

The Four C's of Customer Service Promulgating the Efficacy of Small-Scale Cement Industries' Products

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ABSTRACT

Customer service remains the centric attention of every business organisation in the contemporary world. The businesses try and work very hard to impart the varied customer services to distinguish themselves from other business organisations. Every business holds a different position when talking about customer services they are providing as per the customers' perspectives. The present study impresses as it pays attention to the different C's adopted by the small-scale cement manufacturing units in terms of imparting services. The primary data for the study were obtained from eight small-scale cement firms operating in SIDCO & SICOP, registered under DIC (District Industries Centre) in District Udhampur of Jammu & Kashmir State. The various services in terms of different C's adopted by the eight small-scale cement manufacturing units are "Commitment", "Consistency", "Communication" and "Completeness". The ranking method was used to analyse the results and the results of the ranking table portrayed that the variable "Commitment" scored the highest mean rank as it perceived to be the main content of distinguished service. The factor "Consistency" scored the second rank. Accordingly, the variable "Communication" appeared with the third rank; and finally, the variable "Completeness" acquired rank fourth. Further, the results of regression analysis revealed that imparting customer service is the result of effective commitment, consistency, communication and completeness regarding the products and services of small-scale manufacturing units. The study, however, is restricted to the small-scale cement production units operating in the one district only.

Keywords: Commitment, Consistency, Communication, Cement Industry, SSI's (Small-Scale Industries)

INTRODUCTION AND LITERATURE REVIEW

Customer service is one of the organisational processes which companies execute bearing in mind the mounting competition and for magnetizing entrepreneurial opportunities for growing profitability and better entrée to the market and escalating the customer satisfaction and loyalty level (Calif, 1987). Goofin and Price (1996) state that customer service has significance because it results in enhancing product quality, attaining competitive advantage, and availing profitable opportunities that ultimately result in enhancing sales and business income. Customer service results because of true commitments (Bowen & Chen 2001), consistency in imparting services (Chai et al., 2009) with effective communication (Khaksar et al., 2010). Excellent customer services is based upon the way the business as a whole, from top management to

the downward, moves and spreads in the same direction and presents an apparent, optimistic and positive message to customers. The sphere of the activities and actions related to customer service is vast and in-depth. The research related to customer service had been taken into consideration by numerous researches and some of the proponents of this research include researchers Yi, (1990); Bloemer et al. (1998); Bastos & Gallego (2008); Chai et al. (2009). Their studies efficiently discuss the consequence of customer service and product qualities on customer satisfaction. Archer & Wesolowsky (1996) explore how satisfaction with a product and service quality concurrently influences the purpose of owners in automobile industry. With this notice, Bastos & Gallego (2008) provide confirmation that customer service quality directly affects satisfaction and satisfaction directly influences the positive behavioural intentions

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on customer's perspective. Quality and efficient service has been defined as a strength for use, or the degree to which a product productively serves the purposes of the consumers (Beverly et al., 2002). Tore & Kumar (2003) have mentioned some of the customer services that should be imparted by the small-scale firms in the form of installation and start-up services, training and development, maintenance and repairs, documentation, free deliveries, free on rail and ex-factory services, imparting logistics and spare parts, improving products scenario, software services, warranty and customer-care service. Services which are presented by small-scale businesses are being committed, informational, training, communicational, consistency, repairing and maintenance services, and also some innovational services as designed by some of the small-scale units (Khaksar et al., 2010). Communicational or informational services are in the form informing customers about new products and its new features, communication regarding service centres if any. Today, large-scale manufacturers communicate their services utilizing emails, Wats app, Short Message Service, and websites (Brady & Cronin, 2001). Training and development services increase the level and degree of customer service and in lieu the customer satisfaction. Moreover, trained personnel also enhance the accountability of the company (Butscher, 1999). Communicational services are positively and directly related to customer satisfaction. Establishing long-term relationships with customers is also considered as a service (Flynn et al., 2002). Further, providing repair and maintenance is an inseparable part of customer service in some of the manufacturing units, e.g. computers, electrical goods, etc., and maintenance means changing, cleaning, installing, and restarting up the parts which has problems (Calif, 1987). Recovery or discovery services refer to the services that a business does for detecting defects in the product and rectifying them without causing any loss to the customers (Kruse et al., 2010). For implementing such type of services, the company tests marketing of the products; in addition, with utilizing benchmarking mechanisms, satisfaction of the product will be analysed (Ball et al., 2004).

