

A Study of the Impact of Training on the Performance of Customer Care Executives and Overall Customer Satisfaction at Airtel, Mumbai.

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Abstract: Customer service training is an essential part of making any company a success, and good customer service training can help employees interact in a more positive way with customers. Positive customer interaction is a way to keep customers shopping and spending money at a business, as well as a way to create a good brand for a company. Reinforcing good customer service is an important component of running any business. This research aims to study the impact of training on specific attributes of the customer care executives of Airtel leading to the overall customer satisfaction such as authenticity, customization, confidence, timeliness & proactiveness. A sample of 30 customers are exposed to Airtel Product and Services which are attended by a group of 3 pre-identified customer care executives (CCE) at an Airtel store in Mumbai. Adequate product knowledge training has been given to these executives. Post the training another sample of 30 different customers attended by the 3 customer care executives respectively have been considered where the satisfaction levels were once again measured to find whether training has any significant impact on performance parameters and overall customer satisfaction.

Keywords: Customer Satisfaction, Impact of training, Customer Care Executives

Customer satisfaction is a powerful key to profitability. As companies sell products that have complex administration, operation or service needs, they must ensure that their employees are knowledgeable and comfortable in talking about and supporting these products. Companies with a multitude of offerings can simplify a customer's decision-making process by providing education and information through their employees. Helping customers with the correct and complete knowledge or information more knowledgeable about an area of product or service can be a way to gain mindshare for future preference and purchases.

Well-trained employees are a simple and important part of any successful business. Give employees specific direction, in addition to induction and refresher training and coaching sessions. These should reinforce company objectives regarding customer service, company policy and help address any problems. There are two things that are being talked about here. One is Customer Satisfaction and the other is training. Before seeing how training impacts customer satisfaction, It is important to know all about customer satisfaction as well as about training so that the impact can be understood better

Measuring Customer Satisfaction

Organizations need to retain existing customers while targeting non customers. Measuring customer satisfaction provides an indication of how successful the organization is at providing products and/or services to the marketplace.

As markets shrink, companies are scrambling to boost customer satisfaction and keep their current customers rather than devoting additional resources to chase potential new customers. The claim that it costs five to eight times as much to get new customers than to hold on to old ones is key to understanding the drive toward benchmarking and tracking customer satisfaction

Customer satisfaction is an abstract concept and the actual manifestation of the state of satisfaction will vary from person to person and product/service to product/service. The state of satisfaction depends on a number of both psychological and physical variables which correlate with satisfaction behaviors such as return and recommend rate. The level of satisfaction can also vary depending on other factors the customer, such as other products against which the customer can compare the organization's products.

The usual measures of customer satisfaction involve a survey with a set of statements using a Likert Technique or scale. The customer is asked to evaluate each statement in terms of their perception and expectation of performance of the service being measured.

Companies also see Sales Volumes to measure customer satisfaction. Feedback is taken from the people who interact most with the customers like Sales executives and customer service executives, the number of complaints are also used to measure customer satisfaction.

Need for training

Management finds deviations between employees' present specifications and the job requirements and organizational needs. Training is needed to fill these gaps by developing and moulding the employee's skill, knowledge attitude behavior etc to the tune of the job requirements and organizational needs.

