Research Findings - Retail and Customer Services

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Retail and Customer Service

Job Description of Retail Sales associate

Market Demand

Retail Sales associate is an occupation, which quite high in demand these days as companies are branching out and opening up new outlets. Moreover, they are also training the new recruits and even recruiting them as well. However, it is not easy to be recruited for this particular position as this post entails positively interacting and entertaining the customer, as they are the main assets of any organization. This interaction is not some random chitchat; rather the details regarding various products are transmitted to the customers. Furthermore, they are responsible for providing an exceptional shopping experience to customers. Hence, the associate needs to have a fashion sense and must be passionate about clothing so that the customer would not get bored in his presence and would remain catered and satisfied.

Competencies

A retail associate must at least hold a high school degree or a diploma certification from a well reputed institute, however previous sales experience would be an added advantage for that person. Retail associates needs to be energetic and enthusiastic, as they would need to roam around the entire outlet with the customer and help them in every possible way to understand the product. This entails explaining the product details, finding them their size, and even providing them with feedback on how that product fits their personality. Hence, they need to be friendly and well behaved so that customer might not interpret a bad impression upon the whole brand. In

addition, they must be able to perform well in teams as well and must comply with the organizational policies as well (Curry, 2010).

Job Duties

Sales associates usually spends large portion of their daily time interacting with customer however their overall job- description can be broken down into following:

1. Retail associate must continuously comply with organizations mission and visions.

2. Retail sales associate's main concern is the inventory and its proper allocation to the assigned shelves.

3. The associate must be well aware of the basic information about products, which includes price, color, size and fabric

4. The associate must engage customers, colleagues and employer in effective communication and maintain a friendly environment

5. Associate must be well aware of the fashion trend and must be able to provide positive and true feedback to the customer.

6. He must continuously greet customers in an energetic manner and must not give out negative vibes.

7. Associate must convey customer feedback to the manager and must try to satisfy any discrepancy which customer might come across.

8. Must keep the counter neat and tidy, while following standard operating procedures.

9. Must keep check and balance with the on the display inventory

10. Must attend team meeting and training sessions.

Organizational Behavior Modification Model

We are facing a severe loss at our organization and we need to change our philosophy and the way in which we view customer services, hence implementation of a six step behavior model would be implemented throughout the organization. Training for this particular model would be given to each and every employee and compliance of this new policy would be a must (Halevy, 2011). Following is the six step model in which associate would greet the customer as he enters the stores, asks and addresses him by his name, offer him assistance with shopping, then agreeing with the customer's choice i.e. only if he is making the right choice. Further, if the customer is unaware, he/she must be educated regarding the current market trends and then while he leaves employee must again thank him for visiting and giving us his precious time.

1. Approach & Greet

2. Developing Value's

3. Offering Assistance

4. Agreeing upon solutions

5. Educating the customer

6. Thanking for their time

Key Behaviors for successful job performance

It is quite a necessity for any employee to posses' organizational skills however, other than having such skill set they must also posses certain skill sets which would allow them to perform their task quite efficiently. This not only affects their performance but also results in

organizational productivity as well. However, not all posses such skills and hence they must attend organizational trainings and must develops these skills. Nevertheless, for this particular position the three skills, which are quite essential, are interpersonal skills, decision- making skills, and literacy skills.

1. Interpersonal Skills

Interpersonal skills are those skills, which elaborate the way in which human beings interact, these are those communication and soft skills, which have become part of natural life style and we now take them for granted. These are those soft skills, which allow us to effectively communicate and carry out our personal, social, and professional affairs. This includes verbal and non-verbal communication that we carry out each day because, while taking customer on the round and showing them the products employee must watch out for the non-verbal cues and show customer products accordingly (Miller, 2010).

2. Decision-Making Skills

Decision-making is another key skill, which a retail employee must possess because by having this skill set the employee would be able to take prompt decisions on the go and no lagging would occur. This would ensure maximum customer satisfaction, because if the customers desired shoe size is not on display employee must quickly make a decision whether to go search for the size in the stock or deny the customer of his right. Simply decision making is a skill in which a person chooses a desired option out of several (Miller, 2010).

3. Literacy Skills

Literacy skills are those skills, which ensure that the employee is well educated not only regarding his education, but also about product information. Employees must possess this because if a customer asks for the material of the product and further asks whether to wash it with other clothes or not the associate must be able to answer him. Failures to do so would not lead to customer dissatisfaction, but will also leave a negative impact upon him. In addition, the reading, and writing and not to mention listening skills of the employee must be well so that can easily respond and facilitate the customer.