The four C's of customer service applied in the study include Commitment, Consistency, Communication and Completeness.

Commitment – In order to impart excellent customer service, there must be a Commitment from a business organisation. Commitment is simply what you say, you do. And, commitment should be noticeable through actions. A business should show commitment by leading the charge to establish what excellent customer service should be provided by the business organisation. Businesses should build up and stick to key values for the organisation, and should even entrust to extract ways to determine what's significant for the organisation's customers. Businesses should assume themselves sometimes as the customers by utilizing the organisation's product or service in order to get the real customer's perspective and their issues with the products (both positive and negative). The commitment level of businesses should be gladly noticeable by the customers and it should communicate their commitment with the entire customer zone while taking the results into consideration. Commitment requires immediate actions upon the words uttered which in lieu stamp on buildings the long-term relationship with the customers.

Consistency – After commitment, the business organisation enters into Consistency which is vital to the long-term success and growth of the organisation. The aptitude to consistently offer excellent customer service builds brand loyalty for the business products and services. Loyal customers are profit and sale generators as they are confident and excited to share their impressive customer service experiences with others. Consistency ensures that the customer receives the same depth of service during each time regarding the business, products and services. Consistency means the positive experience and experience at par all the times whenever customer demands the products. If any of the discrepancies arises, the organisation will take up the matter and look to consistently resolve it in a timely and frequent manner. When a business consistently provides good customer service experience, it will surely result in word-of-mouth effect and a business can take benefits out of it. New and prospective customers will appear as a result of consistent business ability.

Communication – The next C, i.e., Communication holds an imperative position in every business. Unless and until a business corresponds properly with the customers, it can't lead a roadmap ahead. The business should also

be kept abreast of how well it's performing in its quest to meet the needs and aspirations of the customers. This C also implies the means to communicate the customer's perception of the business or organisation. It means that customers communicate their personal experiences regarding products or services to the business organisation. This C communicates customer needs, demands and preferences in order to ensure that all products and services are designed keeping into consideration the end-user.

Completeness – The fourth C representing Completeness is the need to ensure that everybody and everything in the organisation is equal and is vital to the organisation's success. Completeness means that everybody within the business organisation should understand their role in imparting superior customer service. An inclusive and methodical appraisal of the organisation's operations is essential for identifying the areas of opportunities. All customer perspective points should be deeply assessed for efficiency. Completeness, therefore, means assuring as to what matters to the customer is recognized first and employed in developing the organisation's product and service concept. It's identifying one's customers and determining how to meet their needs & demands as well. All spheres of the business organisations must be well aware of how their day-to-day actions influence both internal and external customers.

In this era of the day-to-day competitive world and immense competitive strategies to impress and uphold customers, it's become very crucial for a business organisation to make sure that your customer understands how important they are to the business organisation. So, it becomes very imperative to see, hear and feel as to what they mean to business establishment and prolonging by establishing Commitment, followed by exhibiting Consistency during all customer interactions with applying the bond called Communication with total Completeness of purpose. The present research also takes into consideration the afore-stated four C's and their ranking adopted by small-scale cement manufacturing units.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The objective of the study is to emphasize upon the four C's of customer service that can be promulgating the

efficacy (effectiveness and efficiency) of small-scale cement units' products.

HYPOTHESIS OF THE STUDY

“Imparting customer service is the result of effective commitment, consistency, communication and completeness regarding the products and services”.

