

Star Rating: Role of Sales Person at Retail Outlets in Promoting the Benefits



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This paper aims to promote energy efficiency across Kerala, specifically through actions that inform and train sales personnel and consequently to raise awareness of the consumers about the benefits of buying energy efficient appliances and the public in general, on possibilities to save energy at home. In most cases, customers don't have a clear picture about their actual needs and how to match them with a more efficient product; many of them cannot 'translate' an energy label although the vast majority are aware about it. A trained sales person can effectively advice customers in fulfilling their needs

Keyword: Energy Efficiency, Awareness

1. Introduction

Climate changes force policy makers globally to search for ways where green house gas emissions can be reduced rapidly. Here comes the importance of improving energy efficiency at the end use level. Although much improvement has been made over the past years, potential for improving energy efficiency still exists. Star labelling for appliances and equipment's have proven to be one of the most promising policy instruments.

Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE) is set up by government of India to move towards energy efficiency. It coordinates with all intermediaries including the government, industries, manufacturers and consumers in order to achieve their goals of an energy efficient nation. The prime importance of these star ratings is to educate and inform consumers about how energy efficient each product is. This also makes the manufacturer responsible for creating products which are highly energy efficient as consumers may eventually prefer better stered products.

BEE has initiated Retailer Training Programme to reach out to a large consumer audience to spread awareness on the saving from star rated appliances. The main objective of this programme is to organize workshops and imparting training to the authorized trader or seller all across the country. A comprehensive awareness programme will support and reinforce the sales person to briefly explain and convince customers about benefits of star rated appliances, how these products will lower down the electricity bills of consumers. This will not only increase the penetration of star rated products, it will also bring remarkable improvement in energy efficiency rates in India. The labelling of appliances is intended to improve consumer awareness about the energy saving potential of appliances and equipment, enabling consumers to make an informed choice when purchasing appliances /equipment. The labelling of appliances is also intended to encourage manufacturers to produce energy efficient products, in addition to continuously improving energy efficiency standards.

Salespersons are the third most trusted sources of information for energy efficiency of appliances, and also engage directly with consumers. As conduits for information to and from consumers, they also exercise significant influence over consumers' awareness and attitudes towards energy conservation. Nonetheless, retailers do need to be appropriately informed and incentivised for disseminating accurate and relevant information regarding energy conservation, and the delivery potential of appliances and equipment.

Activities done by BEE

- Organization and implementation of the training sessions among sellers of the participating stores and retail chains in order to give adequate and complete information concerning the benefits and advantages of acquiring high-efficient appliances and to provide them efficient arguments for the promotion of energy efficient appliances during the sales procedure.
- Mass media campaign through electronics and print media was created for energy conservation awareness for energy end users to purchase energy efficient BEE star labelled appliances, also it is aimed to educate the point of sales persons who is playing vital role to sale appliances.
- To increase the awareness level about BEE star labelled products amongst channel partners, the National Educational and Training programme (NETP) was initiated for 'Point of Sales Persons' of Channel Partners, who is dealing with consumers on a day to day basis for selling home appliances. The objective of the workshop is to educate the sales executives about the BEE star rating label and the information that they must communicate to the customers/purchasers by providing necessary information to select energy efficient BEE star labelled equipment's/appliances.

Objectives of the study

This study focuses on the role of sales person in educating the consumers on the benefits of star labelling.

Methodology

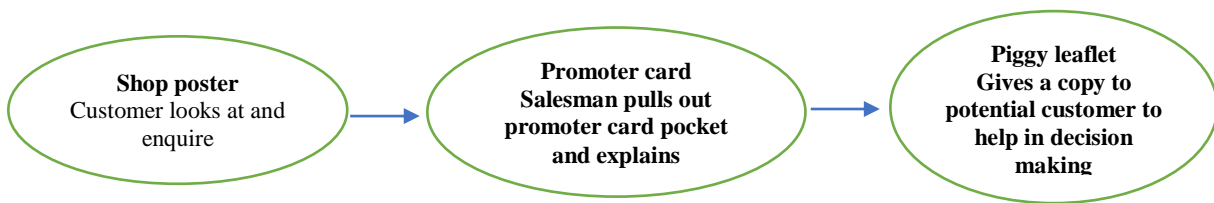
Across the nation BEE used to conduct seminars and workshop relating to energy savings and star labels. In Kerala BEE has conducted workshop in Kochi. Hence, Ernakulam district is being chosen as the sample. Five home appliance outlets of 5000 square feet or above has been chosen for the study namely Nandilath G Mart, Bismi Electronics, Pittapallil agencies, QRS and Lulu Connect.

