

AN ANALYSIS OF MOTIVATING SALES PERSONNEL  
IN SMALL RETAIL STORES

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BY  
RHONDA CARROL BAKER, B.S.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

The process of "retailing" has evolved throughout man's existence from a mere bartering procedure to the more complicated exchanging of merchandise for legal tender. As retailing is visible daily to most persons, it is a valuable and necessary portion of our lifestyle in today's society. Retailing serves as a means of supplying the physical and psychological needs of the public. Over the past decade, however, both large and small retail stores have undergone great changes. These changes have largely been due to the ever changing environment, including social, economic, technical, and competitive aspects (2):

In the past, many towns had one main department store where most residents purchased their goods. With the increase in transportation and mass communication, new options have become available to consumers. In order to maintain the patronage of the changing consumer, retailers have found they, too, must develop various techniques for drawing this "new consumer" continually into their store (7).

One of the big changes that has occurred is the changing role of the retail salesperson. Some observers contend that creative personal selling in stores is a thing of the past. A few retailers claim they have more use for trained "order takers" than actual salespeople. Because of higher educational levels and the influence of various media, retailers believe the customer knows what he wants, so why

waste the effort to sell. This view has been influenced a great deal by developments such as preselling of customers through national advertising, displays, and labeling, along with the increase of self service and selection, as is found in supermarkets and discount stores (2). Nevertheless, the small retailers still consider personal salesmanship essential to their success. Today's working woman simply cannot find time to take half a day a week shopping for a single item. In addition, various advertising media may condition many shoppers to rely on familiar and trusted brand items and stores. Because of lack of time, loyalty of this nature helps alleviate wasted time and effort for many shoppers. Executives in service stores of all varieties recognize the need for improvements in personal assistance to their clients. As a rule, most small retailers agree that they would definitely not wish to see its curtailment (4). As a result, there seems to be an increase in people shopping specialty shops, and less often in malls for their regular shopping. Shoppers are finding a need to rely on a store or salesperson to assist them in achieving their shopping goals quickly and yet acquiring quality merchandise (4).

#### Statement of the Problem

Little information or guidance is available today for small retailers to aid them in formulating a workable and cost-effective motivation program for their sales staff. The purpose of this study was to analyze the motivation of sales personnel in small retail stores as viewed by owner/management and sales personnel.

### Significance of the Problem

Research into motivational aids has been aimed primarily toward large retail establishments. The large retailer generally can afford to invest the dollars and time necessary for such a program investigation. Firms specializing in motivation research also tend to be of more assistance to the larger merchandiser than the small mom-pop stores. Smaller stores, however, are faced likewise with the perils of an unproductive sales staff. Because of the lack of focal attention on the small merchant, the results of this study may prove beneficial to such retailers in establishing future goals.

### Objectives

In order to analyze an effective motivational strategy, the following objectives were established:

1. To determine the long range goals of both employee and owner/management, and the areas of agreement and disagreement.
2. To analyze the extent of employee/management communication.
3. To analyze the validity of the initial training program, if in effect.
4. To analyze the effect of employee's involvement with store's image, and product knowledge of merchandise being sold.
5. To identify the more effective techniques in motivating sales personnel.

### Delimitations

1. This investigation was conducted by the use of

two surveys given to employers and employees, as well as through personal interviews.

2. The type of stores involved included only those ready-to-wear stores which are singularly-owned, and have been in business for a minimum of one year with the present owner.
3. Stores surveyed were limited to small ready-to-wear stores located throughout the five state area of Tennessee, Arkansas, Oklahoma, Louisiana, and Texas.
4. Employees involved included only those employed by the company a minimum of three months.

#### Assumptions

In this study the following assumptions were made:

1. A questionnaire could be developed to gain information necessary to explore stated objectives.
2. There is a significant contrast in management problems faced by small singularly-owned mom-pop stores and larger, multi-store retail establishments.
3. There is a tendency among consumers today to prefer and pay for quality and uniqueness in merchandise.
4. As a rule, the small specialty shop is growing in popularity.

#### Definition

Small Retail Store: 6,000 square feet or less with no more than 6 salespeople on floor.

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Employee motivation is a problem that has been with businesses of all kinds for years. There are a great many writings on the subject. However, specifically concerning small businesses, small retail stores to be exact, the information is greatly limited.

There is no doubt in the retailer's mind that he must have outstanding salespeople to achieve the sales he requires to be profitable. Often, however, the smaller store has difficulty finding and keeping salespeople of the caliber desired.

Retailing is basically a "people business," which involves persons working directly with the public as well as personnel unnoticed by the customer, but, who are equally important in influencing the profit and growth of any establishment. Competition continues to grow between merchants as does the expanding variety and supply of available merchandise. Business costs continue to rise year after year. In addition, shorter hours, higher wages, and fringe benefits have forced management to center more attention on increasing the productivity of employees. The human resource is a costly expenditure. Inefficient work, waste, and errors are costly problems too often faced by management when dealing with sales employees. Payroll, employee benefits, and personnel services will typically represent approximately 70 percent of every dollar put into the store. Thus, management's dual concern is such that

it must consider the initial training of sales employees as well as supervisors. By instructing and developing personnel to their full potential, the retailer hopes to reap lasting benefits from each inflationary dollar invested (11).

Retailer employee turnover averages 60 percent annually, according to 1980 figures, indicating a major deterrent to salesfloor productivity (11). Turnover is a costly problem with the greatest turnover always among new employees. Evidently something is wrong with techniques used to indoctrinate them into the program, especially from the managerial level. Inferior initiation carries on to later periods when the employee finds that his or her dissatisfaction surpasses their interest in the job, and causes them to be unproductive and an undesirable expenditure (1). Previous philosophy stated the only way to get extra effort from an employee was to pay him more or reward him with more fringe benefits. If all else failed, threaten to fire him. Large organizations practicing these methods have decidedly "dubbed" them to be of no avail. In-depth studies on methods of developing a motivated attitude in employees have tested everything from increased pay to a variety of awards and honors. Though small retailers are faced with apathy in employee attitude, they are limited in their affordable approaches to alleviate the problem. The small one-store owner seldom has access to money beyond his own resources, thus he must be successful in order to make healthy profits and stay in business (3).

In the past, it has been extremely impractical to pay salespeople more per hour than is being put back into the company. Hence, to

observe techniques used by larger companies and corporations, these small retailers can apply this information to their own situations when possible. Being small "mom-pop" stores, however, their situations are not easily comparable to larger companies. The problems in motivation are on a much more personal level, and cannot always be handled in the same general manner. The small retailers are in a unique situation, as they are in need of determining a plausible, workable solution to motivating their own sales staff to meet the challenge of dealing with the "new consumer" of today's market.

Kovach (6) readministered a 1946 comparison survey between more than 200 employees and their immediate supervisors. The original study showed a noticeable gap existed between what employees considered to be important and what their supervisors thought these employees would feel as important, as reported in Table 1.