THE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY/ FRAMEWORK

Sampling and Data Collection Methodology

The study is analytical, for maintaining its exploratory effectiveness gathering of the primary data is mandatory. The primary data regarding the proposed study, in order to maintain the objective of the study, were collected from eight small-scale operating cement units functioning in SIDCO and SICOP, Udhampur, J&K, India. All these eight small-scale cement units were registered under DIC (District Industries Centre), Udhampur (J&K). The eight small-scale cement manufacturing units were: M/s Associated Cement, Zenith Cement Industry, Shivalik Cement, M/s Continental Cement Industry, Wullar Cement, M/s Shri Nath Industry, Uma Cement Industry and Kashmir Cement Industry.

The Data Collection Instrument

The survey instrument commonly known as a data collection instrument is the key around the survey. In supplementary words, we can call data collection form as the survey instrument. A self-developed questionnaire was prepared with the extensive study of existing literature and by seeking advice from eminent personalities (professors & scholars) having thorough knowledge in the particular subject matter. The survey instrument was accordingly confirmed by academicians in order to encourage necessary amendments, adjustments, delectable advice and so on. The survey instrument (questionnaire) for the research purpose comprised of general information regarding the respondents and other statements of the four C's of customer service that are essential in promulgating the efficiency of small-scale cement industries products. Statements in the survey instrument, i.e., questionnaire

were in the form of ranking, open-ended and five-point Likert scale.

Data Collection

The first-hand data for the proposed analytical study were collected from the owners/managers of the eight small-scale cement units. They were personally taken into consideration, and were visited and requested to support the research purpose in order to make the study meaningful. The data collection form (questionnaire) was given to them and they were given ease of answering the same by providing them all the relevant and necessary help. Though meticulous efforts were made to collect the primary information, the respective small-scale units were visited from three to four times to attain suitable and relevant information. The present research applied the Census method for gathering response/data from the respective respondents (managers/owners). The secondary data also plunks as distinguished part of the present research. This secondary information was obtained from meticulous sources such as books in the libraries and empirical papers published in the well-known journals. The study implied well-known statistical tools such as mean, mode, standard deviation and ranking methods.

On the whole, ranking tables were used for advancing the study, finding the results and preserving the authenticity of research. The data thus collected was further analysed with the help of SPSS (Version 16.00) for refinement, checking the validity and reliability of the scale. Ranking tables were used to extract momentous responses from the data thus collected.

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

The raw data thus collected was accustomed for data analysis which further resulted into a Table 1, which divulges the mean ranking of the variables accounted for research purpose and analysis portraying the different C's regarding customer service adopted by the eight small-scale cement manufacturing factories. The cement industry operating in SIDCO (Small Industries Development

Corporation) and SICOP (Small Industries Corporation), in District Udhampur of J&K State, comprises of eight small-scale functional cement units. Each unit response was duly taken into consideration with utmost care in order to explore the numerous customer service efforts adopted by these small units. The main hub of the study was to collect the data and derive consequential implications, which could be assisting other industrialists operating in SIDCO and SICOP. The four main C's of customer service adopted by the cement units are "Commitment", "Consistency", "Communication" and "Completeness". Overall, the variable/factor "Commitment" scored the highest mean rank as it is connoted to be the main aspect of delivery customer service. The variable "Consistency" acquired the second rank followed by "Communication" with the third rank. The variable "Completeness" acquainted forth rank due to squat response from NITCO and other transportation facilities in the entire market of the Udhampur area. The classification of the firms with their individual mean ranking regarding the four variables of customer services is understated below.

- *M/s Associated Cement*

M/s Associated Cement is one of the prominent cement units operating in SIDCO, Udhampur. The unit was established in the year 2000 thus having rich and wide experience of core perspectives of doing business. As far as mean ranking regarding four C's of customer service accorded by this unit is concerned, it assigned the first rank to "Commitment" as it was felt to be the main instrument as far as customer service is concerned. The next rank, i.e., second rank is assigned to the variable "Consistency" as this industry considers consistency in disseminating customer service to be the second main aspect. This unit assigned the third rank to the factor "Communication" as communication nowadays is boon to promote sales. The last and fourth rank was assigned to the variable "Completeness" as the firm itself agrees to the depths of customer service and it accepted that no firm can adopt completeness in terms of customer services. So, M/s Associated Cement blatantly announces that commitment is the main ingredient of imparting customer service.