Observation method and Expert survey technique has been used for collecting the data. From the technical inputs received from the experts at the shops, it was found that customers particularly ask star rating for electronic appliances such as Air conditioner and Refrigerator than other appliances. This is because consumers spend more money and these appliances consumes more energy and more over appliances such air conditioner and refrigerator have star labels attached to it.

2. Role of Sales Persons

To promote energy efficiency across India, specifically through actions that inform and train sales personnel and consequently to raise awareness of the consumers about the benefits of buying energy efficient appliances and the public in general on possibilities to save energy at home. Additionally, a set of instruments and materials were integrated to support the specific actions developed

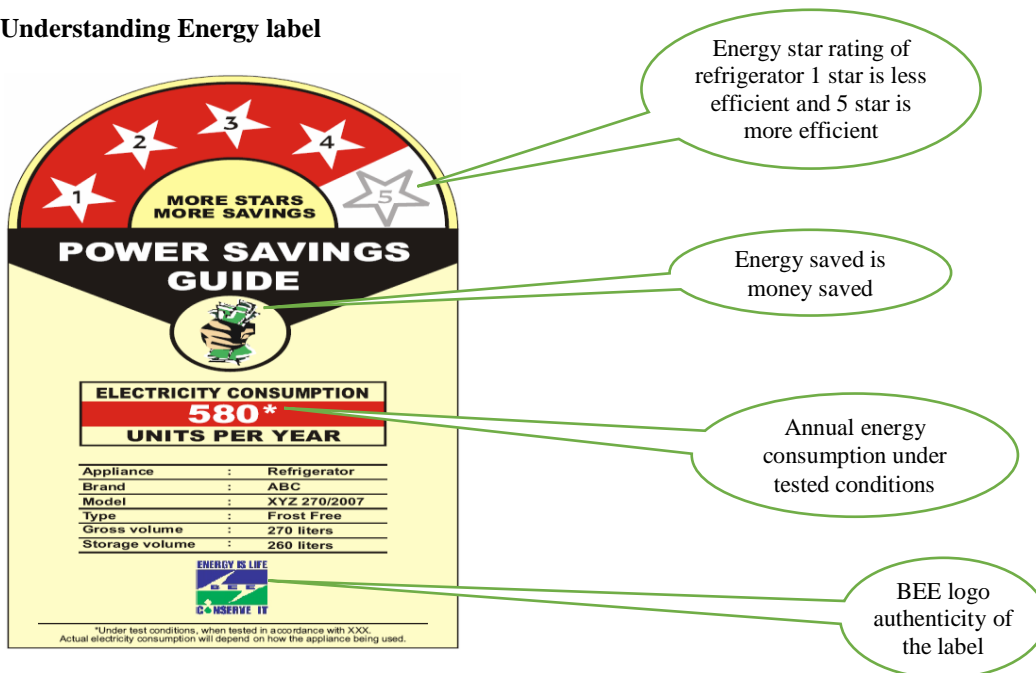
Tools for Sales Persons



Tools used by the show room salesmen covers the following

- Essence Of Energy Label
- How It Impacts appliance performance
- Energy Bill Saving & Payback Calculation
- Energy Calculator Web Site details

Understanding Energy label



3. Findings

The findings from observation and expert survey includes the following:

- People mostly buy an appliance when they need to replace a faulty one or buy one for the first time or replace the existing with a better quality product.
- Majority of the customers have searched information prior to buying. But, they tend to change their decisions owing to the salesman's influence and availability of the product.

- Consumers often value technical opinion of sales man and consider the information provided by them useful and trustful.
- Information's relating to brand, price, warranty etc. are collected from different sources where as technical details regarding the appliance are often received from the store.
- Most of the consumers are interested in the cost and brand associated with the appliance. Sales person normally discusses with the consumer regarding the future cost benefits of the well rated appliance.
- Consumers have heard of star ratings but majority of them are not aware about the differences between each star. Sales persons often fill the knowledge gap at this point.
- Long term costs associated with the appliance and environmental issues associated with it are least considered/is unaware by the consumers. This is the place where the sales person comes in handy.
- Expert survey revealed that most of the consumers measure energy efficiency based on energy labels alone where as very few are interested/aware of energy consumption unit associated with the label. This information is normally passed on to the consumer by the sales person.

4. Conclusion

The study clearly pointed out the need for training the store sales person as in most cases, consumers don't have a clear picture of their actual needs and how to match them with a more efficient product. Many of the consumers cannot translate an energy label although the vast majority are aware of it. Store sales person can play a major role in directing the consumers towards achieving energy efficiency.

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