Measuring employee efficiency & productivity

Measuring and keeping a check and balance on employee productivity and efficiency is necessary activity for attaining and sustaining a long- term competitive advantage across the industry. Furthermore, measurement of productivity is necessary in order to improve it because without highlighting the lacking within an organization, improvement is quite impossible. Furthermore, this setting of goals would be done in collaboration with the employees and they would be key stakeholder in this goal development and achievement activity.

Management by Objective (MBO)

The measurement of employee productivity can be achieved by setting goals at the beginning of the fiscal year and further by creating awareness amongst employee (Spring.gov, 2011). Management by objective provides an outline to the management that they are able to stay at the same page with the employee as according to MBO they both are able to decide upon the

desired outcome and even breakdown employee's weekly goals. Their measured productivity would be fed to organizational database by the employee's immediate supervisor.

Customer Feedback

Another important thing which could be done is by getting feedback from customers regarding their experience at our outlets and we can make necessary adjustments by training the employee or appreciating them as a token of reward.

Informing employee of their performance

1. Appreciating in team meets

If the feedback, which has to be delivered to the employee, is positive and has achieved organizational goals effectively without defying any of the organizational norms then that employee should be appreciated. This appreciation can be in form of monetary benefits or appreciation in midst of the entire team meeting.

2. Warning in private conversation

However, if the employee is unable to accomplish his goals or have proven to be defying organizational rules then either he/she should be trained for the desired skills or must be sent a warning note on not to repeating the same behavior. Furthermore, this warning can be sent to him/her through e-mail or conveyed to him in a formal one- to- one meeting, because de-motivating is not what this feedback session is about, it is about guiding the employee in the right direction. In addition, this one on one face time would clear the air between both parties if there would be any (Spring.gov, 2011).

Reinforcing positive behavior

1. Reward and benefit system

Organization can simply allocate a rewards and recognition system on attainment of organizational goals and complying with the organizational norms and rules. This would generate a positive sense within an employee and would cause him to perform even better next time.

2. Continuous training

Another important thing which an organization can do is train their employees for new management and marketing techniques, so that they might be able to attend the customers in a better way. Furthermore, instead of punishing an employee for being ineffective in achieving his goals and performing his/her tasks, he/she must be sent to training so that he may even develop a sense of trust from organization and may develop a positive behavior towards organizational goals.

Ethical & Legal Issues

1. Monitoring Internet activity

Management today observes employee's internet activities along with they keep a check on their personal files, and when they are provided feedback about it they gets de- motivated and often resigns. Further if they are guilty they are fired. For example, The New York Times magazine fired more than twenty of their employees because they visited inappropriate websites and sent discriminatory e-mail messages to their fellow employee's (Yerby, 2013).

2. Harassment issues

There has always been certain element in every organization which tends to misuse their authority for wrongful purposes. Such people harass employees and threaten them to get their ends meet, otherwise bad performance review would be given about them (GOV.au, 2011). In AT&T, apple and IBM were highlighted and such people were fired before any law suit could have been filed upon the organization.

3. Transparency, privacy & feedback

The process of performance appraisal must be kept quite private as during this process several aspects of employee's personal life tends to surface, furthermore these processes also reflects upon his lacking which must be kept private from other employee. In addition, the entire monitoring is a lengthy process and often management tends to wrap things up and in the process of which over- look certain aspects of employee's performance.

Solution

1. Respecting Privacy

A simple solution was launched in form of Assentor; this software tends to skim all the incoming and outgoing e-mail in an organization and searches for evidences for racism or inappropriate material. Once it identifies any such e-mail it automatically re-routes it to an assign supervisor who then further evaluates the e- mail for any further discrepancies and then necessary actions are taken afterwards (Yerby, 2013).

2. Keeping the evaluation transparent

Employees can ensure the transparency of the entire evaluation process because by this they can keep a proper check and balance of the process and no employee would get de-motivated or harassed. For this they can provide employee with an outline upon which they would be evaluated throughout the process and feedback must be provided to employee after each step.

3. Feedback session

Another added step can be taken by employer to receive feedback from the employee about the entire process and this must also be kept private and in no way must reflect upon his appraisal.

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