

Lesson 22

Personal Selling

When you want to buy something you usually go to a concerned shop and purchase it from there. But, sometimes you find people bring certain goods or products and make them available to you at your place. For example, you find persons selling vegetables or rice by carrying the same in a cart and moving from door to door to sell. You must have noticed persons selling sarees, carpets, electronic items, etc. in a similar fashion. While traveling in buses or local trains you must also have seen people selling pens, toys, books, combs, etc. inside the bus or train. In cities also persons move from door to door to sell different products like water purifiers, air purifiers, detergents, mosquito repellents, etc. Don't you think these are different methods of selling goods unlike keeping them in a shop and sell? In this lesson let us learn more about these types of selling.

22.1 Objectives

After studying this lesson, you will be able to:

- State the meaning of personal selling;
- explain the essential elements of personal selling;
- describe the importance of personal selling; and
- identify the qualities of a successful salesman.

22.2 Meaning of Personal Selling

Think about the persons who come to you to sell goods and commodities. What do they do?

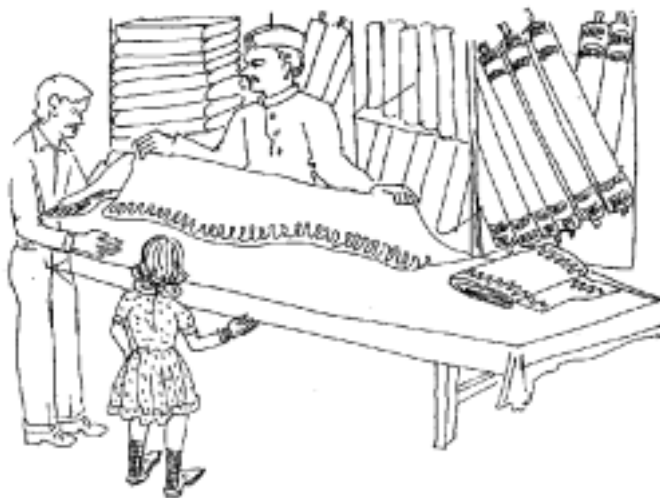
They show certain variety of goods to you, try to explain the features of the products, if required demonstrate the functioning of the items, inform you about the price concession available, persuade you to buy the product and also in some cases promises you to bring certain items of your choice in future. So not only do they inform and explain to you about the product but also persuade you to buy those items and want you to buy from them in future also. On the other hand, you also gather more information about the product, see and handle it personally to judge it better.

The person who sells goods to you in this way is called a ‘salesman’ and the technique of selling is known as ‘personal selling’ or ‘salesmanship’. Thus, personal selling refers to the presentation of goods before the potential buyers and persuading them to purchase it. It involves face-to-face interaction and physical verification of the goods to be purchased. The objective is not only just to sell the product to a person but also to make him/her a permanent customer.

You can also find personal selling in some shops where salesmen are employed by the shopkeeper to use this technique. For example, you can find such salesmen in jewellery stores, consumer goods stores, saree houses, etc. In case of some services, we also find personal selling used in shops. For example, we find people going to the same barbershop to cut their hair and get a massage from a specific barber. This shows that in case of personal selling the seller usually come to know about the taster and preferences of the customer and thus attracts him to buy the goods or services.

Personal selling refers to the presentation of goods and services before the customers and convincing or persuading them to buy the products or services.

After having an idea about personal selling, let us know about some of the essential elements of personal selling.



22.3 Essential elements of Personal Selling

Personal selling consists of the following elements:

- i. **Face-to-Face interaction:** Personal selling involves a salesmen having face-to-face interaction with the prospective buyers.

- ii. **Persuasion:** Personal selling requires persuasion on the part of the seller to the prospective customers to buy the product. So a salesman must have the ability to convince the customers so that an interest may be created in the mind of the customers to use that product.
- iii. **Flexibility:** The approach of personal selling is always flexible. Sometimes salesman may explain the features and benefits of the product, sometimes give demonstration of the use of product and also faces number of queries from the customers. Looking into the situation and interest of the customers, the approach of the salesman is decided instantly.
- iv. **Promotion of sales:** The ultimate objective of personal selling is to promote sales by convincing more and more customers to use the product.
- v. **Supply of Information:** Personal selling provides various information to the customers regarding availability of the product, special features, uses and utility of the products. So it is an educative process.
- vi. **Mutual Benefit:** It is a two-way process. Both seller and buyer derive benefit from it. While customers feel satisfied with the goods, the seller enjoys the profits.

Intext Questions 22.1

Fill in the blanks with appropriate words.

- i Personal selling involves persuading _____ to buy the goods
- ii The ultimate objective of personal selling is _____.
- iii The most important element of personal selling is _____ interaction.
- iv Supply of information to customers makes personal selling an _____ process.

22.4 Importance of Personal Selling

Personal Selling is extremely important as it helps in increasing sales. But there are other features as well which make it important. Let us discuss the importance of personal selling from the point of view of manufactures as well as consumers.

From manufacturer's point of view

- i It creates demand for products both new as well as existing ones.
- ii It creates new customers and, thus help in expanding the market for the product.
- iii It leads to product improvement. While selling personally the seller gets acquainted with the choice and demands of customers and makes suggestions accordingly to the manufacturer.