TABLE 1  
What People Want from Their Work  
(1946)

Employee Ranking		Supervisor Ranking
1	Full appreciation of work done	8
2	Feeling of being in on things	9
3	Sympathetic help with personal problems	10
4	Job security	2
5	Good wages	1
6	Interesting work	5
7	Promotion and growth in the organization	3
8	Personal loyalty to employees	6
9	Good working conditions	4
10	Tactful discipline	7

In 1946, employees ranked full appreciation of work, feeling of being in on things, and sympathetic help with personal problems as the most important factors, while their supervisors ranked these least important. The supervisors felt that good wages and job security were most important to their employees while they ranked them as 5 and 4, respectively. Again, the supervisors felt promotion and growth in the organization (ranked 3) and good working conditions (ranked 4) were more important to employees than the employees felt they were.

The results of the same survey conducted in 1980 are presented in Table 2.

TABLE 2  
What People Want from Their Work  
(1980)

Employee Ranking		Supervisor Ranking
1	Interesting work	5
2	Full appreciation of work done	8
3	Feeling of being in on things	10
4	Job security	2
5	Good wages	1
6	Promotion and growth in the organization	3
7	Good working conditions	4
8	Personal loyalty to employees	7
9	Sympathetic help with personal problems	9
10	Tactful discipline	6

Thirty-five years later the survey revealed the greatest gap between the two groups was the feeling of being in on things when the employees ranked it third and their supervisors ranked it last (10). Interesting work climbed from 6th place in 1946 to 1st place in 1980.

Full appreciation of work done remained high (2nd place) with employees while their supervisors ranked it as 8th in importance for their employees. Both groups ranked sympathetic help with personal problems as 9th which was a drop from 3rd place in 1946 by the employees.

Koellner (5) emphasizes how people under their own motivational drive have trouble understanding why others are not right up there with them. This involves several characteristics an entrepreneur would possess that an average employee usually is lacking. First, this highly motivated person knows and enjoys the idea that the success or failure of the business rides on him. He is aware of the direction and goal of the company. If a problem arises, he knows what moves to make. He has a strong sense of ownership: "It's my baby." And, finally, there is the element of risk and fun. The excitement of wrestling with problems successfully. If each employee could be as driven, employees would have no motivational problems whatsoever. However, as Koellner states, "One is less willing to give when how much and to what they are giving is unknown." He stresses the fact that employees enjoy taking pride in what they do and knowing their contributions are needed and wanted. However, people are reluctant to give their time and efforts to something they do not understand or feel a part of. The more involved with discussions and planning of goals, the more likely they will be emotionally committed to their work. Even then, interest can easily be lost without feedback on performance from management. At the same time, if management expects commitment from employees, they should

be committed to the employees. Without committed management it is very unlikely to obtain any lasting dedication or motivation from employees.

Pickle and Abrahamson have concluded that management must attempt to understand its employees. The working environment involves a whole complex of social, economic, and physical conditions that eventually influence attitude perceptions, behavior, expectations, and productivity. With each employee being an individual demonstrating different behavior, what works in motivating one will not necessary apply to his/her neighbor (9).

Miller's study of this problem led him to four major theories of motivation: Personal achievement and responsibility; Participation in group efforts; Power of achievement of affiliation; and Material or career rewards. He concluded that none of the theories or techniques were totally applicable to all individuals or circumstances. Trying to fit round theories into square holes is less effective than capitalizing on strengths of individual differences and possibilities (8).

There is no "cut and dried" approach in motivating people. Everyone has the same basic needs, i.e., Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs: Physiological, safety and security, social, ego, and self actualization. Every employee has his own interpretation of many of these, however, and this is the very thing that throws a "wrench into the machinery." In fact, as emphasized by Siegel, employees do not come with a service manual and a number to call in case of a breakdown (10). Employees

are not machines, and to treat them as such is a sure road to failure in motivating them.

### Summary

The review of literature shows that there is a need for research in the area of small retailer employee motivation. Of the over 1000 new businesses started each day in the United States, over 95 percent eventually fail. A new business can be an extremely hazardous venture, especially to the individually-financed small retailer, as a retailer's employees can either make or break a store. Research could provide the small retailer with information on viable motivational approaches whereby assuring success for not only the employee but ultimately for the store.

## CHAPTER III

### PLAN OF PROCEDURE

#### Selection of Sample

The sample consisted of approximately 100 small retail stores in various locations throughout the five state area of Tennessee, Arkansas, Oklahoma, Louisiana, and Texas. Each store received two surveys to obtain both owner/management and employee views on the subject investigated. A judgmental sample was selected, dependent upon the researcher, to obtain a representative sample of both owner/management and employee of the small retail stores.

#### Data Gathering Technique

A questionnaire, developed by the researcher, was used to obtain the necessary data from owner/management and employees. The employee questionnaire consists of three parts. The first part determined personal and economic data. The second part obtained information on the subjects' attitude toward their job and owner/management. Part three determined to what extent, if any, a training program has affected participants. A second questionnaire was directed to owner/management. This survey obtained information concerning employee and owner/management relations, as well as determined to what extent the training program, if in effect, has contributed to the present operation of the store.

### Administration

Separate questionnaires were developed for both owner/management and employee in small retail stores in Tennessee, Arkansas, Oklahoma, Louisiana, and Texas. The survey, conducted personally or via mail, was administered in the late summer of 1982.

### Analysis of Data

This research was an exploratory study limited to a five state area. A frequency and percentage distribution for each answer was calculated to show descriptive data, and comparisons between owner/management and employee insights were made.

## CHAPTER IV

### PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

The purpose of this study was to analyze an effective motivational strategy for small retailers dealing with sales personnel. The data were collected from a survey sent to employees of small ready-to-wear stores within the five-state area of Tennessee, Arkansas, Oklahoma, Louisiana, and Texas. A similar survey was also administered to the employee's store owner/manager. Seventy-five sets of questionnaires were mailed or personally administered to the stores' personnel. Thirty-eight sets were returned with eight employee surveys being either missing or non-usable, of the 55 questionnaires that were mailed.

Personal demographics were determined by one section of the survey. Information concerning employee and owner/management relations, employee training and incentive programs, and a comparison study between employee and owner/management also were conducted to analyze areas of agreement and disagreement. Results are presented under three separate categories of: Employee Data, Owner/Management Data, and Comparison of Employee and Owner/Management Data.

#### Employee Survey

The employee questionnaire consisted of three parts. Personal information was obtained in order to determine demographics.

Information was also sought as a means of analyzing employees' views of relationships with owner/management. Finally, employee training and incentive programs in existence were analyzed in order to evaluate their effectiveness.

#### Personal Information

The personal data section consisted of seven questions used to gather demographic information about the responding employees. Respondents ranged in ages from 16 to 65, the most prevalent category being the 26-36 age group. The majority were presently married (63.2 percent) with at least some college background. Half of the respondents had children, most with only two. Children's ages ranged from 1 to 43, but a majority were below 20 years.

Over 60 percent of the respondents owned or were buying their homes. Over half relied on their spouse as the major source of income. Salary categories were distributed evenly from below \$7,000 to over \$50,000 for family income. Likewise, 63.2 percent felt their standard of living was such that they could afford to buy or wear what they sold.

#### Employment and Owner/Management Relations

This area was designed with the intention of analyzing the employee's view of their relationship with the store owner/management. Almost two-thirds of the employees who responded had been employed with their company three years or less. Likewise, 73.3 percent had only been in

retail 7 years or less. When asked why they took this job, 15.2 percent stated their reason was money, 13.2 percent because of their qualifications, 28.9 percent for the challenge, 13.2 percent for the work schedule, and 18.4 percent as a result of overall convenience.

