Improving Customer Service Using a Self-Recording Checklist

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IMPROVING CUSTOMER SERVICE USING
A SELF-RECORDING CHECKLIST

by

Donald Troy

A Thesis
Submitted to the
Faculty of The Graduate College
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the
Degree of Master of Arts
Department of Psychology

Western Michigan University
Kalamazoo, Michigan
April 1983
The purpose of the present study was to investigate a method for improving customer service of three part-time salespeople. A job aid which consisted of a checklist was used to increase the frequency of eight target behaviors. The target behaviors consisted of: appropriately approaching and greeting the customer, being courteous and helpful, appropriately ringing up the sale and closing, having a neat appearance and wearing an identification badge. After training, the salespeople were taught to self-record their customer service behavior. Training increased the subjects' performance, but only had a short term effect. Customer service behaviors increased after implementing the checklists and were maintained at a high level during each checklist phase. The frequency of the target behavior decreased during the phases in which the checklists were withdrawn. The results suggest that checklists may serve as feedback and as an effective job aid to maintain performance.
I would like to thank Beverly Rebber for allowing me to conduct this experiment at Montgomery Ward. I also would like to thank Debra Bell and all those people who have assisted me throughout this experiment. This project would not be completed without your help.

I would like to acknowledge and thank my committee, Dr. Norm Peterson and Dr. Barbara J. Fulton for their advise and constructive criticism.

Special thanks to Dr. Dale M. Brethower, my graduate advisor, your advise and guidance has helped me a great deal. Thank you.

A very special thanks to my parents and family for their love and support throughout my college career. I dedicate this project to you.

Donald Troy
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The use of behavior technology in manufacturing settings has successfully increased productivity (Otteman and Luthans, 1975); punctuality (Hermann, DeMontes, Dominguez, Montes, and Hopkins, 1973); job satisfaction (Teas and Horrell, 1981); and reduced absenteeism among workers (Pedalino and Gamboa, 1974; Stephens and Burroughs, 1978). Behavior technology is also being applied in nonmanufacturing settings, such as the retail industry. Retail managers are using behavioral principles in an attempt to improve the performance of workers and customer service (Business Week, 1970).

Delivering "good" service to customers is a primary concern of retail managers. Managers have been investing more money and energy on various techniques such as training programs and incentive programs to improve their service to customers (Business Week, 1970). These techniques, however, do not seem to be the total answer to retail manager's concern.

Although some managers have been successful using training programs to improve customer service, Brown (1980) asserts that training alone may be an insufficient method for improving a salesperson's performance.
He indicates that a salesperson may engage in the appropriate behaviors after receiving training, but only for a short period of time. This implies that after a salesperson has been trained, managers cannot assume that the salesperson will always engage in the appropriate selling behaviors. Gilbert (1978) suggests one reason training alone may be unsuccessful is because of the lack of information workers receive on their performance after training. The information given to workers on their performance is sometimes termed "feedback". But because of the enormous amount of information a worker may receive, not all of it functions as feedback. According to Bethower (1972) only the information which concerns the workers' past performance and is used to guide their future performance should be considered feedback.

A number of studies have been conducted in the retail industry which demonstrate the effectiveness of feedback. For example, Warren (1978) conducted a study combining training and feedback in a retail department store. Using an amount per sale as a measure of productivity, a baseline and a standard were established. Training was administered and delivered by the department manager and consisted of brief session reviewing the basic approaches to "add on" and "suggestive selling". Feedback was provided in two ways: first,
sales slips for each day or work period were totaled and averaged. The results were given to the salespeople in graphic form. Second, each time a salesperson wrote a sale above the baseline he or she circled the total. As a reinforcer, praise and recognition were administered by the department manager, both on a regular basis and at random. The results showed an increase in the average amount of sales among the salespeople.

In Brown's (1980) study on customer service in a department store, feedback produced a substantial improvement in the frequency of four target customer service behaviors, while training had only a slight impact on improving service. In addition to implementing training—which consisted of viewing video tapes on appropriate customer service behaviors, Brown implemented feedback also. At the beginning of each observation, the observer showed the salesperson a graph of his or her exceptional service responses. In the final phase of Brown's study a contest was implemented to provide the salesperson with feedback from the customers on their service. The results of these studies suggest that feedback on salespeople's performance may play an important role in their selling performance.

