

The necessity of training professional car sales personnel

A strategy for continuing successful sales of a brand

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After the recent political developments, the automobile is once again moving away from being a capital good. Now we are faced with a market where, in addition to advertising and sales incentives, we need professional sales forces to sell a car so that they can guarantee the sales of the company or dealership in a market that is facing recession and price declines. In this regard, in this article, we will examine the necessary characteristics of a professional car salesman, beyond what everyone imagines;

Selling a car through a car showroom is very different from selling the same car through a dealership or showroom of a company. Basically, in car showrooms, if the showroom is reputable and honest, the priority is to sell the car at the highest price and of course without lying or exaggerating its quality and specifications. However, in the case of selling cars through dealerships or showrooms of a company, the matter does not end there because that dealership or showroom actually represents a specific brand and a company and must, in addition to selling a new or used car to the customer, also ensure that the car is suitable for that customer. It is a basic marketing principle that says that every satisfied customer brings at least five other customers to that brand, but every dissatisfied customer discourages at least eleven customers from buying that brand or product! Of course, this principle belongs to a few decades ago. Now, in a world where

cyberspace and social media are the main thing, the effect of this principle has multiplied several times.

Assuming the authenticity of a car and the 100% correspondence of what the seller says about a car with the actual specifications of that product, this does not prove the customer's satisfaction with the purchase of that car because it is possible that the product is not suitable for that customer or, in other words, does not meet the customer's needs. To understand the issue, I will tell you a story from one of my experiences. About seven years ago, I was in charge of marketing for Mitsubishi Motors in Iran. At that time, we encountered a customer on social media who was everywhere criticizing our Mitsubishi Lancer product, describing it as a very bad car, and in a way, he had started a media war in cyberspace with this product and even the brand. After talking to him directly, I found out that he was the manager of a bank branch in one of the country's major cities. A while later, I traveled to that city to visit a Mitsubishi dealership. During that trip, I asked that particular customer to visit the dealership or that I visit his workplace and discuss his problem up close. After meeting him, I found out that he was a distinguished bank manager, about fifty years old, with two children, and that he used his Lancer car to commute between Shiraz and Isfahan once a week. What had made him very unhappy was the short tread of the Lancer 1800 tires and their frequent bursting (rubber abscess) on the not-so-good road between Shiraz and Isfahan, the small trunk of the car, and finally, the dealership's failure to mention these weaknesses when selling the car to him. My answer to him was that, in principle, this car was a good car, considering the size of the 18" rims. With 35-inch wheels, 35-inch tires, and a standard professional sound system with a large subwoofer in the trunk that takes up almost a third of the usable trunk space, this is a car for young people, not a bank manager with two children, ages 11 and 13, who uses it every week for family trips. Those 18-inch wheels, short-wheelbase tires, and

a professional sound system, etc., are very attractive to a young or middle-aged customer, but they are not at all suitable for a middle-aged person whose character does not lend itself to owning a sports car. In order to do so, I asked the customer to return his car to the dealership for sale and buy a Toyota Corolla (a competitor's product) instead. This was met with objections from the dealership's sales manager, but I listened to him and told him that this customer's dissatisfaction had already caused more than fifty people to cancel their purchases. They should give up on the Lancer because from the beginning you offered and sold him a car that was not suitable for that customer. This led us to hold a series of classes for more than a year for all sales personnel of the company and dealerships and to continuously teach them professional car sales skills, a subject that has been well done in some other private sector car manufacturers or car importers. This story highlights the necessity and need for professional sales training for the sales personnel of a dealership or car manufacturer or car importer. Training that goes beyond familiarity with the technical specifications or comparison with the competitors of that car and includes customer communication skills, personality analysis, identifying the nine personality types, quick analysis of the customer and obtaining information from him, and finally presenting the appropriate option to that customer and providing the reasons for that proposal. In today's world, a successful sales manager or car salesperson should not only be familiar with the technical specifications, options, competitors, or market prices of that car, but also with the principles of personality psychology, communication skills, etc., in order to be able to offer each customer a suitable and specific offer or provide proper advice and guidance on purchasing. This doubles the need for professional training of sales staff and the continued importance of this type of training in a market where a lot of effort must be made to gain a share.