

4.21: Increasing Sales with Extended Problem Solving

Learning Objectives

- Describe how a retailer can increase sales from customers engaged in extended problem solving

Consumers with an extended problem solving mindset put a great deal of effort into their purchase decision, gathering information through research and taking care to evaluate all options, before arriving at a decision. Because of the time and energy committed to the search, this diligence is more likely dedicated to the selection and purchase of high-consideration or high-value items like cars, electronics and appliances. Or, it may be focused on something that is new or infrequently purchased. Thus, the consumer feels compelled to do more research to ensure their needs will be satisfied.

While it may be tempting to assume that these shoppers are mostly concerned with quantitative assessment of the alternatives, motivations can also be qualitative, building on external influences like cultural norms and family influences. Yet, it should be noted that these customers are deliberate in their process and are unlikely to be swayed directly by advertising, merchandising and promotion. As such, salespeople can be important in helping the consumer arrive at a decision.

For these shoppers, a salesperson will need to be able to engage the consumer to understand what their specific needs and concerns are, relative to the purchase. That is, what are they specifically hoping to get by buying the product– not the item itself, but what benefits it will provide? Further, the salesperson will need to be able to speak to how well specific features will meet the consumer’s stated needs. And, they will need to be educated on the features & benefits of both the goods they’re selling and those of competitive items, as they will likely need to compare and contrast specific differences.

Because these consumers with an extended problem solving mindset are deliberate in their shopping process, salespeople should expect that they will not “close the sale,” during their first interaction. Instead, they may need to nurture the relationship with the customer, helping them arrive at their purchase decision over time. Thus, effective salespeople will be those who engage in follow-up with the shopper, making themselves available to answer questions or provide perspective.

Practice Questions

<https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/9168>

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