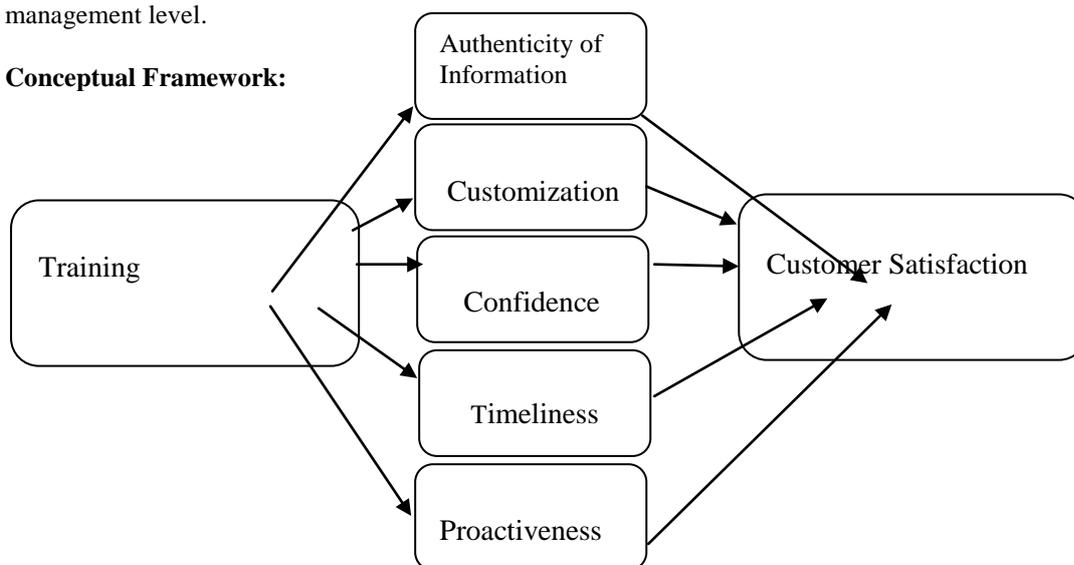
The primary goal of most of the organizations is that their viability is continuously influenced by environmental pressure. If the organization does not adapt itself to the changing factors in the environment, it will lose its market share. If the organization desires to adapt these changes, first it has to train the employees to impart specific skill and knowledge in order to enable them to contribute to organizational efficiency and to cope with the changing environment.

Every organization in order to survive and to be effective should adopt the latest technology i.e mechanization, computerization and automation. In Airtel employees need to be trained to make customers comfortable with using the latest automation introduced to make their lives simpler.

With the emergence of increased mechanization and automation, manufacturing of multiple products and by-products or dealing in services of diversified lines, extension of operations to various regions of the country or in overseas countries, organization of most of the companies has become complex. This creates the complex problem of co-ordination and integration of activities adaptable for and adaptable to the requirements of growth, diversification and expansion.

Besides the above mentioned reasons the need for training also arises to Increase productivity, Improve Quality of the product/ service, Helps a company fulfill its future personnel needs, Improves organizational Climate, Improves health and safety, Prevents obsolescence, Effects personal growth, Minimize resistance to change. It is important to follow all the stages of training from the Training need analysis to conducting the actual training right upto training evaluation and changes in modules or training Material. By choosing the right type of training a company can make sure that employees have the right knowledge and skills for the business, and are kept up to date with best and new practices. This is applicable for all employees, right up to management level.

Conceptual Framework:



Research Objective:

To study the impact of training on specific attributes of the customer care executive leading to the overall customer satisfaction such as authenticity, customization, confidence, timeliness & proactiveness.

Hypothesis:

H1: There is a significant impact of training on performance parameters of customer care executives such as authenticity, customization, confidence, timeliness & proactiveness.

H2: There is no significant impact of training on overall customer satisfaction

Research Methodology:

Airtel as a telecomm service provider was taken into consideration. A sample of 30 customers were exposed to Airtel Product and Services and attended to by a group of 3 pre-identified customer care executives (CCE). Adequate product knowledge training was then given to these executives. Post the training another

sample of 30 different customers attended by the 3 customer care executives respectively was considered where the satisfaction levels were once again measured.

The two variables considered were Training and Customer satisfaction. An effort was made to check whether there is a causal relationship between the two variables.

Customers were asked to rate their level of satisfaction on a 7 point Likert scale. 1 being Very dissatisfied and 7 being Very Satisfied.

Care was taken that all the 3 executives were given the same training and the date of joining were also same.

Their regular job profile included handling all kinds of enquiry request and complaints pertaining to Billing, Tariffs, Payment and Collections, Credit, Automation, Refunds, Roaming etc.