In retail sales, feedback on the overall performance of salespeople is usually based on their number of
sales or the department's cumulative sales over a period of time. In most retail stores, the salespeople have no readily available access to their sales records. If the store sales are down, managers review each department's sales record and each salesperson's record. Based on this information, salespeople receive feedback on their performance. Some department stores have incentive programs, such as winning a contest, earning time off, or bonuses, etc. Feedback on salespeople's "non-selling" performance (stockwork, customer assistance, etc) is usually administered when managers are not "satisfied" with the salesperson's performance or when the departmental work is not completed on schedule. Salespeople may also receive feedback from customers. Customers who are pleased with the service may make positive comments, although comments from customers are not always positive. With the exception on feedback from customers, feedback on salespeople's performance may be too delayed and may not function as an effective reinforcer. Peterson and Fulton (1983), in a review of feedback procedures, assert that in order for feedback to function as a reinforcer it should be presented as immediately after the responses as possible. In cases where the salespeople do not receive feedback on their performances they may perform
below the standard (Warren, 1978). These observations suggest that the effectiveness of feedback depends in part on the source from whom the salesperson receives feedback from and when it occurs in relation to the relevant responses (Pruden and Reese, 1972). Research has indicated that "traditional" feedback methods in the retail industry involve superiors administering feedback to their subordinates. Although this "traditional" method has shown positive results, Hegarty (1974) examined the effectiveness of feedback given to superiors by their subordinates, using a information-opinion survey. In Hegarty's study, subjects were randomly assigned to an experimental group and a control group. Subordinates were asked to complete the survey on their supervisors. After the supervisors received their feedback reports, the experimenter explained the results. The experimental group members were aware that they would be receiving feedback on their behavior two weeks after the first survey. The control supervisors did not expect immediate feedback. No subordinate knew who would be receiving feedback and who would not. Twelve weeks after the first survey, a second survey was implemented in the same format. Hegarty found that subordinate feedback to managers led to positive change in the supervisors behavior. Fraser,
Beaman, Diener, and Kelem (1977) examined peer feedback among a group of college students. In the first experiment students were assigned a learning partner. Students with low grades were matched with students with high grade point averages. The students were encouraged to study together and monitor each other's work, but no special time was allotted for the partners to work together. The students' final grade was determined by the average of their individual performances. The results showed that students who were assigned a learning partner produced a higher academic performance than students of the control group. A second experiment was conducted in a manner equivalent to that in the first study, except that the size of the partnership groups varied. At the end of the course, students received a grade based on the average score of the individual performance of the members especially his peer-monitoring group or just his own score if he was not assigned a partner. The results of the second study also show students who were assigned partners to study with received higher grades than those students who were not assigned a partner. These studies along with "traditional" feedback methods depend on external sources for administering feedback. Kazdin (1980) noted several disadvantages in relying on external.
sources for delivering feedback:

1. because they do not constantly observe the subject, they miss some behaviors.

2. they may become cues for performance of target behaviors because of the associated contingencies.

3. target behaviors may not be performed as readily in situations when the external source is not present as opposed to when he/she is present.

4. subjects may perform better when they are allowed to have some control over their own behavior.

With these factors in mind and the notion that people are in the best position to monitor their own behavior, the author chose to examine feedback using a self-recording method as an alternative to "traditional" feedback methods.

**Self-Monitoring**

Literature indicates that the interest in self-monitoring has grown considerably since the 1960's. Behavioral therapists are beginning to use self-monitoring in therapy programs and for assessment purposes.

Self-monitoring involves systematic self-observation followed by self-recording. Nelson, Kapust, & Dorsey
(1978) describe self-monitoring as a technique which consists of a person discriminating occurrences of some aspects of his or her own behavior and maintaining a record of those occurrences. Kadzin (1980) asserts that observation of one's own behavior can enhance the chance of controlling that behavior. He states that individuals adhere to certain personal standards for various tasks and activities. When they deviate from those standards they make an attempt to control their behavior. For example, a person who feels overweight may begin regulating the amount or kinds of food he or she eats.

Recently, self-monitoring has played an important role in assessments and as a treatment component. When self-monitoring is used for assessment purposes, individuals observe and record data on their own behavior and then report the results to the investigator. These data provide the investigator with information on specific dependent variables (McFall, 1970). Richards (1977) asserts that when self-monitoring is used solely as an assessment procedure, the investigator should try to maximize accuracy and minimize reactivity (accuracy is defined as the degree to which self-monitored and externally monitored behavioral recordings are congruent).

