to the consolidation of the relationship and the increase of customer loyalty to the organization (Abu-Alhaija et al, 2018). There are four levels or stages of customer loyalty to the organization or the product: 1- Perceptual loyalty: It refers to loyalty based on beliefs. Loyalty at this stage is directed towards the mark due to the level of performance and characteristics. This stage expresses the consumer's beliefs about the quality of the mark. 2- Emotional Loyalty: It refers to the level of preference that the consumer shows for the mark, represented by the level of pleasure and love for the experience related to the mark. The more love and awareness that the brand offers the desired experience, the more emotional loyalty the customer has. 3- Voluntary loyalty: It indicates a deeper level of commitment, and is expressed by the level of commitment shown by the consumer to continue using the mark in the future. It is also associated with the desire to overcome obstacles even if competitors offer better prices or value. 4- Practical or behavioral loyalty: It is the level at which the consumer switches from intention to actual use, and is expressed through the level at which the consumer uses the mark, and how much money and time he spends on this mark compared to other signs (Tartaglione et al, 2019). The following are the stages needed to build customer loyalty: 1- Building employee loyalty: Any company that has a high level of customer loyalty definitely has a high level of employee loyalty. Customers buy relationships and intimacy and they always want to buy from people they know and prefer. 2- The implementation of the 80: 20 rule: which is that 80% of the company's income results from 20% of its customers. The smart company is the one who divides its customers based on the value and monitoring of their activities to ensure that the high-value customers of the company get their fair share of promotional offers. It is found that 80% of sales come from 20% of existing customers. 3- Determine the stage of loyalty to customers and work to develop it: the company can improve the level of customer satisfaction and move them to a higher level when it determines their current level of loyalty, and if the program and process of managing the relationship with the customer does not push customers to a higher level of loyalty, then the company must Her program fell again. 4 - Serve first, sell second: Customers today are smart and have the information they need to buy while they are intolerant, they expect to receive the service in a way that satisfies them and without inconvenience. If they find good customer service elsewhere, they say "if They could have provided this service, why not you? "The future position of customers in buying or participating with

the company depends on its ability to compete (Uncles et al, 2002). 5- Paying attention to customers' complaints: In most companies, 10% of customers' complaints are unclear, but 90% of them are clear and contain negatives from the customer's point of view such as unpaid bills, the sales employee's lack of interest in receiving customers, in addition, a subscriber is not satisfied with the transfer Negative speech can now reach thousands of customers online. 6- The company continues to respond (sensitivity) to customers' needs: the study confirms that sensitivity is closely related to the customer's understanding of good service, so customers expect round-the-clock service, the availability of customer self-service, and technology tools such as e-mail, all of which means demanding the desires that customers realize. And due to the nature of the services, there is an opportunity for the possibility of achieving a more integrated e-commerce. 7 - Defining customers' definition of value: With the company's knowledge of defining value for customers, it can cover their needs in this direction to build strong customer loyalty, and the company must invest in customer loyalty research that enables it to understand the extent of its ability to cover the value that the customer expects from His eyes. 8 - The company should take back its lost customers: the study found that the company has two opportunities to successfully sell to lost customers in exchange for one opportunity for new customers, and restore - lost customers is a source of increased income, in medium companies 40% of customers are lost every year, so it must Establish a strategy not only to acquire and retain new customers but to recover lost customers (Kim et al, 2004) . 9- Use different channels to serve the same customers well: Customers who get their services from the company through multiple channels have deeper loyalty than customers with one channel, and it is assumed that the customer gets the same fixed service from any channel, and leaves the choice of the channel to the customer. 10 - Availability of performance skills in the company's front-line employees: In the information centers, employees must be able to answer via e-mail and the company's website well, in addition to being friendly and helpful when receiving phone calls. 11- That the company provides a unified central database: which will contain the data on the sales department, customer services, accounting, etc., which are usually separate from the other and do not give complete information about the customer. For the practical application of the customer loyalty strategy, all data must be integrated into a unified database. 12 - Help the company with partners / distributors: The company relies on many distributors to provide service to customers, support the chain of relationship with the customer well and create value that is difficult for competitors to match (Rai& Medha, 2013).

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

In this paragraph, the level of the responses of the members of the researched sample will be diagnosed about the study variables, as well as the correlation and influence relationships between the main variables of the research will be determined, so that thus it is possible to test the main hypothesis from which the research was launched, as follows:

Diagnose the level of answers of the members of the sample researched on the axis of sales representatives

Table (1) The level of responses of the sample members searched on the axis of salespeople

The paragraphs	Agreement percentage	Arithmetic mean	standard deviation
Sales representatives are required to know the general market environment.	0.78	3.38	1.14
For sales representatives to be successful, you must know the items available for sale and their terms of sale.	0.83	3.57	0.87
Salespeople influence a customer's willingness to buy.	0.077	3.76	0.83
Sales representatives contribute to identifying appropriate ways to sell the organization's products.	0.89	3.59	0.86
The skills of salespeople influence the success of business deals.	0.64	3.51	0.80
Salespeople influence the competitive advantage of the organization.	0.91	3.68	1.20
The smile and demeanor of a salesperson influences customer loyalty.	0.55	3.51	1.07
The dialogue style of salespeople affects the success of business deals.	0.74	3.38	1.06
Culture is an important part of a salesperson's personality.	0.82	3.76	0.93
The educational level plays a large role in the ability of the salesperson to persuade the customer.	0.78	4.05	1.05
Total	0.71	3.62	0.37

We note from Table (1) that the variable of female respondents was measured through (10) paragraphs, and the percentage of agreement on this dimension reached (71%), which is higher than the standard percentage of agreement amounting to (66.7%), and what confirms this result is The value of the arithmetic mean of the total salesperson variable, which amounted to (3.62), which is higher than the hypothetical mean value of (3), and with a standard deviation of its value (0.37). Those surveyed have a strong culture and positive behavior that helps them to enhance sales of the company's products and

thus increase its market share, and the value of the arithmetic mean of all the items of the variable sales representatives was higher than the value of the hypothetical arithmetic mean.