At this point it would be interesting to know the process at a typical Airtel store. When customers enter the store there is a token monitoring system where in they punch their cell numbers and select the type of problem or query that they have come for. They get a token number and are handled randomly by Customer care executives. As and when the customer service is available he gets the next token number flashing on his computer screen and calls out to the customer. In case the token Monitoring system is down due to maintenance issue a register is maintained so that customer details can be filled in and they can be given a token monitoring system. Customers selecting the option of postpaid billing handled by these executives were considered for this survey.

After being attended by CCEs, the customers were requested to rate their satisfaction level on specific parameters such as authenticity of information, customization, confidence, timeliness, Proactiveness. A questionnaire was provided to the customers where they were asked to mark their ratings on a scale of 1 to 7. After the customers marked their rating the data was tabulated, analyzed.

The training for 6 hours was conducted in a training room of the Airtel office by one of the Airtel trainers.

Post the training conducted 30 random customers who were serviced by these CSEs were asked to fill in the same questionnaire as filled by the previous 30 customers before the training and rate their satisfaction level with regards to the parameters displayed on the questionnaire.

Ratings given by the customers on 5 parameters were consolidated for each parameter and a pair sample T test was conducted with a 5 % LOS

Data Analysis & Interpretation:

Authenticity of Information (AOI)

The customer was asked to rate this parameter to check if the customer was satisfied about the authenticity of the information given. In case of even a seed of doubt in the customer's mind a customer comes back to the store or calls up the call center again which is called as a repeat query and it is an added cost to the company.

AOI Findings Before Training:

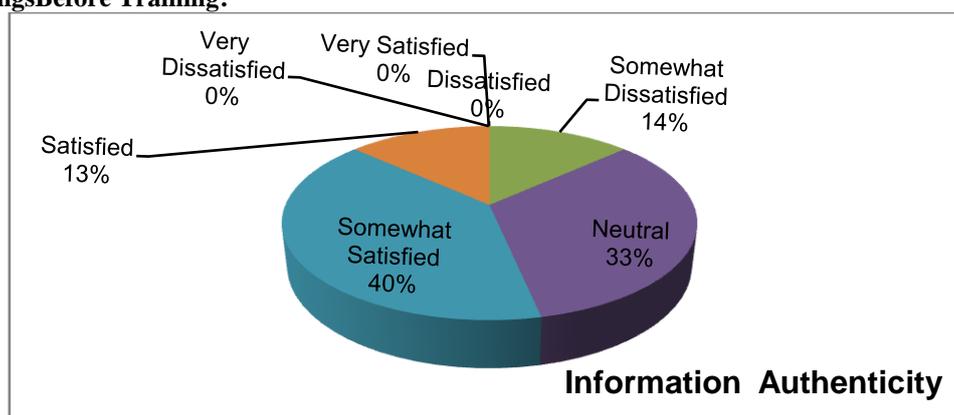


Fig 1

40 % said that they were somewhat satisfied that the information given was the complete information. 33% said that they were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied. 13% were satisfied that correct information was given and 14 % were somewhat dissatisfied. None of the customers were somewhat satisfied, Very dissatisfied or very satisfied

AOIFindingsAfter Training:

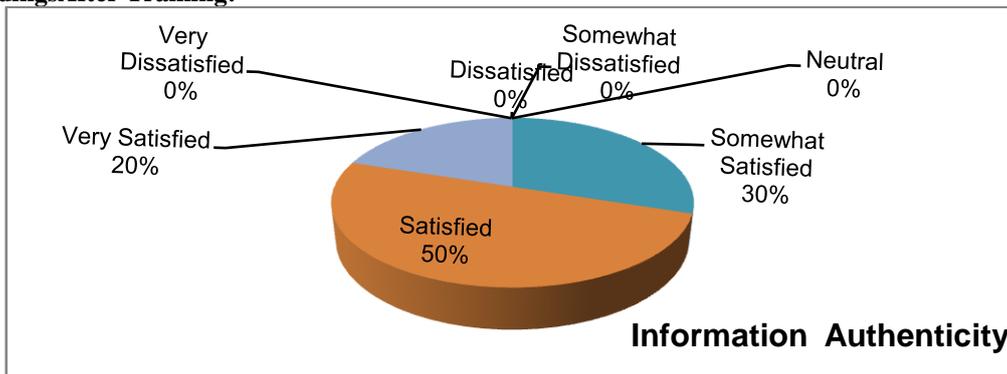


Fig 2

There was a marked improvement with 50 % saying that they were satisfied that the information given was the correct information.30% were somewhat satisfied and the good news was that 20% were very saissified. Nobody was very dissatisfied, somewhat dissatisfied , dissatisfied or neutral

