

THE IMPACT OF CUSTOMER SERVICE ON PRODUCT QUALITY AND THE LOYALTY WITH THE BRAND

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Abstract

The aim of the article is to examine the relationship between the ability to expose the offer, the sale of the additional goods and the quality of the final products in the authorized car service. In the concept of this work, the final product is an executed and complete service work containing tangible and intangible elements. In turn, the satisfaction of external customers is a measure of product quality. Another purpose of the work is to analyse the impact of customer experience with an authorized car brand service on the development of its loyalty with a given brand. The results of the questionnaire done among the clients of the authorized car service are introduced in the article. The research shows that the level of products quality measured by the level of customer satisfaction is higher if the number of clients who highly perceive ability to present the offer and sale of additional goods is larger. The conducted research shows that positive own experience with an authorized car service built during direct contact of personnel is an important factor influencing the choice of the brand.

Key words: satisfaction, product quality, brand

JEL Code: M14, M31, M12

Introduction

The high supply of similar products makes the choices of customers more and more difficult. In practice, customers make a list of several key criteria while making purchase decisions (Solomon, 1996). The use of information in the purchasing decision-making process is the interpretation of guidelines defined as predictive and trust (Cox, 1962). Predictive tips mean that there is a relationship between the customer's assumed specific product quality and the level of its quality. Trust tips are the result of free perception of the product and assessment by the potential buyer. In the opinion of Olson and Jacoby (Olson, Jacoby, 1972), the rational choice of a product from the point of view of quality is when both directions reach high

values. It should be noted that predictive guidelines are usually applied to material products (Olson, Jacoby, 1972). In case of such intangible products as car services, the ability to present the offer and sell products plays an important role. These are the activities carried out during individual contact with the client. Presentation of the offer is an element of an external guidance that creates the value of trust. Another factor determining the final decision of the client is the level of trust in the brand. It is shaped during the promotion of the brand during direct contact (Smith, Berry, Pulford, 1998). This is the final effect of the promotional role of the brand (Mazurek-Łopacińska, 1997) and the activities carried out during the presentation and sale of products. The aim of the article is to analyse the impact of personnel service on shaping the quality of the final product of the car service and creating relationships with the brand. First of all, the paper attempts to diagnose whether the level of customer satisfaction with the ability to present the offer and sell additional items affects the satisfaction of the quality of the completed service. This means that as part of the work an attempt was made to verify whether the customer's satisfaction with the presentation of the offer and the sale of the product is a "component" of satisfaction with the quality of the received service. Secondly, the work assesses the impact of the customer's experience with the car service on the decision on the subsequent selection, when buying a car of a given brand. The author took into account the existence of a dependence in which the level of customer satisfaction reflects the acquisition of an intangible product (or its part) that meets the appropriate level of requirements. In the opinion of many authors, the level of satisfaction with the purchased product is identified with the level of meeting the client's requirements (Hill, Aleksander, 2003). Other authors make use of the satisfaction to compare the features of the acquired product and the characteristics expected by the buyer (Kotler, 1994). Other authors confront expectations regarding the product with the result of user experience (Marciniak, 2000).

1 Characteristics of the research

The tests were carried out at an authorized car service of a well-known car brand. The study was carried out using a diagnostic survey. The survey was conducted among those clients waiting for the service who used the services of the tested website for the second time and lasted for half a year. By an auditorium method, 514 questionnaires with customer feedback were obtained. As part of the auditorium survey carried out, customers were asked to define the level of their satisfaction with the ability of the staff to present the offer and sell additional items. During the response, the clients defined their attitude to the service element in the

service by selecting one of the possible answers in the questionnaire form. These were the following possible answers: very dissatisfied, rather unhappy, with no opinion, rather satisfied and completely satisfied. A field not filled in at this point of the test means that the customers did not answer the question. At the same time, as part of the survey, each of the respondents was asked to assess their level of satisfaction with the overall quality of services provided. Customers could award one of the ratings on a scale of 1 to 5 (score 1 - customer totally dissatisfied, rating 2 - customer rather dissatisfied, rating 3 - customer without opinion on the level of their satisfaction, rating 4 - customer rather satisfied, rating 5 - customer completely satisfied). Awarding the rating meant that the customer quantified his satisfaction. In addition, as part of the survey, customers were asked to determine what criteria they were guided by when deciding on the choice of the car brand used. Among the possible choices, the survey included the following options:

- attractive, bargain price,
- positive ratings and opinions in the media,
- recommendation of friends,
- own, previous positive experience with the service,
- accidentally,
- other,

Clients also had the option of leaving the field of the questionnaire empty and resigning from commenting on the subject.