From customer's point of view

- i Personal selling provides an opportunity to the consumers to know about new products introduced in the market. Thus, it informs and educates the consumers about new products.
- ii It is because of personal selling that customers come to know about the use of new products

in the market. The sellers demonstrate the product before the prospective buyers and explain the use and utility of the products.

- iii. Personal selling also guides customers in selecting goods best suited to their requirements and tastes as it involves face-to-face communication.
- iv. Personal selling gives an opportunity to the customers to put forward their complaints and difficulties in using the product and get the solution immediately.

Intext Questions 22.2

Which of the following statements are true and which are false?

- i. Personal selling helps manufacturers to improve their products based on suggestions made by sellers.
- ii. Customers do not have immediate solution of their problems regarding a product from the salesman.
- iii. Personal selling leads to creation of new customers only for the existing products.
- iv. Better use of product is not the result of personal selling.
- v. Customers can not make complaint to the salesman about a product.

22.5 Qualities of salesperson engaged in Personal Selling

It is very difficult to enlist the qualities of people engaged in personal selling. The quality will vary from time to time and from situation to situation. It also depends upon the customers' demand and nature of the product. Again a salesman may be effective in one situation but may fail in another situation. So in real life certain qualities may be suitable for a particular line of product and may be irrelevant in any other case. However, there are certain common qualities, which every salesman should possess in order to become successful in their life. These qualities are listed below.

- i. Physical Quality**
- ii. Mental Quality**
- iii. Integrity of character**
- iv. Knowledge of the product and the company**
- v. Good behaviour**
- vi. Ability to persuade**

Now let us discuss the above qualities in detail.

- i. Physical quality:** A salesman should have a good appearance and an impressive personality. He should also have a sound health.

- ii. **Mental quality:** A good salesman should possess certain mental qualities like imagination, initiative, self-confidence, sharp memory, alertness etc. He should be able to understand the needs and preferences of customers.
- iii. **Integrity of character:** A good salesman should possess the qualities of honesty and integrity. He is to gain the confidence of the customers. He should be able to understand their needs and guide them how to satisfy those needs. His employer too should have faith in him. A salesman should be loyal both to the employer and to the customers.
- iv. **Knowledge of the product and the company:** A salesman should have full knowledge of the product and the company he is representing. He should be able to explain each and every aspect of the product i.e. its qualities, how to use it, what precautions to be taken, etc. He should be able to explain the business and service record of the company. He should also have knowledge of products of rival companies. So that he can put across the superiority of his own products.
- v. **Good behaviour :** A salesman should be co-operative and courteous. Good behaviour enables one to win the confidence of the customers. He should not feel irritated if the buyer puts up many questions even if the questions are irrelevant. It is also not necessary that the person he is trying to convince buys the product. The salesman has to remain and courteous in every case.
- vi. **Ability to persuade:** A good salesman should be good in conversation so that he can engage the person he is attending in conversation. He should be able to convince him and create the desire in his mind to possess the commodity.

Intext Questions 22.3

State whether the following statements are 'true' and which are 'false':

- (i) Knowledge of product is not necessary to make one a good salesman.
- (ii) A good salesman should have imagination, initiative and alertness.
- (iii) It is not necessary for a good salesman that he must be accepted by the society.
- (iv) A good salesman should be loyal to the consumer but not to the employer.
- (v) Impressive voice, good appearance and sound health has no place in qualities of a good salesman.

22.6 What You Have Learnt

- Personal selling refers to the presentation of goods and services and convincing and persuading potential customers to buy the product or service.
- Essential elements of personal selling :

- o Face-to-face interaction;
 - o Persuasion;
 - o Flexibility;
 - o Promotion of sales;
 - o Supply of information; and
 - o Mutual benefits
- Personal selling is important both from the customers and manufacturers point of view.
 - Qualities that can make a sales person more effective are many. These include physical and mental qualities, integrity of character, knowledge of the product and the company, good behaviour and ability to persuade the customers.

22.7 Terminal Exercise

1. What is meant by personal selling?
2. State the essential elements of personal selling.
3. Describe the importance of personal selling from the point of customers.
4. Explain the importance of personal selling from the point of view of manufacturers.
5. State the physical and mental qualities of sales persons engaged in personal selling.
6. State the social qualities of sales persons engaged in personal selling.
7. What are the occupational qualities of salespersons engaged in personal selling?
8. Define personal selling. Explain the importance of personal selling from the point of view of customers and manufacturers.
9. What is meant by personal selling? Explain the essential elements of personal selling.
10. Do you think that to be a successful salesperson only personal and mental qualities are sufficient? Give reasons in support of your answer.
11. Describe the different qualities of sales persons engaged in personal selling.
12. A salesman need not possess any quality if the product is good. Do you agree with the statement? Give reason.

22.7 Key to Intext Questions

- 22.1 (i) customers; (ii) to promote sell of products, (iii) face-to-face; (iv) educative.
- 22.2 (i) True; (ii) False; (iii) False; (iv) False; (v) False
- 22.3 (i) False; (ii) True; (iii) False; (iv) False; (v) False

Activity For You

While buying any goods and services, carefully notice the behaviour of the salespersons and note down the various qualities he/she posses.