CustomizationFindingsBefore Training:

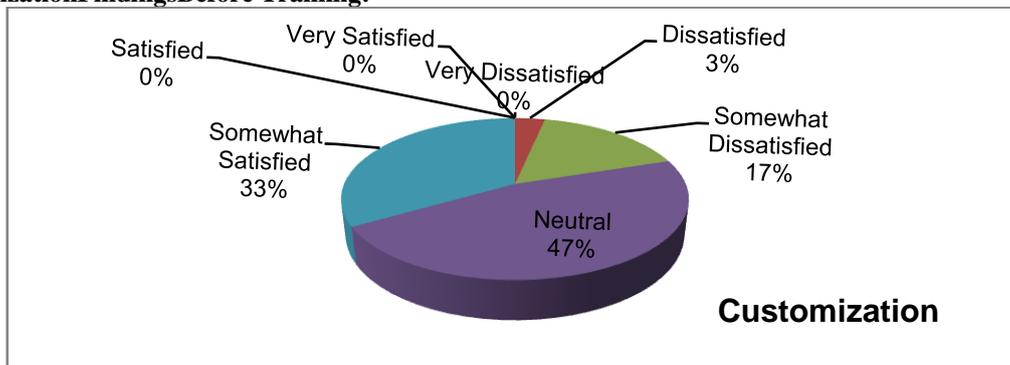


Fig 3

33% said that they were somewhat satisfied that the the information was given to them specific to their needs and that the executive was not just beating around the bush.47% said that they were neither satisfied not dissatisfied .17 % were somewhat dissatisfied.3 % were dissatisfied. 0 % were neither very satisfied nor satisfied nor very dissatisfied that information given was specific to their needs

CustomizationFindingsAfter Training

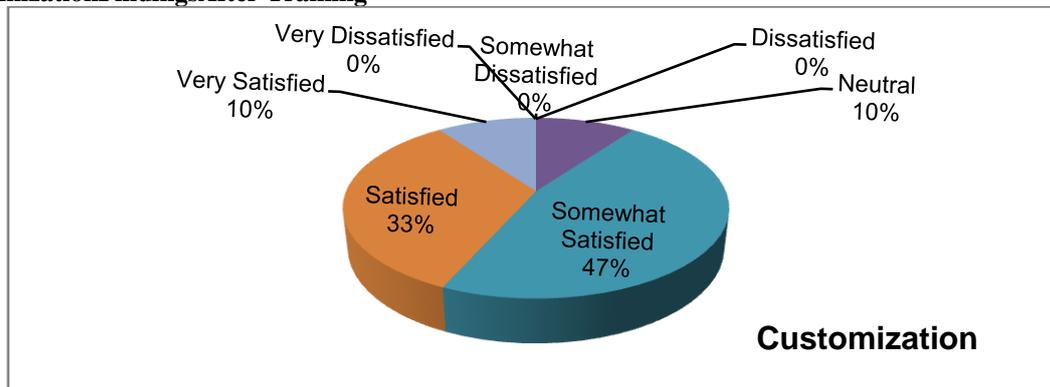


Fig 4

47 % said that that they were satisfied that the information given was the specific to their needs.33% were somewhat satisfied. 10 % were very satisfied and 10% were neutral. 0% were dissatisfied , somewhat dissatisfied and very dissatisfied.Giving customer information specific to their needs cuts down average customer handling time which means that more and more customers can be handled which is a good thing

Confidence

Confidence while talking to the customer stems from good product knowledge which gives the customer a feeling of security that the executive knows what he is talking about and can solve the customer's query