More than half of the respondents felt they had a future with the company and had every intention of staying on indefinitely. They believed management had been responsive to their needs and problems and they, personally, made vital contributions and input into the company. Respondents felt qualified, and only one stated they were overqualified for the work at hand. More than half believed they received credit for their work and were paid adequately. However, only 47.4 percent had received any raise since starting with their company. Ten percent of the respondents felt they brought in at least 90 percent of the store's total sales; 13.3 percent brought in 61-90 percent; 30 percent brought in 30-60 percent; and 26.7 percent brought in less than 30 percent.

The majority of respondents (65.8 percent) worked days only, while only 10.5 percent worked both days and evenings. Almost three-fourths felt their hours were flexible and convenient for them. While at work, approximately half of the employees stated owner/management was on the sales floor at least 50 percent of the time. Sixty-eight percent also felt management was motivational while there in the store.

Only 5.3 percent felt they were not trusted by management

to follow through with assigned tasks. Almost three-fourths (76.3) clearly understood their duties. Almost 60 percent felt communications were open between owner/management and themselves and that no communication gap existed.

Employees were asked to rate selected qualifications owner/management would look for in hiring new personnel. A scale of 1 to 8 was used, with 1 being the most important and 8 being the least important. Table 3 shows the qualifications important in hiring sales personnel as viewed by employees of small retail stores.

TABLE 3  
QUALIFICATIONS RATED BY EMPLOYEES  
AS IMPORTANT IN HIRING SALES PERSONNEL

Qualification	Number of Respondents	Rating*							
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Past Sales Experience	20	3	2	3	2	3	2	2	3
Dependability	20	12	3	2	1	1	1	0	0
Personal Appearance	19	1	4	2	6	2	3	1	0
Maturity (Age)	18	0	1	1	1	6	4	4	1
Maturity (Personality)	17	3	3	2	4	2	1	2	0
Education	18	0	0	2	1	5	6	4	0
Low Starting Salary	20	1	0	0	1	0	1	2	15
Assertiveness (Customer Rapport)	17	0	4	5	3	1	1	3	0

\*Scale: No. 1 as most important  
No. 8 as least important

### Employee Training and Incentive Programs

This area was designed to study the effectiveness of employee training and incentive programs, when in existence. Also included were customer preferences in merchandise and service.

Over half the respondents said there was no training program in existence with their company (57.9 percent). Of those with programs, none used films. Only 5.3 percent had formal lectures, 7.9 percent had a series of personal demonstrations, and only 2.6 percent listed other as a possibility. Only 5.3 percent of the employees stated they were checked on sales techniques weekly; 2.6 percent monthly, 2.6 every 6 months, and 7.9 percent were checked seldom or never. As far as rating the program, only 10.5 percent rated theirs as good, excellent, or highly motivational.

Almost half the respondents (47.4 percent) stated that most of their customers preferred specialized attention; however, 21.1 percent felt their customers preferred to be left alone. In either case, respondents felt they were prepared, as almost 80 percent said they were kept well informed by management concerning new merchandise and fashion trends brought into the store. This was evidently helpful since nearly 80 percent (78.9 percent) had customers who were loyal to their store. Likewise, almost three out of four salespersons had built up a clientele who were loyal to the store because of the respondent's own personal service to them. Personal service was the most outstanding aspect indicated by respondents that encouraged store loyalty,

as was expected. As far as what their customer was looking for in merchandise, 60 percent had customers who preferred quality more than price, only 10 percent who looked for price more than quality, and less than 10 percent (7.9) who looked for fashion above all.

#### Owner/Management Survey

The questionnaire developed for the Owner/Management data consisted of three categories: personal store owner/management information, employees and owner/management relations, and information to determine if employee training and incentive programs have been effective motivational tools for the small retailer.

#### Personal Store Owner/Management Data

This information was gathered to determine what types of stores and management were being surveyed by the study. Four questions were presented concerning the owner/manager's experience in retailing and his expectations for his store's future. Three questions pertained to the actual size and location of the store.

Respondents ranged from owning/managing their present store from 1 to 51 years. The most in any category were 10 having been with their store for only 1 year, 5 had been with their stores over 2 years and 3 with theirs for 3 and 4 years. Almost 58 percent of the respondents, therefore, may be considered new store operators.

Since 50 percent of the respondents were relatively new in their owner/management position, it is also interesting to note that 52.6

percent have been in retail for less than 10 years. When asked how much longer they intended to remain with their store, 81.6 percent were indefinite as to their future plans, and 97.4 percent were certain their store would be successful as it was presently being managed.

The size of the stores ranged from 630 to 6,000 square feet. The most common size store was 1,800 square feet with three stores (7.9 percent) registering as such. Almost 16 percent were free standing buildings, 55.3 percent were in strip centers and 31.6 were located in a central business district.

#### Employees and Owner/Management Relations

This area was designed to determine owner/management perception of mutual relations with its personnel. Questions were designed to determine management's view of employees' dedication to the store.

When asked if owners had been responsive to the needs and problems of their employees, 52.6 percent of the respondents answered affirmatively. Almost 95 percent believed their sales staff makes vital contributions to the company's growth, although, only about half (52.6 percent) actually trusted their employees to accomplish tasks assigned to them.

Of the total respondents, only 7.9 percent felt their salespeople brought in at least 90 percent of the store's business accumulatively, while 13.2 percent checked between 61-90 percent. The 30-60 percent of the business was the most often checked at 47.4 percent, and less than 60 percent checked by 23.7 percent of the owners. Almost half

(47.4 percent) of the employees kept clientele books. However, 78.9 percent of the owners will allow employee's personal contact with customers to bring them into the store.

Owner/management time spent on the sales floor varied from 5 to 100 percent of their working day. The highest frequency was 26.4 percent of the owners, who spent between 78 and 80 percent of the time in selling. This amount of floor time by management in small stores is probably invaluable considering that 63.2 percent of the owners have fewer than 4 salespeople working for them on a full or part-time basis.

Over half of the sales staff had an average length of employment of two years or less. Although 39.5 percent stated their sales personnel have been with them since the store opened, the exact length of time is unknown. It is assumed, however, that many of them have been with the store for a long time since some of the owners have been in the store for as many as 51 years.

In searching for new employees, owner/management was asked to rate selected qualifications. A scale of 1 to 8 was used, with 1 being the most important and 8 being the least important. Table 4 shows the qualifications important in hiring sales personnel as viewed by owner/management.