During the auditorium questionnaire, clients were also asked if they had any contact with the car brand before using the current car. Answering the questions customers declared lack of experience with the brand, others declared previous experience with the brand using another car of the same brand or left an unfilled field at this point of the study without commenting on this topic.

2 The impact of the ability to present the offer and sell additional goods on the quality of the final products

Distribution of the level of customer satisfaction due to their attitude to the ability to present the offer and the sale of additional goods is presented in the Table. 1. It turns out that the level of satisfaction with the quality of the service provided at the authorized car service is the highest in the case of customers very satisfied with the ability to present the offer and sell additional goods and in the case of customers who did not answer at all. In addition, in the

case of completely satisfied clients, there is a smaller range of border responses than for customers who have not responded on this topic. The higher value of standard deviation (table 1) in the case of customers who have not commented on the ability to present the offer and sell articles in a service organization means a greater differentiation of ratings in relation to the average rating than in the case of highly satisfied customers.

The analysis of the content presented in Table 1 shows that customers who highly appreciate their satisfaction with the quality of the service provide assessment of the staff skills regarding the presentation of the offer and the sale of products at the "rather satisfied" level. In this case, the average satisfaction level is lower than in the case of highly satisfied customers and customers who did not answer the question on the ability to present the offer and sell products. It should be noted that the higher value of standard deviation for customers who do not comment on the ability to present the offer and sell products proves that these customers in a more differentiated assessment of the average than satisfied customers assessed the level of satisfaction with the quality of services. In turn, lower than in the case of highly satisfied customers and customers who did not answer the question of the ability to present the offer and sell products, the median value of satisfied customers means such distribution of satisfaction ratings, in which the majority are lower than the arithmetic average. This means that most of the clients who after completing the service are rather satisfied with the ability to present the offer and sell the products to the same or lesser extent, later assess the quality of the final service regardless of the impact of other factors reducing the negative impression of interpersonal contact. Based on the observation of the functioning of an authorized car service, it should be clarified that there are factors that neutralize the effect of a bad presentation of the offer. There are the following factors: reduced waiting time for admission to the service, shorter than the service delivery date announced earlier, additional assurance about quality and warranty as well as comfortable waiting conditions for the service.

Tab. 1: Statistical parameters indicating customers' satisfaction based on the assessment of the ability to present the offer and sell the products

List of the selected statistical parameters	The level of satisfaction from the point of view of customers' evaluating the capability of presenting the offer and sale of products					
	No response	Very dissatisfied	Rather dissatisfied	Without an opinion	Rather satisfied	Very satisfied

Average	4,6154	-	2,25	3,6819	4,3889	4,7602
Number	26	-	8	44	144	292
Standard Deviation	0,8355	-	0,4330	0,6314	0,5152	0,4269
Median	5	-	2	4	4	5

Source: own study

The lowest level of satisfaction with the quality of services provided in the service was assessed by clients who:

- rate at the „rather unhappy level“ the ability to present the offer and sell additional goods,
- leave without an opinion the ability to present the offer and sell additional goods.

It should be emphasized that among clients whose attitude to the ability to present an offer and sell products is indifferent there is a greater diversity of satisfaction ratings from the purchased service than in the case of customers rather dissatisfied with the ability to present the offer and sell products. This is evidenced by the higher value of the standard deviation. Among customers neutral in relation to the ability to present the offer and sell products, the number of customers completely satisfied and rather satisfied with the quality of the service received is greater than the number of customers awarding the remaining ratings. It should be noted that while estimating the level of quality of services by customers rather dissatisfied with skills to present offer and sell products due to the small sample size is not very meaningful. However, it should be emphasized that these customers, who perform low assessment, take it into account in a global assessment of the acquired service.

3 The influence of contacts with the car service on brand loyalty - chi square test

The results of completed surveys are presented in Table 2 and in Table 3. Two research subgroups have been identified to enable the use of the test. One research subgroup was created from customers choosing the brand based on their own previous experience with the service. The composition of the second research group consisted of clients choosing the brand on the basis of other factors than own experience with service.