Confidence Findings Before Training

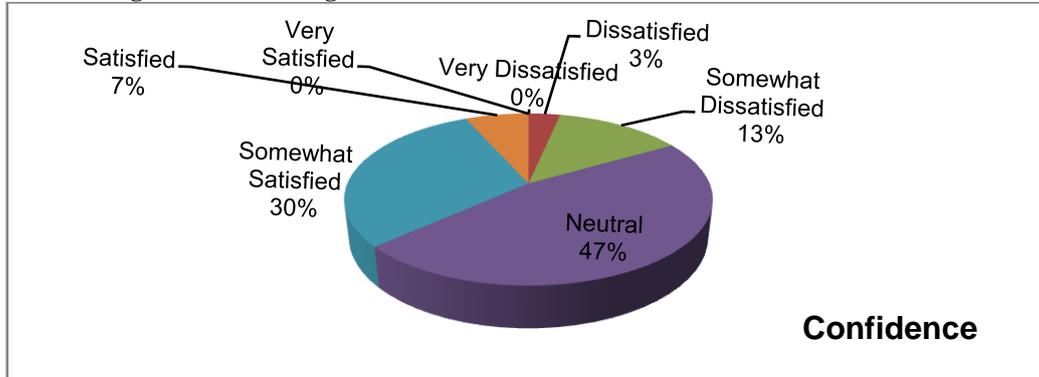


Fig 5

47% said that they were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with the confidence level of the executive. 30% were somewhat satisfied. 7% were satisfied. 13% were somewhat dissatisfied, 3% were dissatisfied. No one was either very satisfied nor very dissatisfied.

Confidence Findings After Training

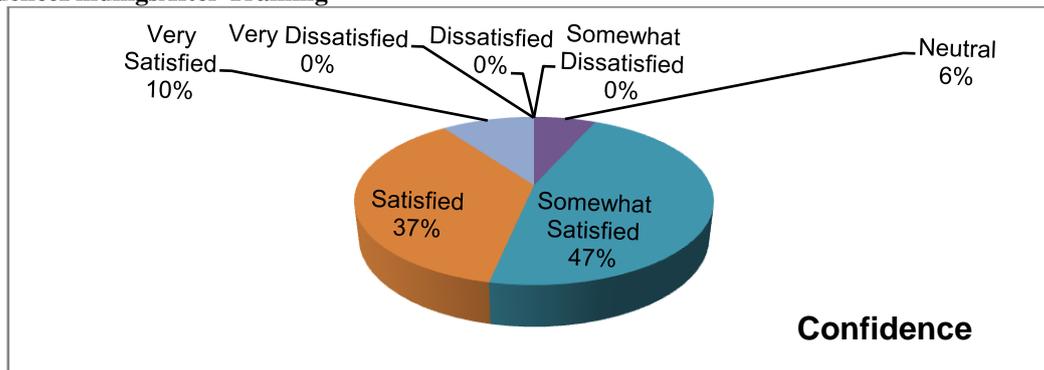


Fig 6

47% were somewhat satisfied about the confidence level of the executive. 37% were satisfied. 10% were very satisfied. 6% were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied. 0% were dissatisfied, somewhat dissatisfied and very dissatisfied. Confidence while talking to the customer stems from good product knowledge which gives the customer a feeling of security that the executive knows what he is talking about and can solve the customer's query

Timelines

A customer's service executive is able to solve the customer's query within appropriate time lines only if he has his knowledge in place. Resolving queries within appropriate time lines is a very good thing as the customer is also happy that he got his work done faster and the executive can also help more customers.