From these ratings, dependability was rated as the first qualification looked for by 39.5 percent of the owners who responded. At the opposite end, the least important factor in hiring was whether

TABLE 4  
 QUALIFICATIONS RATED BY OWNERS  
 AS IMPORTANT IN HIRING SALES PERSONNEL

Qualification	Number of Respondents	Ratings*							
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Past Sales Experience	32	3	2	1	7	11	2	5	1
Dependability	34	15	10	5	1	1	1	1	0
Personal Appearance	34	2	7	8	8	8	1	0	0
Maturity (Age)	31	0	0	2	2	4	8	12	3
Maturity (Personality)	32	7	6	6	7	2	2	2	0
Education	30	0	0	1	3	4	14	8	0
Low Starting Salary	30	0	1	0	1	1	0	1	26
Assertiveness (Customer Rapport)	31	6	7	8	4	1	2	3	0

\*Scale: No. 1 as most important  
 No. 8 as least important

the employee would accept a low starting salary (86.7 percent). Maturity (personality) was of second importance (21.9 percent), whereas, assertiveness was rated third in importance by one out of five owners. Following are past sales experience (9.4 percent) and personal appearance (5.9 percent) in order of being most important.

A closer look revealed the most important qualifications in hiring sales personnel were dependability, assertiveness, maturity (personality), and personal appearance as these four traits rated in the top four in importance. Of lesser importance were past sales experience, age,

and education as most of the ratings were in the last four categories of importance.

The majority of the owner/managers (81.6 percent) felt their customers are more interested in quality than price or fashion. They felt that employees are kept well informed as to new merchandise and new fashion trends (97.4 percent). It was unanimous that their clients were loyal to them. The main reason given for this was the personal service the customer received (57.9 percent). In fact, respondents felt the majority of their clientele received special attention (71.1 percent).

#### Employee Training and Incentive Programs

These data were compiled to develop a picture of the effectiveness of current employee training, if such existed in the stores. The use of incentives to motivate sales personnel were examined also.

An analysis of the sales training programs in the stores revealed that only ten percent of the owners stated they had such training. The sales training techniques used included 6.7 percent who used films, 20 percent used lectures, 13.3 percent used personal demonstrations, while 10 percent indicated other techniques were used. The specific techniques were not identified.

Of those using the above methods, 2.6 percent of the owners felt they were poor, 15.8 percent were rated as good, 5.3 were rated as

excellent while the majority did not rate the techniques. Of those owners with no training program, only 31.6 felt it would be advantageous to have one.

When owners were asked how often sales techniques of employees were checked, only 28.9 percent responded. Of those responding, only 13.2 percent were checked on a weekly basis, 2.6 percent were checked semi-monthly, 2.6 percent were checked monthly, and 10.5 percent were seldom or never checked.

Ninety percent of the owner/managers replied that they encouraged, as well as motivated, their employees. Since the majority (81.6 percent) of the owners believed that sales personnel are adequately paid, it appears that salaries were not a problem in motivating employees.

Other incentives were analyzed. Only one out of four employers gave any form of bonus, commission, or a stock acquisition as a means of incentive to motivate their employees. However, an interest in receiving motivational suggestions and ideas was expressed by 84.2 percent of the owner/managers.

Description of Two-Way Comparison

A comparison was made of the evaluations of the store employee and owner/management relations. Also studied were views on training methods and customer profiles. The results are depicted in Figures 1-5. The highest rating percentages from each group were used in the comparison.

Although owner/management and employees answered similarly on many aspects, overall differences were found. Surprisingly, for instance, Figure 1 shows a reverse of what was expected.

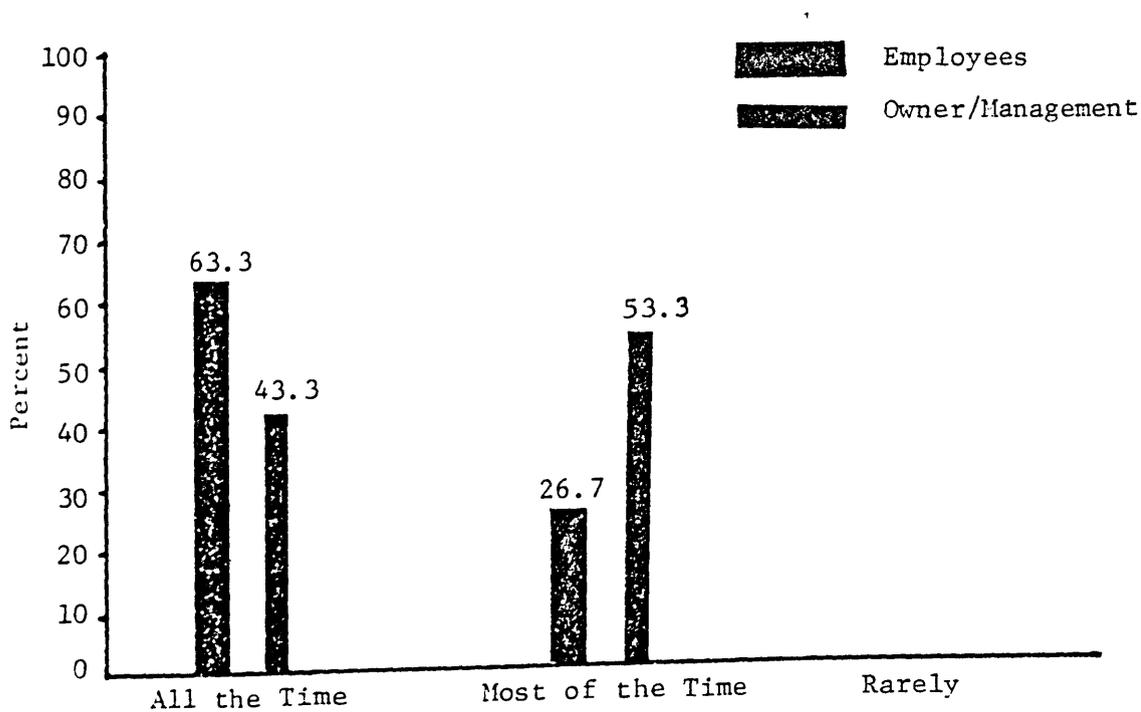


Fig. 1. Owner/Management Responses to Employees Needs.

Employees felt owner/management was more responsive to their needs than management felt they were. Responses were unanimous that employees made vital contributions to the operation of the store. Management felt noticeably stronger, however, about the importance of its pay scale than did their employees by almost 20 percent.

Figure 2 shows that both groups of respondents felt employees bring in between 61-90 percent of the store's sales. Approximately one-fourth of the employees and one-fifth of the owners thought the employees bring in more than 90 percent of the store's sales.

