

Salesperson Communication Strategy in Dealing with Customer Complaints on After Sales Service (Kalla Toyota Cokroaminoto Makassar)

1st Gabby Gabriella¹, 2nd Moeh Iqbal Sultan¹, 3rd Muhammad Farid¹
{gabbygabriell264@gmail.com¹, miqsul@yahoo.com², faridemsil@yahoo.com³}

¹Department of Communication Science, Hasanuddin University, Makassar, Indonesia

Abstract. Salespeople are generally tasked with promoting goods to increase sales volume. Its main role is as a persuasive communication tool. Salespeople carry out promotions with a form of persuasive communication designed as an information tool for customers about products or services and are expected to influence them to buy goods or services produced by the company. Sales promotions by salespeople are designed to entice consumers to make positive purchase decisions. But in fact, after Kalla Toyota's sales force has succeeded in selling the car unit, there is a stage called after-sales where there are complaints, problems and suggestions. The purpose of this study is to determine the communication strategy of salespeople in dealing with customer complaints. This type of research is a qualitative descriptive research. The results of the study showed that there was customer satisfaction with the service and handling carried out by the sales staff when the customer submitted a complaint. The salesperson deftly complements and implements the communication strategy with his communication skills and understanding of cars. In addition, salespeople help customers for consumer satisfaction and loyalty even though customer complaints are not part of the salesperson's duties.

Keywords: salesperson, customer, service, communication

1. Introduction

Currently, business development in the world, especially Indonesia, is running very rapidly, a lot of economic and business competition from various fields where companies that have existed for a long time have become giant companies in Indonesia. One of the business worlds that increasingly exists from the past to the present is the automotive business. Speaking of the automotive field, there are many large companies that oversee automotive in Indonesia, one of which is Kalla Toyota.

PT Hadji Kalla, established in 1952 and engaged in the automotive sector and trade. In 1969, PT Hadji Kalla became the sole marketing agent of Toyota cars for South, Central and Southeast Sulawesi. Due to its achievements in the sales of passenger and commercial vehicles, the company often receives the Triple Crown Award, from Toyota Corporation, Japan. Its Market Share is also the highest surpassing other regions in Indonesia.

As a company develops, the scope of the company's activities is getting wider and more

complicated, this causes the need for an organizational structure to fill positions with the division of tasks and authority of the members of a company. In the automotive world, of course, there are many factors that make the development of a company such as quality, price, service and no less important are human resources. Improving the ability and effectiveness of human resources in the company is very much needed because it is one of the important factors in the strategy of managing the company.

To achieve the company's goals PT Hadji Kalla has a work system in the company's organization filled by employees with various types of tasks and divisions as well as a variety of services they provide. The services they provide include sales showroom, service and spare parts supply. The employees or divisions that deal directly with customers are the salesperson, customer relation person and after-sales.

Salespeople are generally tasked with promoting goods to increase sales volume. Salesperson comes from the word promote which means to develop or improve. Its main role is as a persuasive communication tool. Salespeople conduct promotions with a form of persuasion communication designed as an information tool for customers about products or services and are expected to influence them to buy goods or services produced by the company. Kalla Toyota is the same way, salespeople are tasked with promoting, explaining, directing and advising customers about vehicle needs and the right match of customer funds with the price of the car. Sales promotions conducted by salespeople are programs and special offers in the short term designed to lure consumers or mostly directly to related end consumers to make positive purchasing decisions. However, in the service, after the salesperson has successfully made a sale, there is a stage called after-sales where there are complaints, problems and suggestions. Salespeople in charge of receiving customers certainly have a moral burden and responsibility to continue to serve customers regarding complaints even after the sale and purchase process is carried out. Customer complaints that occur at Kalla Toyota Cokroaminoto Makassar such as defects in the car that cannot be handled by the workshop, for example, the sound on the engine while driving and these complaints cannot be handled by any Kalla Toyota branch workshop, making customers complain to the salesperson who handled it when purchasing the unit.

In addition to service complaints and lack of workshop facilities there are also a variety of other complaints such as the slow handling of the unit completed by the service advisor at the workshop, gift vouchers that are slow to be given beyond the promise after purchase, car insurance when accidents are problematic, scuffed cars or there are functions that are not normal when used and many other complaints so that customers file complaints to Kalla Toyota after the sale and purchase transaction is carried out and most customers choose to contact the salesperson when they want to convey their complaints. As said by Putra who is a salesperson at Kalla Toyota Cokroaminoto on October 27, 2022 that "most customers ask about complaints whether the old car they use or the new one they bought to us as salespeople who are considered capable of answering all their complaints even though it is actually not a basic part of our duties as salespeople but are considered capable of handling all customer complaints".

Therefore, it is important to communicate between customers and Kalla Toyota employees in order to maintain a good relationship and customer satisfaction with the services provided. The influence of scientific and technological advances also affects the understanding and demands of customers regarding the many choices and good services from other

companies so that Kalla Toyota employees must provide better service for customer satisfaction. The rapid progress automatically makes the business in the automotive field becomes a lot of competitors. The existence of such competition, can be overcome with a good communication strategy from Kalla Toyota employees to deal with customer complaints and provide the best service so that customers always come and are satisfied with the services provided.