Timelines Findings Before Training

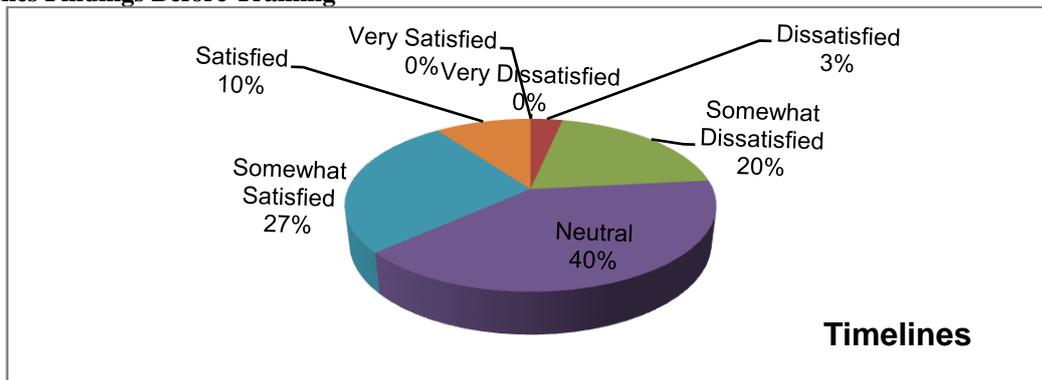


Fig 7

40% were enither satisfied nor dissatisfied with the time within which the information was provided to them.27% were somwhat satisfied.20% were somwhat dissatisfied.10% were satisfied. 3% were dissatisfied. None of the customers were either very satisfied nor very dissatisfied.

Timelines Findings After Training

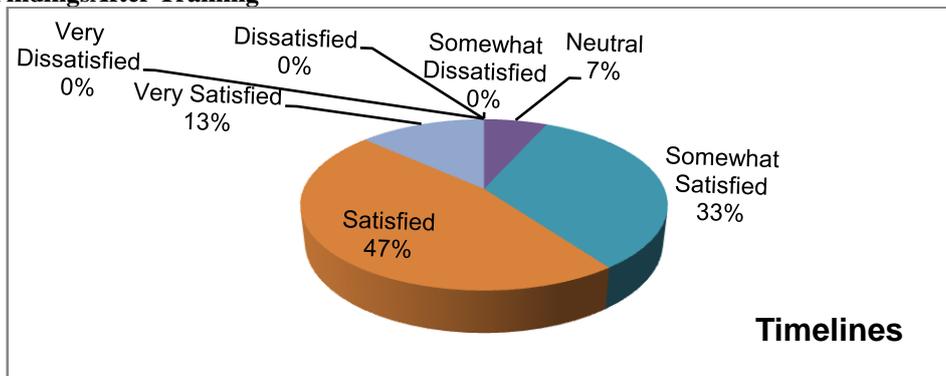


Fig 8

47 % were satisfied that the information was given within appropriate time.33 % were somewhat satisfied. 13 % were very satisfied.7 % were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied. No customer was dissatisfied, somewhat dissatisfied or very dissatisfied.

Proactiveness

Addressing concerns that may have cropped in the customers mind with out the customer actually having to spell it out is like giving customers the WOW factor in customer satisfaction. This however requires alertness to spoken needs of the customer from which the executive can then gauge the unspoken needs. To address the concerns one requires having his knowledge in place.

Proactiveness Findings Before Training

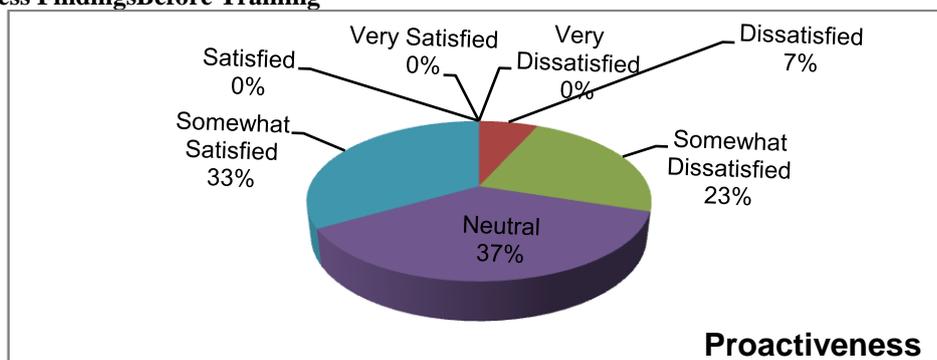


Fig 9

37% were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied about the proactiveness of the customer service executive.33% were somewhat satisfied and 23 % were somewhat dissatisfied.7% were dissatisfied. None of the customers were either satisfied, very satisfied nor very dissatisfied.