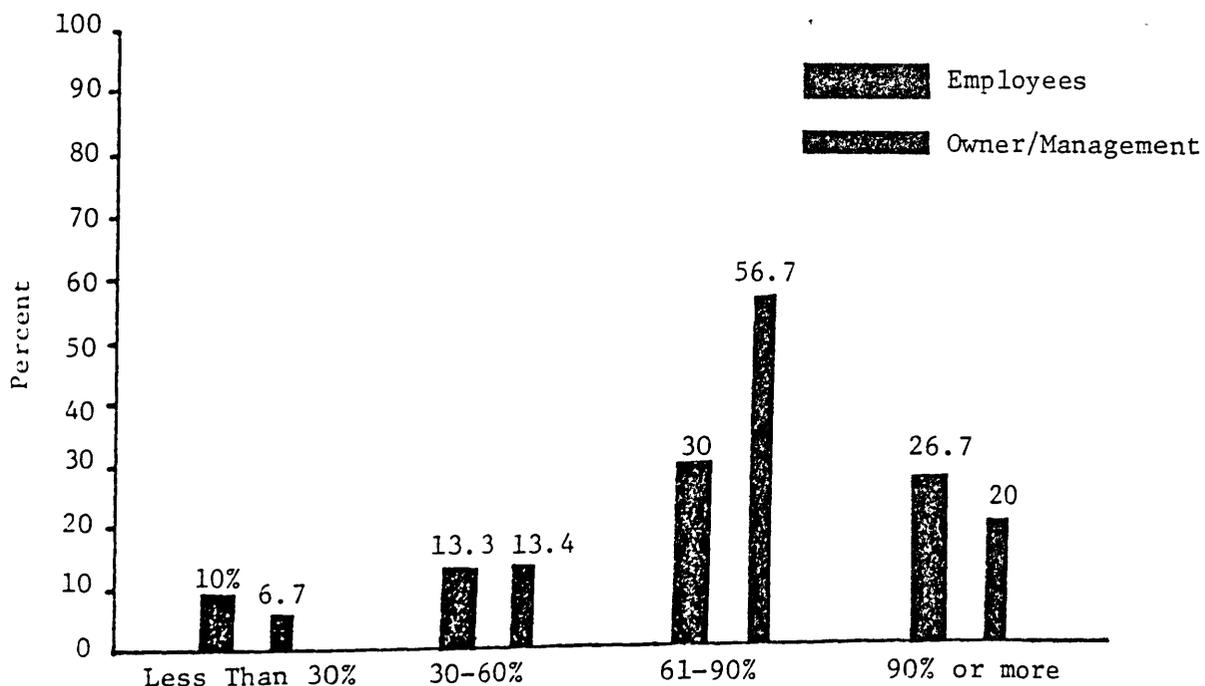


Fig. 2. Total Sales Employees Bring Into Store

The percentage of time owner/management spent in the store ranged from 5-100 percent. More responses were indicated, however, in the 90 percent bracket. Of the time spent in the store, only a slight difference was shown on the degree employees were encouraged and motivated by owner/management. Again, there was a marked difference in the level of trust between the two groups. Almost 87 percent of the employees felt they were trusted to perform their duties, while only 53 percent of the managers demonstrated such trust.

Training programs in small retail stores were found to be almost nonexistent. Figure 3 depicts the responses to training programs. Lectures and demonstrations were used more often than other training methods.

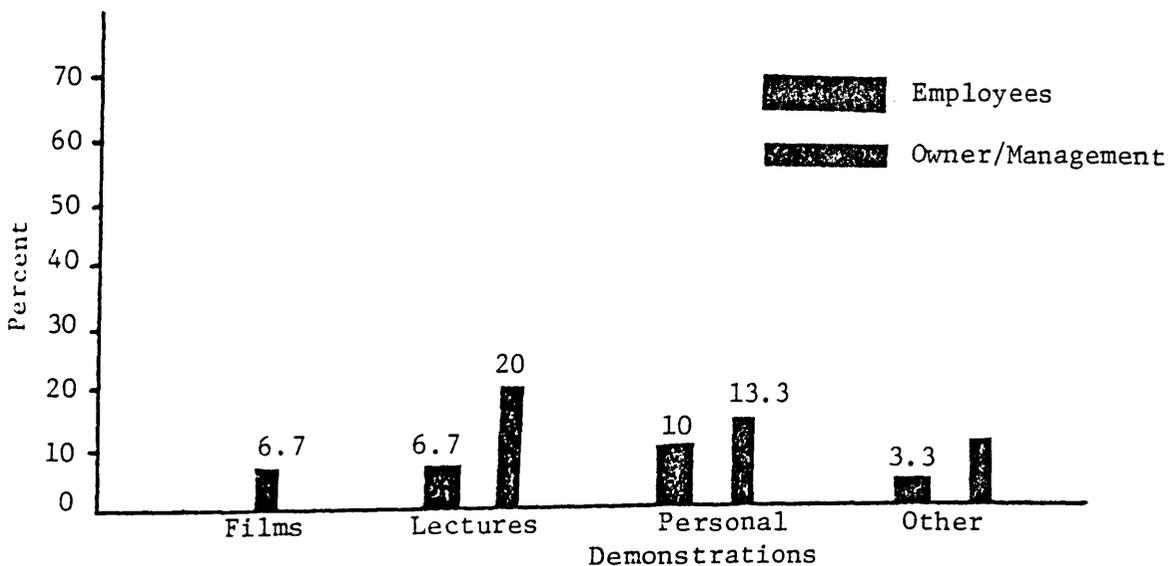


Fig. 3. Elements of the Training Programs of the Retailers

Figure 4 presents the frequency percentages on which employees are checked concerning their selling techniques. Surveys of both groups were similar as neither group felt techniques were checked very often.

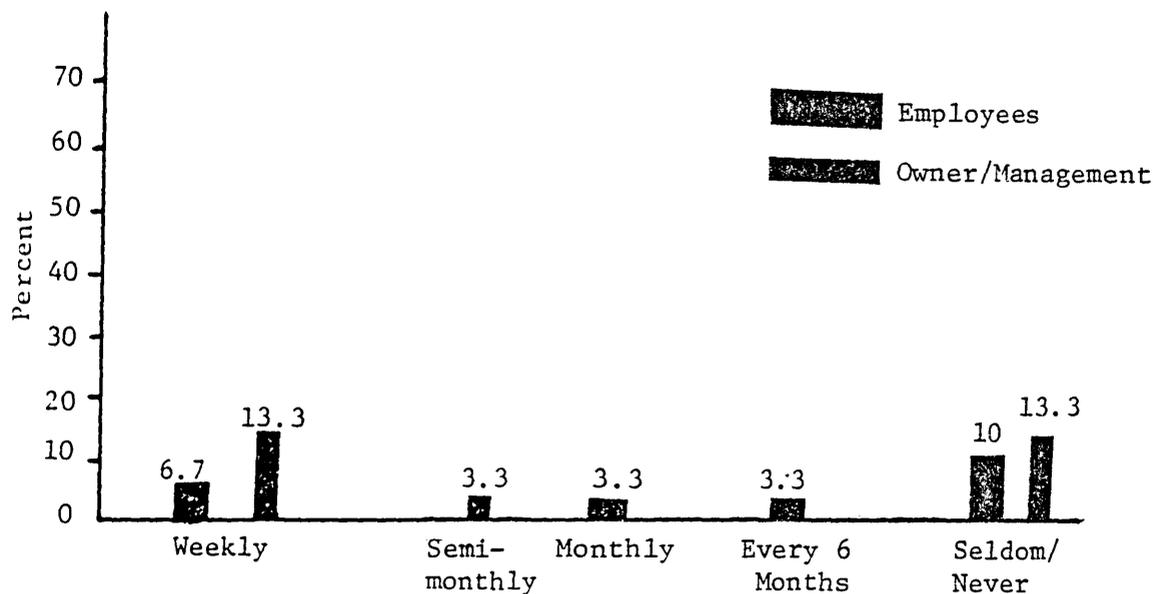


Fig. 4. Frequency Employees are Checked on Selling Techniques

The desire for a training program in their store was expressed by approximately half of the respondents in each group. Although very little follow-up to existing training was in effect, few respondents felt the present system was poor.