One of the reasons customers choose a vehicle is quality, price and satisfying service. By comparing what customers expect and customers get can be called customer satisfaction. This can be achieved through providing maximum service and encouragement to customers [1].

The conditions that must be met by an industry in order to be successful in competition are trying to achieve the goal of generating and retaining customers. The company must have employees who are experts in understanding consumer desires and able to communicate well in order to provide the right service to resolve customer desires and complaints [2]. But the big question is to whom then the customer submits his complaint. The customer relation person is the position in charge of handling these complaints, but in fact, based on the observation of the researcher who also served as a salesperson at the research location, he saw that most customers chose to contact the salesperson who handled them when purchasing the unit. So it can be said that the salesperson has succeeded in establishing a good relationship with the customer even though the buying and selling process has been completed and has entered the after-sales process.

Communication according to Lawrence D, Kincaid is a process in which two or more people form or exchange information with each other, which in turn arrives at a deep mutual understanding [3]. According to Bintaro Tjokro Mijoyo and Mustafat Jaya, Strategy is the overall steps and series of policies to achieve a goal or to overcome existing problems [4]. While another understanding according to Sondang P. Siagian, Strategy can be defined by the main policies that are directly related to the achievement of goals that include human resources by considering the internal and external conditions of the organization [5].

Public Relations is an interaction process where Public Relations creates public opinion as input that benefits both parties, and instills understanding, fosters motivation and public participation, aims to instill good wishes, trust mutual understanding, and a good image [6].

The number of car unit sales that occurred at Kalla Toyota Cokroaminoto Makassar from January to August 2022 was 779 units. Along with the number of sales of customer complaints are also getting more and more diverse, mostly in that year customer complaints such as promises of shopping voucher event prizes that are long, long BPKB collection, delivery of cars to customer addresses less clean to workshop services that are too long queues. This is where the role of Communication strategy in planning, tactics, ways that will be used to launch communication by maintaining all aspects that exist in the communication process to achieve the desired goal.

The following is the sales table of car units at Kalla Toyota Cokroaminoto Makassar from January to August 2022

Table 1. Unit sales January-August 2022

Month	Sales
January	96
February	91
March	123

April	97
May	64
June	128
July	94
August	84
Total	779 Unit

Source: Primary data after processing 2022.

Meanwhile, the total number of customers from January to August 2022 had 53 complaints against the Kalla Toyota Coktroaminoto Branch. The number of complaints and deficiencies felt by customers makes Kalla Toyota and salespeople should pay attention to their communication strategies and patterns so that customers still feel served and safe when entrusting Kalla as their vehicle because they have quality vehicles, good service and communication.

There are several previous studies regarding services and consumers. Aula was indicated that Lion Air airlines implement the communication strategy is in accordance with the theory or expert opinion according to Paul Argenti namely reputation is formed from a consistent and interconnected image of consumers [7]. Subsequent research from Rayasa et al., in JNE Samarinda Main Branch in Handling Cases of Customer Complaints obtained from research results that in compiling messages to deal with customer complaints are adjusted to the cases handled. Where the information provided is in accordance with the SOP, because if it is not appropriate it will be criticized by the public, where the core officers in this company are the counter officers and couriers, so they must be able to provide accurate information with estimates and prices issued in accordance with the SOP, where customer complaints are in accordance with the SOP will be handled by checking starting from the delivery of goods at the sales counter officer, and couriers [8]. The latest research from Nurlintang and Rustandi [9], have showed the implementation of interpersonal communication between salespeople and consumers at Speedo Siliwangi Proshop is going quite well. This is supported by several factors which have been implemented in accordance with the theory of experts, although some of them have not been implemented optimally .

Unlike previous research, this study focuses on complaints after successful transactions. Where complaints are in the form of service, completeness of units that are not in accordance with the agreement to units from Kalla Toyota Cokroaminoto that are experiencing problems. So the difference between this research and previous research lies in the process of the role of communication that occurs after the purchase and delivery occurs. It can be seen from the data above that complaints and sales have both increased and various types of customer complaints during after- sales are recorded in the CRP report, this makes researchers want to see the salesperson communication strategy at Kalla Toyota Cokroaminoto so that customer and salesperson communication continues well even after the sale units and many customer complaints. Therefore, based on the background above, the focus of this research is "Sales Communication Patterns in Dealing with Customer Complaints about After-Sales Service at Kalla Toyota Cokroaminoto Makassar"

Based on the background of the problem, the researcher will examine (1) How are the Salesperson's Communication Patterns in Dealing with Customer Complaints about After-Sales Service at Kalla Toyota Cokroaminoto Makassar?following is the sales table of car units at Kalla Toyota Cokroaminoto Makassar from January to August 2022

2. Research Methods

This research uses a qualitative approach. This type and approach is used as a process and procedure used to find answers. The qualitative research method approach, according to Taylor and Bogdan, can be interpreted as research that produces descriptive data on oral and written words, and behavior can be observed from the people studied [10]. Qualitative research views social reality as something holistic, not separated from one another, complex, dynamic, full of meaning, and the relationship between symptoms is reciprocal. In addition, qualitative research also emphasizes natural object conditions, where the researcher is the key instrument. In this study using a qualitative approach, the author wants to understand the Communication Strategy of salespeople in dealing with customer complaints about after-sales service at Kalla Toyota Cokroaminoto Makassar Branch Office.