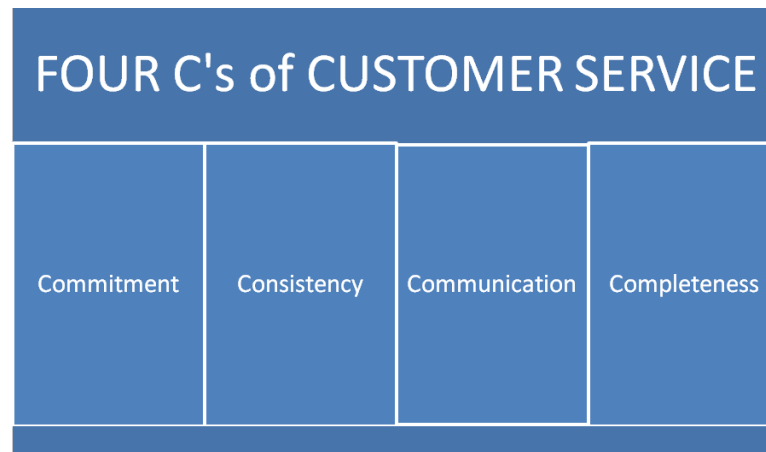


Fig 1: Diagrammatical Representation of the Variables/Factors Representing Four C's of Customer Service Promulgating the Efficacy of Small Scale Cement Industries Products

- *Zenith Cement Industry*

The next imperative and renowned small-scale cement unit was Zenith Cement Industry. The unit wise mean ranking of the four C's of customer service promulgating the efficacy of this small-scale unit was that it awarded the first rank to "Commitment" as this was considered to be the foremost aspect of customer service. The second rank was attained by the variable "Consistency" as consistency in service is the only way to retain customers. This small-scale cement unit accorded the third rank to "Communication" and ultimately it assigned the fourth rank to the variable "Completeness" (Table 1).

- *Shivalik Cement*

Another populous small-scale cement unit operating in SIDCO, Udhampur (Jammu & Kashmir) is Shivalik Cement, which accounted for catering the broad market share. This small-scale cement manufacturing firm also seeks to assign "Commitment" as the main customer service perspective and thus accorded the first rank to this variable/factor. The variable that scored the second rank in this cement manufacturing firm was "Consistency" as the firm stressed upon consistency in maintaining customer service to the of competitive weapon. The third rank was attained by the variable "communication" as this firm says that Shivalik Cement is most fabulous among local and regional customers due to its effective communication tools and techniques especially words of mouth. The last and final rank was obtained by the variable "Completeness" in Shivalik Cement as represented in Table 1.

- *M/s Continental Cement Industry*

M/s Continental Cement Industry is the fourth cement unit that again has a rich experience in holding business and regarding customer's scenario. The firm situated in SIDCO, Udhampur, represents reputation in itself. The mean ranking of the four C's of customer service promulgating the efficacy of this small-scale unit was that it sanctioned the first rank to "Commitment" as this variable seems to be the best means of imparting customer service. The second rank was accorded to the variable "Consistency" by this firm. The third rank was attained by the variable "Communication" as response of the customers improves with the assistance of apt communication and the last/fourth rank was scored by the variable "Completeness". So, it was clear that M/s Continental Cement Industry states commitment as the main factor that reimburses most in terms of products and profits and is represented in Table 1.

- *Wullar Cement*

The fifth high-flying small-scale cement firm operating in the cement industry was Wullar Cement and this firm was found to be more recognizable and tempting to the customers and residents of Jammu and Kashmir. As far as the mean ranking related to the four C's of customer service promulgating the efficacy of this small-scale unit is concerned, this firm diluted the first rank to the variable "Commitment" as it decrees that this variable to be the most effective and superior factor/variable among all the other related designed factors/variables. The variable "Consistency" came up with the second rank due to the

magnitude of maintaining consistency in disseminating services. The third rank was favoured by the variable "Communication" as the firm states that customers are mainly targeted with the assistance of proper communication. The fourth and the last rank was scored by the variable "Completeness" as the firm considers that completeness in imparting services is crucial for every business.