Customers wanting special attention (60 percent) greatly outnumbered those who wished to be left alone (26 percent). Both owner/management and employees were unanimous in that they felt employees were kept well informed on new merchandise and fashion trends.

Qualifications desired in hiring new sales personnel revealed several interesting comparisons. The stronger characteristics of dependability, maturity (personality), and assertiveness were checked as the three most important traits by both groups. Maturity (age), education, and low starting salary were the three least important concerns of either group. Past sales experience and personal appearance, although both important, placed in the middle range.

Figure 5 presents the aspects of the store that encourage customer loyalty.

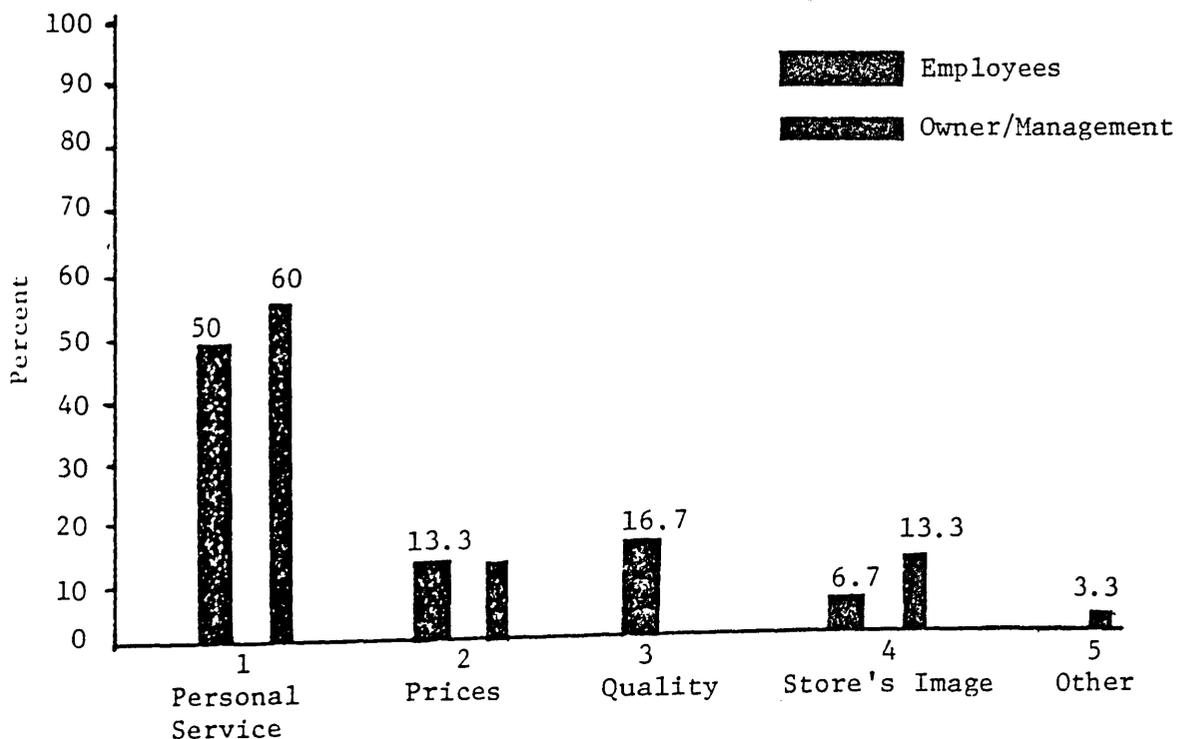


Fig. 5. Aspects of Store that Encourage Customers Loyalty to Store

There was only a slight variation in owner/management and employees feelings concerning the customers desire for quality more than price. It is noted, however, that both groups (13 percent) felt the price of the merchandise did encourage customer loyalty.

Both groups of respondents were unanimous in that they did have customers who were loyal to their store for one reason or another. In examining this loyalty, results of the comparison found that personal service was the most important factor by both groups.

## CHAPTER V

### SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this study was to analyze an effective motivational strategy for small retailers. The following objectives were formulated.

1. To determine the long range goals of both employee and owner/management, and the area of agreement and disagreement.
2. To analyze the extent of employee/management communication.
3. To analyze the validity of the initial training and incentive program, if in effect.
4. To analyze the effect of employee's involvement with store's image, and product knowledge of merchandise being sold.
5. To identify the more effective techniques in motivating sales personnel.

Data were collected through the use of two questionnaires administered to employees and owner/management. Both surveys consisted of three parts. Part 1 developed personal or store information relative to the participants' work situations. Part 2 dealt with employees and owner/management relations. Part 3 studied employee training and incentive programs.

From the survey it was determined that most respondents were between the ages of 26 and 36, having at least some college background. The majority were presently married, female, with half having children

less than 20 years of age. Most respondents either owned or were buying their home and relied upon their spouse for the bulk of the family income.

Almost two-thirds of the employees who responded had been with their present store for three years or less. The majority of them were quite content with their relations with owner/management and felt they had a definite future with the company. The only major thread of discord being that over half had yet to receive any form of raise since starting with the store.

Few respondents indicated any formal training in their company. Of the instruction methods indicated, personal demonstrations and lectures appeared to be the most prominently used. Most respondents indicated they were seldom or never checked upon concerning selling techniques.

Most employees who responded to the survey felt they had customers who prefer specialized service, although there were some who had customers who preferred to be left alone. Respondents did feel they were kept well informed about new merchandise and fashion trends brought into the store. Many had loyal customers as a possible result of the high level of personal service they offered.

Over half of the owner/managers who responded to the questionnaire were new store operators. They had great faith in the way the business was being managed and had indefinite plans for the future. Most stores surveyed were approximately 1,800 square feet and located

in a strip center.

Most of the owner/management respondents felt they had been responsive to the needs and problems of their employees. They believed their employees brought in close to half of all sales and made vital contributions to the growth of the store. Fifty percent did indicate they had faith in their employees to accomplish assigned tasks.

The majority of respondents stated they as owner/management spent between 75 and 80 percent of their time in the store. This was important as most stores had less than four salespeople to help them at any time.

The average length of employment of the sales staff was two years or less. When hiring new personnel, respondents rated dependability as the number one qualification they wanted. Three other top rated characteristics were assertiveness, maturity (personality), and personal appearance. Of lesser importance were sales experience, age, education, and low starting salary.

All respondents indicated they had loyal customers who looked for quality above price or fashion. They believed they kept their employees well informed as to new merchandise and fashion trends, which was important since most of their customers like special attention.

Nine out of ten of the owner/managers felt they encouraged and motivated their employees. They felt their people were adequately paid but few offered other incentives. Likewise, the majority of respondents offered no training programs whatsoever. Of those that

did, only a small percentage (13.2) checked them on a weekly basis. According to the results of the survey, less than a third felt that a training system would be worthwhile, but were interested in any motivational aids they could obtain.

An evaluation was made of the comparison between store employees and owner/management relations. Views on incentive and training methods, and customer profiles were also reviewed.

From the results of the comparison, employees were more pleased with management's responsiveness to their needs and problems than was management. Both felt employees made vital contributions to the store, but management felt stronger about its pay scale than employees. In comparison employees ranked higher in the 61 to 90 percent category as far as bringing sales into the store. Time management spent in the store was very high (90 percent). While there, both they and employees felt owner/management was encouraging and motivational. Trust level was an interesting factor as employees felt owner/management had more faith in them than they actually indicated.