Research shows self-monitoring to be very accurate
in some studies and the opposite in other studies. Thus, we can conclude that the accuracy of self-monitoring is affected by many factors. McFall (1970) lists some of these factors which may enhance the accuracy of self-monitoring as:

1. training subjects to use correct self-monitoring methods.

2. target behaviors should be salient, easy to discriminate and positively valued.

3. the time in which the monitoring act is to the actual target behavior should be short.

4. the self-monitoring method should not demand a lot of the subject's time and energy, and

5. the self-monitoring method should be systematic.

The following study was conducted by McKenzie and Rushall (1974) to illustrate the use of self-monitoring as an assessment tool.

McKenzie and Rushall (1974) investigated the effects of self-recording on the attendance and performance of a swimming team. Two experiments were conducted. In the first experiment, team members kept a record on being absent, late for practice, and leaving practice early. During baseline, no external contingencies were programmed. During the first experimental condition, members recorded their attendance (they had to attend
practice and swim in order to record their attendance). During the second experimental condition, members recorded whether they were late for practice or not. In order to record their attendance they had to be on the pool deck before practice. In the third experimental condition, members had to be present when practice started and remain there until it ended. The results showed a decrease in the number of absentees, late arrivals and early departures among the team members. In the second experiment, the authors examined public self-recording to increase the swimmers' work output. A reversal design was used. During this experiment the number of laps completed by a swimmer was recorded by placing a checkmark in the appropriate square on the "program board". The first baseline served as pre-experimental work rates for each swimmer. During the first program board condition, swimmers were shown how to use the board to record the laps they completed. During the second baseline condition, the program board was discontinued. The results show that the working rate of the swimmers increased. A follow-up evaluation showed that the use of the program board had lasting effects.

When self-monitoring is used as a treatment component the self-monitoring procedure serves as an
independent variable. Both accuracy and reactivity should be maximized. McFall (1970) lists several factors to enhance reactivity. They are:

1. subjects should be motivated to change.
2. an agreement on the valence of the target behavior (i.e., on the desirable direction of change--an increase or decrease).
3. the target behavior should be positively valued.
4. performance goals should be set.
5. performance feedback should be made available.
6. the target responses is self-monitored before it occurs, rather than afterwards.
7. the self-recording device should be obtrusive.
8. only one target behavior should be monitored at one time.
9. the target behavior should be self-monitored on a continuous basis.

Studies which illustrate the use of self-monitoring as a treatment component include Broden, Hall and Mitts (1971) who demonstrated the use of self-monitoring among two eighth-grade students by conducting two experiments on the effects of self-recording on classroom study behaviors. In the first experiment, a student recorded her study behavior rate during one of her
class sessions. After baseline, the girl recorded whether or not she studied in class. The results showed an increase in studying behavior. When the student was not required to record her study behavior a decrease in studying was noted. Self-recording was again required and the student's behavior increased. When self-recording was discontinued, teacher praise was implemented. In the final phase, praise was also withdrawn and study behavior remained at a high level. In the second experiment, a student recorded the number of talkouts during one of his classes. Like the results in the first experiment, talkouts decreased when self-recording was in effect and increased during the phases in which self-recording was withdrawn.

Johnson and White (1971) investigated self-observation as a behavior change technique among a group of undergraduate students. An experimental group who monitored their study behavior and two control groups were used: one group who self-observed their dating activities, and another group who volunteered but were randomly not accepted into the study. Subjects in the self-observation study group were instructed to record their studying behavior by graphing the appropriate weight for that activity on a weekly basis. The self-observation dating group received similar
instructions, but were required to record the time spent in dating activities. The results indicate that students who self-observed their study behavior achieved significantly higher grades than the central group of unaccepted volunteers. Subjects in the dating group achieved higher grades than the control group and lower grades than the study group. These findings suggest that self-monitoring can be successfully used as a technique for behavior change.

Other studies that have investigated self-monitoring as a treatment component include: Nelson, Lipinski, and Black (1976), Seymour and Stokes (1976), Zimmerman and Levitt (1975), McFall (1970), and Romanczyk (1974).

There are many unresolved issues concerning the effects of self-monitoring, Kanfer (1970) and Kazdin (1974) have come up with two models in an attempt to offer an explanation of self-monitoring effects.