- *M/s Shri Nath Industry*

Another crucial firm operating in the cement industry is M/s Shri Nath Industry and this firm is operating and functional in SIDCO since 2001. The mean rankings related to the four C's of customer service promulgating the efficacy of this small-scale unit were like this:

- Rank one to "Commitment",
- Rank two to "Communication",
- Rank three to "Consistency" and
- Finally rank four to "Completeness".

So, this unit reveals that commitment is the main factor that promotes the customers' services rather retains and invites customers.

- *Uma Cement Industry*

Uma Cement Industry is the seventh noteworthy small-scale cement manufacturing firm functioning in the cement industry, SIDCO, in District Udhampur of Jammu and Kashmir. This unit is quite reputed as was found during the survey based on reviews and had earned immense friendliness portraying the splendour of the industrial units in the District Udhampur of Jammu and Kashmir. This unit presumes and accorded rank one to the variable "Consistency" and explained that it is important to deliver as per customer requirements and maintain the delivery parameters. The firm experienced and stated that next to the aforesaid variable is "Commitment" and assigned rank two to the variable as it concentrates more on delivering what it commits to the customers. The variable "Completeness" was allotted rank three by the firm and the last rank was given to the variable "Communication" as the firm stated that if all the above three ranks accorded (Consistency, Commitment and Completeness) are done properly then firms automatically earn communications regarding the products and the services they are offering. All the stated mean rankings are exhibited in Table 1.

- *Kashmir Cement Industry*

Kashmir Cement Industry is counted as the eighth prevailing cement unit enlisted in the SIDCO's cement list industry. This unit is also popular among the customers of Jammu and Kashmir and the mean ranking related to the four C's of customer service promulgating the efficacy of this small-scale unit was such that it guaranteed rank one to the variable "Completeness" as this firm stated that completeness in imparting customers services covers all the other aspects of customers services too. The variable which derived rank second was "Consistency" as the firm commented that the nature of service must be consistent to survive in the market. The variable "Commitment" was given the third rank by this firm and the variable "Communication" was assigned rank four and the last ranking as it says that communication is all automatic and is the results of our actions and doings (Table 1).

The hypothesis of the study was tested with regression analysis. The consequence of step-wise linear regression analysis (Table 2) tempted four independent factors as significant in predicting the dependent variable. These are "Commitment", "Consistency", "Communication" and "Completeness". The correlation between predictor and outcome is positive with values of R as .810, .798, .747 and .707, which indicates an elevated correlation between predictor and the outcome. In model 1, R is .810 which entices 81% of the relationship between dependent and independent variables. R-Square for this model is .671 which means that 67% of the variation in customer service can be explained from the stated four independent variables. Adjusted R square (.668) reveals that if anytime any other independent variable is added to this model, the value of R-square will increase. Further beta values connote a noteworthy connection of independent variables with the dependent variable. "Commitment" while imparting services has materialized as the sturdy predictor whereas "Completeness" came out to be the weakest as represented by relative t-values. Change in R square is also found to be significant with F-values significant at 5% confidence level. Errors in regression are independent as indicated by Durbin-Watson value (1.994). The aforesaid findings support the hypothesis "*Imparting customer service is the result of effective commitment, consistency, communication and completeness regarding the products and services*".

