

FORMAL EVALUATION OF RETAIL BUYERS

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Prior research has pointed to the importance of retail buyers' job performance on the operating success or failure of a retail store (e.g., Martin 1973), yet little attention has been devoted to an examination of the performance measurement mechanisms used by stores to evaluate their retail buyers. This study analyzed the extent and nature of formal performance evaluation processes for retail buyers.

Method

Two hundred and thirty-four department and grocery store buyers solicited from all parts of the United States responded to an extensive written survey instrument which probed the prevalence and characteristics of the evaluation process for retail buyers. One section of that instrument, that dealing with the formal performance appraisal process, forms the basis of this study.

Results

The study revealed the following set of results with respect to the formal evaluation process:

Results on Formal Performance Evaluation

1. Eighty-two percent of the sample indicated that their job performance was evaluated "in a regularly scheduled formal appraisal", with some 83 percent of the respondents indicating that a formal performance appraisal was done annually by their firm.
2. Typically the results of the appraisal were discussed with the respondents; forty-four percent of the sample indicated that the performance interview lasted from 30 minutes to an hour.
3. In general respondents were quite knowledgeable about the criteria used in measuring their performance; 40.4 percent knew "exactly what criteria were used", 47.3 percent had "a reasonably good idea", and 11 percent had "some idea" of these evaluation criteria.
4. Thirty-seven percent of the buyers, however, responded that they "had no input" in helping to determine the final rating they actually received.

Results on Formal Performance Appraisal by Store and Buyer Characteristics

Chi-square analyses revealed that:

1. A significantly larger percentage of buyers in corporate chains received formal performance evaluations as compared to buyers in independents and wholesalers.
2. Buyers in publicly owned companies reported a significantly higher percentage of formal evaluations than did those in privately held organizations.
3. Grocery and department store buyers were more likely to be formally evaluated than buyers working for food wholesalers.
4. Buyers who had worked in their present position for 2 or more years, those who had been responsible for buying their present product line for 2 or more years, and buyers who bought for 50 or more stores reported receiving a lower percentage of formal performance appraisals than did less experienced buyers or those buying for smaller organizations.
5. Male buyers reported a significantly greater incidence of formal performance appraisal than did female buyers.

Conclusion

The study results have shown substantial differences with respect to the incidence of formal performance appraisal of retail buyers, particularly when the results were broken down by store and buyer characteristics. Certainly, more research is needed to link the presence or absence of formal evaluation processes to additional aspects of the operating success of the store, other feedback mechanisms, buyer satisfaction and the like. Only in this way will a definitive picture of the importance of the evaluation process on store and buyer success emerge.

REFERENCES

- Martin, C.R. (1973), "The Contribution of the Professional Buyer to a Store's Success or Failure", Journal of Retailing, 49, 2, 73-80.

arithmetic. On a more sophisticated level, it is designing educational opportunities, experiences, and institutions that meet the real needs of people.

Air pollution is a widely recognized "social problem" in Denver. Despite the EPA, Sierra Club, and so many others, the air in Denver seems to get browner every year.

"Marketing" solutions to the problem would be providing and selling a viable mass transit system. It would also be replacing the present polluting products and lifestyle with newer and better options. The old systems have not worked because they relied upon force and dubious premises about how people live and what they want.

The marketing solutions to these problems are to identify the real needs, wants, and problems of the people; develop solutions in the form of newer and better goods and services, and then efficiently market the new products.