Kanfer proposes that an individual tends to compare their performance results against a personal performance standard, goal, or norm, and then self-administer either reinforcement or punishment, depending on the discrepancy between the observed performance and their standards. The self-administered reinforcement regulates the individual's subsequent performance in the same situation. The primary function of self-monitoring
in this model is to promote self-observation and evaluation of performance. Self-monitoring can also serve as a cueing function for subsequent behaviors.

Kazdin's model is based on operant conditioning. Kazdin suggests monitoring one's own behavior may produce a change by increasing the salience of remote response consequences, both positive and negative. The act of monitoring may acquire positive or aversive properties, thus it may serve either as a discriminative stimulus for thoughts about response consequence or as a cue for engaging in learned alternative responses.

These models indicate that self-monitoring is similar to information feedback. Self-monitoring provides feedback to the individual on his/her performance and allows them to compare it to their personal or set standard (Kadzin, 1980). A technique which enhances self-monitoring is the use of job aids.

Job aids are used to give direction or guidance to worker's, which may function as feedback on their performance. The job aid used in the present study is a "self-recording" checklist. Bacon (1983) conducted a study which demonstrated the effectiveness of checklists. The subjects in Bacon's study consisted of students who were TA's (teaching apprentices) for a university psychology course. Baseline consisted
of monitoring the TA's task completions. Intervention involved a checklist that specified the TA's tasks in terms of accomplishments. During this phase, the TA's were required to complete a checklist as to whether or not they engaged in the specified task. The checklist was to be completed and turned in at the end of each day. At no time during the study did the TA's receive feedback on the checklist. The results show the percent of tasks completed improved by 28.8% when the checklist system was in effect. This study indicates that checklists may be a worthwhile method for managing workers' performance.

In the present study, the author investigated self-recording on salesperson's customer service behavior. It differs from previous studies in that self-recording is examined in a retail setting. It differs from Brown (1980) study in that in the present study, checklists are completed immediately following the target behaviors. The present study is similar to Komaki, Heinzmann, Lawson (1980); and Brown (1980), by predicting that training alone is an insufficient method for improving workers' performance.
CHAPTER II

METHOD

Subject and Setting

Three female salespersons of a large retail department store--Montgomery Ward--participated in the study. Each salesperson worked part-time (15 to 23 hours weekly) and was paid an hourly wage. The author selected these salespersons because they worked in different departments (and were not likely to interact with one another), each one had been employed at least one year, and had a low absenteeism record.

Target Behaviors

The observer recorded data on the occurrence or nonoccurrence of eight customer service behaviors. These behaviors consisted of behaviors which were considered directly related or involved in sales transaction. Brown (1980) identified four of these behaviors as:

1. approaching the customer promptly.
2. greeting the customer appropriately.
3. being courteous.
4. closing appropriately.

The present study included four other behaviors that
were considered important by management. They included:

1. being helpful.
2. ringing up sales appropriately.
3. having a neat appearance.
4. wearing an employee identification badge. (table 1)

Data were also recorded on the overall performance of the salesperson while on the selling floor. The behaviors that were considered "acceptable" performance behaviors were classified into four categories. They included:

1. selling.
2. stockwork.
3. miscellaneous.
4. idle time.

These categories were derived from Luthans, et al. (1981) study and were modified for the relevance of the present study. (figure 1)

Observation Procedure

A checklist and a task performance sheet were designed for the observer. The checklist involved recording data on the salesperson's customer service behaviors. During observation sessions, the observer completed a checklist on each interaction between
Table Caption

Table 1. Definitions of target behaviors.
Definitions of Target Behaviors

1. **Approach.** The salesperson should wait on the customer as soon as possible. If the salesperson is waiting on a customer and another customer approaches the counter, the salesperson should acknowledge the customer and assure him or her that he/she would be with them as soon as possible.

2. **Greeting.** The salesperson should greet the customer with a general social greeting such as "Hello", "Good morning", etc. Instead of asking for just "Cash or charge", or "May I help you".

3. **Courteous.** The salesperson should smile and engage in "small talk" (chat) with the customer about the weather, merchandise, etc. The salesperson should engage in "small talk" following the greeting and prior to closing the sale.

4. **Helpful.** The salesperson should assist the customer by helping him or her find certain merchandise, answering questions about the merchandise, directing the customer to the right department, etc.

5. **Ringing up a sale.** The salesperson should know the appropriate procedure for ringing up a sale the salesperson should verbally ask the customer is he/she paying for the merchandise by cash or Ward's charge card, Visa or Master Charge.