CONCLUSION

The present research paper swallows conclusions from the empirical study undertaken regarding the small-scale cement manufacturing units operating in District Udhampur of Jammu and Kashmir State. The paper connotes the rankings of the various customer services C's so acquired by eight small-scale cement manufacturing units, which quotes the preferences demanded by the customers while imparting them services. The present analytical and exploratory research states the four C's of customer services that are adopted by the eight small-scale cement manufacturing units operating in SIDCO & SICOP, under DIC (District Industries Centre) in District Udhampur of Jammu & Kashmir State. These small-scale cement units adopt the same sort of customer services C's as adopted by the larger players operating at a wide range, to impart greater and wider range of customer services to their wholesalers, retailers and customers. The various Customer services C's adopted by these small-scale cement manufacturing units are "Commitment", "Consistency", "Communication" and "Completeness". The variable "Commitment" scored the highest mean rank as it was proclaimed by the most of the cement sellers that commitment is the basis of imparting customer services has "no commitment means no business" to them. The factor "Consistency" scored the second rank. Subsequently, the third customer service mandatory factor emerged to be "Communication" and finally the variable "Completeness" developed with the fourth rank. Moreover one of the hypotheses of the study namely imparting customer service is the result of effective commitment, consistency, communication and completeness regarding the products and services was tested with the assistance of stepwise linear regression or simply by applying regression analysis. The result of all

the four models was significant as revealed by their mean values and the hypothesis was accepted.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The present study is encompassed with some of the limitations of the study. First, the study is done in a small district, i.e., District Udhampur of Jammu & Kashmir State, the results of which could not be at par with those industries that are working in other parts/spheres of the States and Districts functioning with extremely different surroundings, warmth and background. Secondly, the consequences of the study are dependent upon the replies attained from the owners/managers of small-scale cement manufacturing units, though, tremendous care had been taken to acquaint response/data by making the research purpose understandable to the respondents in their local argot, but an ingredient of prejudice cannot be lined out which adds to the limitation of the study. Thirdly, only eight small-scale cement manufacturing units were taken into consideration, and some other small-scale units manufacturing white cement and other house building materials units were dropped out for the research purpose.

FUTURE RESEARCH

Future research regarding the same could be undertaken in medium- and large-scale industries so as to reveal the exact position of the customer services scenario and some other business/service sectors could also be incorporated, for e.g., pesticides, white cement making, chemical industries, food industries, furniture manufacturing's Genset, medicine industries, information communication technology industries and some service sectors, too.

Table 1: Unit-Wise Mean Ranking of the Four C's of Customer Service Promulgating

The Efficacy of Small Scale Cement Industries Products				
<i>Cement Units</i>	<i>Commitment</i>	<i>Consistency</i>	<i>Communication</i>	<i>Completeness</i>
M/s Associated Cement	1	2	3	4
Zenith Cement Industry	1	2	3	4
Shivalik Cement	1	2	3	4
M/s Continental Cement Industry	1	2	3	4
Wullar Cement	1	2	3	4

<i>Cement Units</i>	<i>Commitment</i>	<i>Consistency</i>	<i>Communication</i>	<i>Completeness</i>
M/s Shri Nath Industry	1	3	2	4
Uma Cement Industry	2	1	4	3
Kashmir Cement Industry	3	2	4	1
Mean & Rank	1.38 (I)	2.00 (II)	3.11 (III)	3.49 (IV)

Note: Where 1 denotes "highest rank" and 4 denotes "lowest rank"

Table 2: Regression Model Summary (With Coefficient) of Customer Service as Dependent Variable (Step-wise Multiple Regression Method)

<i>Model</i>	<i>R</i>	<i>R²</i>	<i>Adjusted R²</i>	<i>Std. Error of Estimate</i>	<i>F value ANOVA</i>	<i>Sig. level</i>	<i>β</i>	<i>T</i>	<i>Sig. level</i>	<i>Durbin-Watson</i>
1.	.810	.671	.668	.4876	74.231	.000	.865	10.084	.000	1.994
2.	.798	.610	.616	.4412	67.128	.000	.853	9.483	.000	
3.	.747	.603	.601	.4023	65.423	.000	.784	9.272	.000	
4.	.707	.596	.594	.3764	55.109	.000	.767	8.876	.003	

a) Predictors: (Constant), Commitment

b) Predictors: (Constant), Commitment, Consistency

c) Predictors: (Constant), Commitment, Consistency, Communication

d) Predictors: (Constant), Commitment, Consistency, Communication and Completeness

e) Dependent variable: Effective customer service

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