Training and incentive programs were rare, as indicated by responses. Lectures and personal demonstrations were used more often than other training methods, although rarely followed upon. Few felt their methods were actually poor. Reaction to the idea of implementing a training program where one was non-existent was favored by only half of the owners.

Customers wanting special attention were the prominent type

clientele. Employees were definitely kept well-informed and up-to-date on new merchandise and fashion trends as this information was required by their special customer.

Qualifications in hiring rated dependability, personality, and assertiveness as the top three characteristics looked for by owner/management. The least important were indicated as age, education, and low starting salary.

Both management and employees felt the majority of their customers were concerned with quality more than price. They also agreed they had customers who were loyal to their store. An important reason for this was the personal service given them.

#### Conclusions and Recommendations

Based on the results of this study it was concluded there is a definite need in developing an effective approach to motivating sales-personnel in small retail stores. Small store owners and managers cannot afford to waste either on an unproductive staff. Salespeople can make or break a store and, therefore, a store must have as capable a group as possible in order to succeed.

One important factor in the study which indicated a degree of discontent was the low pay scale. The following recommendations, based on the researcher's contact and work with small retailers for three years, are suggested for consideration:

1. Give more incentives, which are not necessarily profit sharing. No small owner wants his employees' hands in his pocket. But if there are difficult

selling items to be cleared, allow for a greater profit margin for the salesperson that sells it.

2. Since salespersonnel are the backbone of the store, instead of an increase of advertising and mailers, put the money into salespeople incentives. Minimum wage is a typical salary with small retail stores. Pay well above that and attract a wide variety of potential employees. With such choices, store owner/managers will be able to select only the quality employees and keep them longer.
3. A common complaint of many store owners is that no salesperson they hire, no matter how good they are, can sell as well as they can, and with good reason. The owner has more at stake. A possible incentive plan would be to give an outstanding employee one percent stock in the company, with the option of buying four more percent. If the store should ever grow to the point of opening a second store, the new store would do the same with another outstanding employee. Keep the stores separate so that no employee's interest is diverted from his store. With the opening of each new store, allow any participating employee the option to buy five more percent of stock. If an employee understood that with each additional dollar that was brought into the store would only mean that much more for him, ultimately, the store would become his project. To watch it grow and prosper would only mean he was watching his own future growing. This method would keep outstanding employees in the store with definitely the store's interest at stake, not just a paycheck.

Narrow mindedness will keep any business small. Many old methods of motivating employees only lead to frustration on the part of owner/management and salespeople as well. No one can actually motivate another person, as that door is locked from within. Creating a climate in which employees find it rewarding to motivate themselves is beneficial in contributing to the growth of the company.

APPENDIX

## EMPLOYEE QUESTIONNAIRE

This questionnaire was developed to investigate possible methods of motivational techniques effective in a small retail situation. The results of this study, being conducted for a master's thesis at Texas Woman's University, will be used to help the small retailer and employee better work together to meet the needs of a changing consumer. The few minutes of your time needed to complete this questionnaire will be very much appreciated.

### PERSONAL DATA

1. Into what category does your age fall?

\_\_\_\_\_ 16-25

\_\_\_\_\_ 26-35

\_\_\_\_\_ 36-45

\_\_\_\_\_ 46-55

\_\_\_\_\_ 56-65

2. What is your marital status?

\_\_\_\_\_ Single

\_\_\_\_\_ Divorced

\_\_\_\_\_ Married

3. What was the highest level of education you completed?

\_\_\_\_\_ Less than 12 years

\_\_\_\_\_ High school diploma

\_\_\_\_\_ Some college

\_\_\_\_\_ College degree

\_\_\_\_\_ Post graduate

4. How many children do you have? \_\_\_\_\_ What are their ages?

---

5. Do you

\_\_\_\_\_ Own your own home or buying

\_\_\_\_\_ Rent an apartment

\_\_\_\_\_ Live in mobile home

\_\_\_\_\_ Other

6. What is the source of the majority of your household income?

\_\_\_\_\_ Personal earnings

\_\_\_\_\_ Spouse's earnings

\_\_\_\_\_ Dividends

\_\_\_\_\_ Annuities

\_\_\_\_\_ Other

7. There is no requirement to answer the following question.  
In what category does your annual household income fall?

\_\_\_\_\_ Below \$7,000

\_\_\_\_\_ \$7,001 to 10,000

\_\_\_\_\_ \$10,001 to 20,000

\_\_\_\_\_ \$20,001 to 30,000

\_\_\_\_\_ \$30,001 to 40,000

\_\_\_\_\_ \$40,000 to 50,000

\_\_\_\_\_ Other

8. Does your standard of living allow you to buy/wear what you sell?

\_\_\_\_\_ Yes

\_\_\_\_\_ No

## RELATIONSHIP WITH OWNER/MANAGEMENT

9. How many years \_\_\_\_\_/months\_\_\_\_\_ have you been employed with this company?
10. How long have you worked in retailing? \_\_\_\_\_
11. Did you take this job because of:
- \_\_\_\_\_ Money
- \_\_\_\_\_ You felt qualified
- \_\_\_\_\_ The challenge
- \_\_\_\_\_ Work hours
- \_\_\_\_\_ Convenience
12. Do you plan to stay with this company:
- \_\_\_\_\_ A few more months
- \_\_\_\_\_ Another year
- \_\_\_\_\_ Indefinitely
13. Do you feel you have a future with this company should you decide to stay indefinitely?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Yes
- \_\_\_\_\_ No
14. Has the owner/management been responsive to your needs and problems?
- \_\_\_\_\_ All of the time
- \_\_\_\_\_ Most of the time
- \_\_\_\_\_ Rarely
15. Do you feel you make vital contributions and input into the operation of the store?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Yes
- \_\_\_\_\_ No

16. How do you feel toward your work?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Qualified
- \_\_\_\_\_ Overqualified
- \_\_\_\_\_ Underqualified
17. Do you feel you receive credit for your work?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Yes
- \_\_\_\_\_ No
18. Do you feel you are paid adequately for the job you do?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Yes
- \_\_\_\_\_ No
19. Have you received any raise in pay since you began working here?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Yes
- \_\_\_\_\_ No
20. How much of total sales do you feel you bring into the store?
- \_\_\_\_\_ At least 90%
- \_\_\_\_\_ 61 to 90%
- \_\_\_\_\_ 30 to 60%
- \_\_\_\_\_ Less than 30%
21. Usually what time of day do you work?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Days
- \_\_\_\_\_ Evenings
- \_\_\_\_\_ Both days and evenings

22. Are your hours at work flexible when you feel it necessary?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Yes
- \_\_\_\_\_ No
23. Of the time you are at work, what percentage of the time is the supervisor for your department on the floor? \_\_\_\_\_%
24. Do you feel you are being motivated and encouraged by your employer to do the most outstanding job for him/her?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Yes
- \_\_\_\_\_ No
25. Do you feel you are trusted by your employer to accomplish assigned tasks?
- \_\_\_\_\_ All of the time
- \_\_\_\_\_ Most of the time
- \_\_\_\_\_ Rarely
26. Do you understand your duties clearly?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Yes
- \_\_\_\_\_ No
27. Do you feel at times that there is a communication gap between management and sales staff?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Yes
- \_\_\_\_\_ No
28. What qualifications do you feel your employer looks for in hiring sales personnel? Rate the following, 1 through 8, in order of importance, with 1 being the most important and 8 being the least.
- |                             |  |
|-----------------------------|--|
| _____ Past sales experience | _____ Maturity (age)                   |
| _____ Dependability         | _____ Maturity (personality)           |
| _____ Personal appearance   | _____ Education                        |
| _____ Low starting salary   | _____ Assertiveness (customer rapport) |

EMPLOYEE'S TRAINING PROGRAM

29. Does your company maintain a sales training program?

\_\_\_\_\_ Yes

\_\_\_\_\_ No

If no, skip to question No. 33.