Tab. 2: Awareness of contact with the brand and criteria for its selection – observed (O) and expected Value (E)

The number of customers in the light of the previous contacts with the brand	The number of customers who have chosen the car brand based on own experience with the car service and on the basis of other factors		
	Customers who choose brand based on contact with car service	The number of customers who made the choice of the brand based on other factors*	Total
Number of clients using another car of the brand declaring previous contact with the brand	O = 88 E** = 51,9689	O = 124 E** = 160,0311	212
The number of clients declaring that they have not had any contact with the brand before	O = 12 E** = 57,8521	O = 224 E** = 178,1479	236
Number of clients who did not give feedback	O = 26 E** = 16,179	O = 40 E** = 49,821	66
Grand total	126	388	514
*other factors means: attractive, bargain price, positive ratings and opinions in the media, recommendation of friends, accidentally, other,			
$E^{**} = [(row\ total) \times (column\ total)] / sample\ total$			

Source: own study

Hypothesis to be tested: a positive correlation exists between experience with the service, including the ability to present and sell the additional goods, and the choice of the brand. Chi-square test was used to verify the hypothesis [Krysicki et al. 2006].

H0 - The client's experience with the service in which the offer was presented and the products sold, does not affect the formation of opinions about the brand and its subsequent selection of the car of the brand.

H1 - The client's experience with the service in which the presentation of the offer and the sale of products was made influences the formation of the opinion about the brand and its subsequent selection of the car of the brand.

Table 2 presents the observed values. It should be noted, that the expected values for the chi-square test are also presented in table 2. In table 3 the others statistical values prepared for the chi square test have been shown.

Tab. 3: Awareness of contact with the brand and criteria for its selection – other statistical values (SV) for chi-square test

The number of customers in the light of the previous contacts with the brand	The number of customers who have chosen the car brand based on own experience with the car service and on the basis of other factors		
	Customers who choose brand based on contact with car service	The number of customers who made the choice of the brand based on other factors*	total of row
Number of clients using another car of the brand declaring previous contact with the brand	SV*** = 24,9811	SV*** = 8,1124	33,0935
The number of clients declaring that they have not had any contact with the brand before	SV*** = 36,3412	SV*** = 11,8015	48,1427
Number of clients who did not give feedback	SV*** = 5,9616	SV ***= 1,936	7,8976
SV*** = [(O – E) squared] / E			
Chi-square			89,1338
Critical value of chi-square at 0.01 and 2 degrees of freedom			9,2104

Source: own study

Since the chi-square is more than the critical value of chi-square, the null hypothesis is rejected. Thus the alternative hypothesis is accepted, showing that skilful presentation of the product and the service offer combined with skilful communication constitute an important element of the customer's experience with the car service. It affects the formation of opinions about the brand and its (later) choice.

Conclusion

The conducted research shows that the ability to present the offer and sell additional items during service affect the customer's opinion on the quality of the final service. This quality, expressed by the degree of customer satisfaction with the completed service, is the higher the greater the number of customers completely satisfied with the level of presenting the offer and the ability to sell products. In turn, moderate dissatisfaction with the ability to present the offer and sale of products and the neutral attitude of customers to these skills translates into low or moderately low satisfaction with the level of quality of services provided. This means that moderate dissatisfaction with the ability to present an offer and sell products is nothing

but consistent conversion of the state of emotions to the level of satisfaction with the quality of the service provided.

The research shows that the own experience with the service built during direct contact of staff is an important factor shaping the relations of the organization with the client. At work, using the chi square test, it was shown that there is a positive relationship between the number of customers choosing a car brand and the number of customers who have previously experienced the service of a given brand. At the same time, it should be noted that the work also showed, however, small but requiring attention of incidental contacts with the service in the subsequent decision process of brand selection. It turns out that several (12) clients who did not have any formal contacts with the brand so far indicated the experience with the service as a criterion for the choice of the brand (Mitchell, King, Reast, 2001).

The paper shows that the element shaping the experience of customers with the service is "individually oriented" communication during the presentation of the service offer and the sale of products of an authorized car service (Ząbek, 2014). In the automotive industry, in which "technical services" dominate with a strong specialist orientation, the ability to present an offer and sell products has a significant impact on the final quality of the product (Ząbek, 2010). In theory, it is assumed that quality is a factor shaping the brand (Urbaniak, 2008). It turns out, in a certain simplification, that this relationship also goes the other way. The level of quality of service expected by buyers is a function of, among others, while presenting offers on the site and selling products opinions about the brand (Hawes, Bornhouse, 1987). Experience with brand car service in the minds of customers plays a vital role when deciding on the choice of the car brand. It means that there is a relationship between the perception of the brand and its choice. This also refers to the principle that the brand means the satisfaction with the choice of certain things (Andersen, 2005).

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