Class Notes

Class: 11	Topic: SPECIALIST SUPPORT TO CUSTOMERS
Subject: RETAIL	

Post-sales Service Support

Post-sales service support, sometimes called after-sales service, is any service provided after a customer has purchased a product. After-sales support may be provided by a retailer, manufacturer or a third-party customer service or training provider and may include warranty service, training, repair or upgrade, or various other services.

Specialist Support to Customers

Types of post-sales service support

(a) **Online support/technical support/help desk**:
It includes assistance with technology merchandise, such as PCs, software products, mobile phones, televisions and most electrical or mechanical products.

(b) **Onsite support/customer support**:
Onsite Support/Customer Support includes services that help customer with products in the store, mall, etc., at the time of sale. It is a range of customer services to assist customers in making cost-effective use of products.

(c) **Customer training**:
It refers to providing information to the customer regarding the knowledge, skills and competencies required to use the product. Customer trainings help the customers to know the actual utility of the products.

Customer data

Customer data is information held on file about customers by a store or other business, usually including names, contact details and buying habits. Customer data are the first hand responses that are obtained from customers through investigation or by asking direct questions.

Collecting and storing customer information

Collecting and storing information about customers is essential for retailers to tailor customer service programs and grow the business.

There are many ways to collect information on the customers, including:

(a) **Order forms:**
Order forms let customers order a specific product or service that the business is unable to supply immediately, and are a good way to collect customer information. By filling out a pre-order form, a customer makes a commitment to buy a product and will often pre-pay for it.

(b) **Enquiries**:

It is a good business practice to record the details of any customer enquiries to follow-up with them. Enquiries also give an opportunity to collect customer information and mention the company's website, mailing list or social media pages.

(c) **Recording complaints**:
Customer complaints can be used as a way to collect customer information. Not only does the complaint get recorded, but also who made it, why, which staff member heard the complaint and what was done to resolve the problem.

(d) **Warranty cards**:
If the business has products or services that come with a warranty, warranty cards can be used to collect and store the customers' information.

(e) **Customer satisfaction surveys**:
To collect the information on customer satisfaction, survey cards can be used where customers rate, for example, aspects of your service out of 5. The back of the card can ask for the customer's personal details.

(f) **Feedback**:
Feedback cards can also be used to collect information. Feedback can be asked on specific aspects of your business or leave it open-ended, like a suggestion box. Again, the back of the card can request personal details.

(g) **Company website:**
A business website can be used to collect customer information through a 'contact us' form for general enquiries, or by allowing customers to sign up to a mailing list (if you have regular news or updates).

Storing customer information
Customer information is confidential and must be stored securely. A simple way to store customer information is to use an electronic spreadsheet. If there is detailed information, a customer relationship manager (CRM) database might be more suitable. A CRM can help the sales associate analyse customer information to find purchasing trends and identify their best customers.

Maintaining customer information

Customer information is only useful if it is up-to-date. It is important to regularly check the accuracy of the customers' information, and update it where necessary. Using stored customer information It is important to ask the customers if they would like to receive information or updates, and give them the option to opt-out. If a business spams customers without their consent they may react negatively to the business.

Benefits of maintaining records of customer
• helps to work more efficiently
• protects interests of government and of agency
• protects employee and citizen rights
• displays cost and impact on the business
• enables re-examination of processes and decisions
• helps in research and development activities • enable steadiness and stability in