Proactiveness Findings After Training

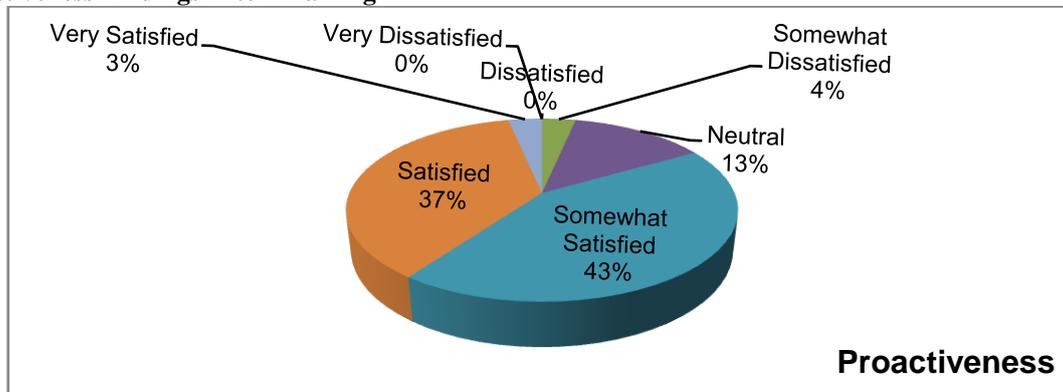


Fig 10

44% were somewhat satisfied with the level of proactiveness that agent displayed in solving the query.37% of the customers were satisfied.13 % were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied.3 % were very satisfied. However 3 % were also somewhat dissatisfied but nobody was dissatisfied or very dissatisfied. Proactively addressing customers concerns is like giving customers the WOW factor in customer satisfaction.

Hypothesis Testing:

Since pre training and post training impact needs to be measured we will conduct a pair sample T test, which was conducted at 5 % level of significance.

Calculations and Results

	After	Before	Difference (d)	d^2
Authentic Information	177	136	41	1681
Customisation	163	123	40	1600
Confidence	165	127	38	1444
Acceptable Timeframe	170	126	44	1936
Proactiveness	157	119	38	1444
Sum			242	9786

Table Value = 2.045

i.e DOF = 29 and LOS = 5 % which is $5 / 2 = 2.5\%$ or 0.025

According to the T table the value of T in such a situation is 2.045

Since the calculated value 2.69 is more than the table value 2.045 we accept the Alternate hypothesis and reject the null hypothesis. Thus Training does have a significant impact on performance parameters of customer care executives such as authenticity, customization, confidence, timeliness &proactiveness and thus on overall customer satisfaction.

Conclusion:

Enterprises all over the world have start realizing the importance of "knowing what it is that they know" and of making the best use of this knowledge. Knowledge is already recognized as the most important company asset, as the "only meaningful economic resource", and this is why so many efforts are made and so many resources are invested in how to acquire it, represent it, capitalize it and manage it.

One way that Airtel can ensure that its employees are upto date with their knowledge levels is by creating working conditions that encourage continuous learnings.Managers must take active roles in identifying training needs and help to ensure that employees use the knowledge gained through training in their

work. Training should be evaluated not only on the basis of the number of programs offered but on the basis of how much it improves employee performance. Along with training the knowledge management system of the company must also be regularly updated and easily accessible to all employees. Training must always have measurable learning objectives which should be identified before the training and evaluated after the training.

The ratings give for both the customer service executive before the training was not too bad but there was much improvement after the training which could be seen from their new scores. They just needed their memories refreshed because for sure they would have definitely covered all these concepts and topics during their induction training. But since that was 9 months ago their memories needed to be refreshed. Thus it can be concluded that training does have an impact on customer satisfaction and affects customer satisfaction positively.

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