Qualitative data obtained through semi-structured interviews conducted to the branch head, supervisor, customer relation person, service advisor and salesperson. Through the interviews conducted, it can be seen how the communication strategies used by salespeople in dealing with customer complaints. To support this research, previously observation techniques were also carried out and supplemented with documentation. While the validation technique will go through a process of data reduction, presentation and verification to analyze the data.

3. Results and Discussion

PT Hadji Kalla, established in 1952, is engaged in the automotive and trading sectors. In 1969, PT Hadji Kalla became the sole marketing agent of Toyota cars for South, Central and Southeast Sulawesi. Due to its achievements in the sales of passenger and commercial vehicles, the company often receives the Triple Crown Award, from Toyota Corporation, Japan. Its Market Share is also the highest, surpassing other regions in Indonesia.

The profession that is very instrumental in the development of Kalla Toyota as a company engaged in the automotive sector is the sales department called the salesperson. Salesperson is a position in charge of making sales so that the units produced can be sold. Sales is not an easy thing to do especially for products that can be said to be expensive and difficult to reach. However, due to the need, popularity and public need for vehicles, especially cars, it makes the salesperson's job easier to persuade customers to buy a car.

However, before deciding to buy a car, consumers must consider many aspects ranging from brand, type of car, price, quality and service. Salespeople at Kalla Toyota certainly need to do an appropriate communication pattern in attracting customers so that customers can decide to purchase a unit at Kalla Toyota.

The success of salespeople in building an image and resolving customer complaints is influenced by various factors such as the reputation and good name of the company can make it easier for organizations to communicate and achieve goals effectively, while a negative image is the opposite [11].

Nana Sudjana suggests that there are 3 communication patterns that can be used to develop dynamic interactions, namely (1) Communication as an action or one-way communication pattern, where the salesperson acts as an action giver and the customer as an action receiver so that the salesperson is more active than the customer. This can occur when

the dominant salesperson uses the method of explaining continuously. If this type of communication is dominant, it can result in less lively communication activities. (2) Communication as an interaction or two-way communication pattern, namely the salesperson and the customer can play the same role, namely each as a giver and receiver of action. This can further liven up the atmosphere in explaining and questioning about products. (3) Transaction communication or multidirectional communication, i.e. learning allows customers to know more about things and unit specifications. Discussion and simulation are methods that suit this type of communication [12]. Communication strategy is the choice of various steps so that the efforts and power used can be effectively and efficiently [13].

Communication patterns according to Nana Sudjana above are communication patterns that are also used by salespeople at Kalla Toyota Cokroaminoto Makassar Branch Office. Before determining the communication pattern, the salesperson first observes the prospective buyer or consumer because based on the training conducted by the supervisor that before determining how to explain the customer must first determine the character and desires of the consumer so that the salesperson is able to choose what type of communication pattern they should do for successful sales.

The first communication pattern is communication as action or one-way communication pattern, in this pattern the salesperson will be very active in explaining and describing the advantages of the product and the suitability of the price and the needs of consumers, the salesperson will explain and explain a lot and consumers listen more to what is conveyed by the salesperson.

The second communication pattern is Communication as interaction or two-way communication pattern, in this communication pattern, salespeople and consumers will be equally active in providing explanations related to the car to be purchased. For example, the salesperson explains the specifications of the unit with its advantages while the consumer explains complaints or differences of opinion related to what was conveyed by the salesperson.

The last or third communication pattern is trans-action communication or multidirectional communication, in this pattern it is almost the same as the second pattern but this pattern can be said to be more specific in deeper discussions and interactions between salespeople and consumers are more intense and more in-depth discussing units, advantages, disadvantages and other things that are very specific and very in-depth related to automotive.

That is then the salesperson's step in dealing with customer complaints, by determining the character of the customer and then choosing the communication pattern to be carried out. After the communication pattern is carried out but the salesperson still gets complaints or customer dissatisfaction, the salesperson will communicate with the customer relations person, supervisor to the service advisor and transfer the customer complaint to the division that matches the customer complaint.

4. Conclusion

Salesperson communicate with consumers by first determining the character of the consumers they will face by making observations through brief introductions. After determining, the salesperson will determine the communication pattern, including

communication as action or one- way communication patterns, communication as interaction or two-way communication patterns and trans-action communication or multi-directional communication. However, if the salesperson still gets complaints or customer dissatisfaction, the salesperson will communicate with the customer relations person, supervisor to the service advisor and transfer the customer complaint to the appropriate division with the customer complaint.

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