30. Does the training program consist of:

\_\_\_\_\_ Films

\_\_\_\_\_ Lectures

\_\_\_\_\_ Personal demonstration

\_\_\_\_\_ Other

31. How often are employees checked on selling techniques?

\_\_\_\_\_ Weekly

\_\_\_\_\_ Semi-monthly

\_\_\_\_\_ Monthly

\_\_\_\_\_ Every 6 months

\_\_\_\_\_ Seldom/never

32. How would you rate the training now in effect in your company?

\_\_\_\_\_ Poor

\_\_\_\_\_ Good

\_\_\_\_\_ Excellent

\_\_\_\_\_ Highly motivational

33. As a salesperson do you feel most of your customers:

\_\_\_\_\_ Prefer specialized attention

\_\_\_\_\_ Would rather be left alone until they are ready to make their purchase

34. Do you feel you are kept informed as to new merchandise and fashion trends being brought into the store?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Yes
- \_\_\_\_\_ No
35. Do you have customers who are loyal to your store in that they shop there on a regular basis?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Yes
- \_\_\_\_\_ No
36. Do you have customers who are loyal to you because of your service to them?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Yes
- \_\_\_\_\_ No
37. What aspect of your store do you feel encourages store loyalty among its customers? (choose only one)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Personal service
- \_\_\_\_\_ Prices
- \_\_\_\_\_ Quality of merchandise
- \_\_\_\_\_ Image projected through displays and general atmosphere of store
- \_\_\_\_\_ Other
38. Do you feel your customer is concerned with:
- |                          |           |          |
|--------------------------|-----------|----------|
| Quality more than price? | Yes _____ | No _____ |
| Price more than quality? | Yes _____ | No _____ |
| Fashion above all?       | Yes _____ | No _____ |

OWNER/MANAGEMENT

QUESTIONNAIRE

This questionnaire was developed to investigate possible methods of motivational techniques effective in a small retail situation. The results of this study, being conducted for a master's thesis at Texas Woman's University, will be used to help the small retailer and employee better work together to meet the needs of a changing consumer. The few minutes of your time needed to complete this questionnaire will be very much appreciated.

PERSONAL DATA

1. How long have you owned/managed this store? \_\_\_\_\_
2. How long have you worked in retailing? \_\_\_\_\_
3. Concerning your future plans, how long do you anticipate owning/managing this store? \_\_\_\_\_
4. Do you feel this company will be successful in the future as it is currently being managed? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_
5. How large is your store? (square footage) \_\_\_\_\_
6. Is your location:  
\_\_\_\_\_ Free standing  
\_\_\_\_\_ In a strip center  
\_\_\_\_\_ In a mall  
\_\_\_\_\_ Central business district

RELATIONSHIP WITH EMPLOYEES

7. Do you feel management has been responsive to the needs and problems of its employees?  
\_\_\_\_\_ All of the time  
\_\_\_\_\_ Most of the time  
\_\_\_\_\_ Rarely

8. Do you feel your employees make vital contributions to the growth of the company? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_
9. Do you trust your employees to accomplish assigned tasks?  
\_\_\_\_\_ All of the time  
\_\_\_\_\_ Most of the time  
\_\_\_\_\_ Rarely
10. How much of total sales do you feel your employees bring into the store?  
\_\_\_\_\_ At least 90%  
\_\_\_\_\_ 61 to 90%  
\_\_\_\_\_ 30 to 60%  
\_\_\_\_\_ Less than 30%
11. Do your employees keep a clientele book? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_
12. Do employees personally contact customers in order to bring sales into the store? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_
13. Approximately what percentage of your work time is spent on the sales floor? \_\_\_\_\_%
14. How many employees work for you on a regular basis? \_\_\_\_\_
15. What is the average length of employment of your sales people? (Check only one).  
\_\_\_\_\_ Less than 6 months  
\_\_\_\_\_ 6 to 12 months  
\_\_\_\_\_ 1 to 2 years  
\_\_\_\_\_ Since store opened

16. What qualifications do you look for in hiring sales personnel? Rate the following, 1 through 8, in order of importance, with 1 being the most important and 8 being the least.

\_\_\_\_\_ Past sales experience  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Dependability  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Personal appearance  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Maturity (age)  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Maturity (personality)  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Education  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Low starting salary  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Assertiveness (customer rapport)

17. Do you feel your customer is concerned with:

Quality more than price? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

Price more than quality? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

Fashion above all? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

18. Do you keep employees informed as to new merchandise and fashion trends to be brought into the store? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

19. Do you have customers who are loyal to your store in that they shop there on a regular basis? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

20. What aspect of your store do you feel encourages store loyalty among its customers? (check only one)

\_\_\_\_\_ Personal service

\_\_\_\_\_ Prices

\_\_\_\_\_ Quality of merchandise

\_\_\_\_\_ Image projected through displays and general atmosphere of store

\_\_\_\_\_ Other

21. Do you feel most of your cusomters:

\_\_\_\_\_ Prefer specialized attention

\_\_\_\_\_ Would rather be left alone until they are ready to make their purchase

EMPLOYEES TRAINING PROGRAM

22. Do you feel you motivate and encourage your employees to do the most outstanding job for you? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

23. Do you feel employees are paid adequately for the job they do? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

24. Do you have:

\_\_\_\_\_ A bonus system

\_\_\_\_\_ Commissions

\_\_\_\_\_ Stock acquisition program

\_\_\_\_\_ None of the above

25. Does your company maintain a sales training program? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_ If not, skip to question No. 28.

26. Does the training program consist of:

\_\_\_\_\_ Films

\_\_\_\_\_ Lectures

\_\_\_\_\_ Personal demonstrations

\_\_\_\_\_ Other

27. How would you rate the training program now in effect in your company?

\_\_\_\_\_ Poor

\_\_\_\_\_ Good

\_\_\_\_\_ Excellent

\_\_\_\_\_ Highly motivational

28. Would you like to see a sales training program in your store, if not in effect? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_
29. Would you be interested in information concerning motivational suggestions aimed toward the small retailer? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_
30. How often are employees checked on selling techniques?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Weekly
- \_\_\_\_\_ Semi-monthly
- \_\_\_\_\_ Monthly
- \_\_\_\_\_ Every 6 months
- \_\_\_\_\_ Seldom/never

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