Diagnose the level of responses of the members of the sample researched about the customer loyalty

Table (2) The level of responses of the surveyed sample members on the customer loyalty

The paragraphs	Agreement percentage	Arithmetic mean	standard deviation
Interacting with the organization expresses a personal standing for a customer.	0.89	3.84	1.24
Interacting with the organization helps distinguish a customer from others.	0.73	3.78	0.98
The organization's products fit the customer's lifestyle.	0.91	3.57	1.14
The organization's products are of good quality in comparison to their price.	0.67	3.76	1.04
The organization offers benefits greater than the price the customer pays.	0.83	3.81	1.10
Do not damage the organization's products before the expected period.	0.59	3.68	0.97
I can count on and trust the organization's products.	0.67	4.38	0.72
There is pleasure in dealing with the stores of this organization.	0.73	3.27	0.90
The organization's products contain a wide variety of products.	0.89	3.46	0.80
Representatives of the organization are friendly in their dealings with the client.	0.82	4.05	1.39
Total	0.77	3.76	0.53

The customer loyalty variable was measured in light of (10) paragraphs, and as shown in Table (3), the percentage of agreement on this dimension reached (77%), which is also higher than the standard percentage of the agreement, and the mean value of the total loyalty variable The customer (3.76), which is higher than the hypothetical mean value, and with a standard deviation (0.53). The value of the arithmetic mean of the customer loyalty variable paragraphs confirmed these results, as all of them

were higher than the value of the assumed arithmetic mean. Customers that deal with the company's products are searched for their loyalty.

Analysis of the correlation relationship between sales representatives and customer loyalty: Table (3) shows the values of the (Spearman) correlation between sales representatives and customer loyalty, and the results of the correlation analysis were according to the following:

Table (3) the values of the correlation coefficient (spearman) between sales representatives and customer loyalty

	Customer loyalty	sales representatives
Customer loyalty	-	**0.86
sales representatives	**0.86	-

* Correlation was significant at 0.01 level.

We notice through Table (4) that the value of the correlation coefficient between the total sales delegate variable and the customer loyalty variable reached (0.86 **), which is a strong positive relationship and has a significant significance at the level (0.1), and these results confirm the importance and role of sales representatives in enhancing customer loyalty Which deals with the company's products, and accordingly, these results allow the acceptance of the main hypothesis of the research, which stated: "The existence of a significant correlation and influence relationship between the sales representatives and between enhancing the loyalty of customers who deal with the organization's products".

Analyzing the impact of sales representatives in enhancing customer loyalty : Table (4) shows the effect of sales representatives in enhancing customer loyalty using simple linear regression coefficient and the results were as follows:

Table (5) Results of the effect of sales representatives in enhancing customer loyalty

	a	B	R ²	f
sales representatives	1.458	0.82	0.63	15.752

It can be seen from Table (4) to determine the effect of the total variable of sales representatives on enhancing customer loyalty. We find that the calculated value of (f) reached (15.752), which is greater

than its tabular value at a significant level (0.01) and with confidence limits (99%), and these results confirm the existence of The impact of sales representatives on customer loyalty, as the value of the constant reached (1.458a =). This means that there is customer loyalty by (1.458) even if the variable of sales representatives is equal to zero, and the value of (0.82B =) means that the change of sales representatives is by one unit It will lead to a change in customer loyalty by (0.82), while the value of (R²) reached (0.63), and this means that (63%) of the variance in customer loyalty is a variance explained by the salespeople who entered the model, and that (37) % Is a variance explained by other factors that did not enter the regression model. Accordingly, these results confirm, and in clear evidence, the existence of a semantic effect for sales representatives in enhancing the loyalty of customers that deal with the products of the researched company. There is a justification for not rejecting the main hypothesis of the research, which is: "The existence of a significant relationship and influence between sales representatives and strengthening loyalty. Customers who deal with the organization's products".

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Most of the responses of the members of the surveyed sample emphasized that the sales representatives with whom the researched company deals with possesses full knowledge of its products and the nature of the environment in which it operates. Therefore, the researched company must provide all training programs necessary to improve the skills of its sales representatives in a manner that suits the nature of its customers. It was also found through the results of the analysis that the sales representatives exert a direct influence in enhancing the competitive advantage of the researched company and improving its reputation, through their role in the success of many commercial deals that this company undertakes. Standards consistent with the nature of its work. And it became clear through the results of the analysis that the researched company provides high-quality products commensurate with its prices, and thus this may be reflected in the expression of the personality of the customers that the researched company deals with, so the researched company should know the requests of its customers and what are the delivery methods that They want to obtain the company's products through it, so that it can reinforce their loyalty to it and maintain its market share. Most of the responses of the members of the surveyed sample confirmed that most customers feel pleasure when dealing with the shops and sales representatives of the researched company, and this could be reflected in enhancing their loyalty to its products. Therefore, the researcher proposes to re-conduct the current research in other sectors, to see the extent of generalizing its results in the Iraqi environment. Sales representatives also exercise a significant role and influence in enhancing customer loyalty towards the products of the company being researched. And it is necessary for him to get acquainted with the experiences of developed countries in the field researched, and that is through the permissibility of establishing communication sessions and exchanging information with academic institutions, research centers and investment offices, especially foreign ones.

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