6. **Closing.** The salesperson should go beyond saying "Thank you" by wishing the customer a pleasant day, or by assuring them that they had made the right purchase (e.g., "I know you're going to enjoy your new ______").

7. **Appearance.** The salesperson should always present a neat appearance--clean clothes, hair combed, shoes polished, etc.

8. **Name tags.** The salesperson should always wear his identification badge at all times. Badge should be worn on the outer wear of the clothing, so that customers can easily identify a salesperson for assistance.
Figure Caption

Figure 1. Salesperson overall performance sheet.
### Salesperson Overall Performance Sheet

#### 60 second intervals

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### Area I

**Selling.**
1. conversing with customer
2. showing merchandise to customer
3. assisting customer (fitting or selection)
4. ringing up the sale
5. filling out charge slips

### Area II

**Stockwork.**
1. arrangement and display of merchandise
2. folding and straightening merchandise stacks and/or racks
3. tagging
4. replenishing stacks and/or racks
5. packing or unpacking merchandise
6. inventory of merchandise

### Area III

**Miscellaneous.**
1. directing customer to departments
2. checking credit ratings of customers
3. handling returns
4. receiving instructions
5. business-related conversations with supervisors or co-workers

### Area IV

**Idle time.**
1. socializing with co-workers
2. standing/sitting around

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the salesperson and the customer. The observer also completed a task performance sheet on the salesperson's overall performance while on the selling floor. The observer entered each subject's department unannounced and began recording data. Each observation session lasted approximately 60 minutes. Six mystery shoppers also served as reliability observers. After engaging in a selling transaction with the salesperson, a mystery shopper would record data on the salesperson's customer service behavior by completing the checklist. The salespersons were aware of the mystery shoppers, but were unaware of who they were and when they would be present.

Baseline

Baseline was recorded over a four week period, before intervention began. During baseline the observer strolled through the area and recorded data on the salesperson's behavior. During each sales transaction, the observer recorded whether or not the salesperson engaged in the target behaviors. If the salesperson engaged in the target behavior, the observer checked the "yes" box and if the salesperson did not, the "no" box was checked. The observer also collected data on the salesperson's overall performance by checking
the appropriate category of behaviors at the end of each 60 second interval. During baseline, the salespersons were unaware of the target behaviors and no feedback was given by observers which would have influenced the salesperson's behavior. At the end of baseline the salespeople attended a retraining session to enhance their selling skills. During this training session the salespeople were informed that the goal was to increase their number of sales. Feedback on their performance was administered on a random basis by the department managers.

Intervention

Training: Each salesperson attended a training session which lasted approximately 3 hours. During training, the salespersons received materials (pamphlets, handouts, etc.) on the store policies and customer service policies. The salespersons received the materials and were allowed to ask questions afterwards. Demonstration of mastering the material consisted of completing a work sheet over the material and receiving a 90% or better score. Since the training was required for all employees, the salespersons participating in the study did not lose any pay.

Self-recording: Self-recording consisted of training
the salespersons how to record their own customer service behavior. This technique would provide feedback to the salespersons on their customer service behavior. The salespersons were instructed to go through the checklist and record whether or not they engaged in the target behaviors after each sales transaction. To ensure that the salespersons completed a checklist after each transaction they were instructed to keep track of the number of sales transactions they engaged in by recording the number in the space provided on the checklist. At the end of each week, the number of checklists turned in was compared to the number of sales recorded on the register tapes.

Reliability Procedures

Reliability checks consisted of the author as the primary observer, an independent observer, and mystery shoppers serving as reliability observers. Agreements between these reliability observers were checked on a weekly basis, when both observers were present during the same time, but at different locations so they could not see one another's data. The percentage of agreements were calculated on a item-by-item basis for each target behavior. Reliability was calculated by dividing the number of agreements by the number
of agreements plus disagreements, and multiplying by one hundred. Reliability ranged from 87% to 98%.

The number of checklists completed and turned in by the salespeople ranged from 80% to 95%.

Experimental Design

A combination of a multiple baseline design and reversal design was used in the present study. Baseline data were recorded for the first 30 days of the study. Training was implemented at this time. Checklists were implemented during days 31, 71, and 81, respectively. During day 110, the checklists were reimplemented and withdrawn again on day 130.
CHAPTER III

RESULTS

Customer Service Response

Figure 2 shows the percentage of important customer service responses by each subject. All three salespeople performed the eight target behaviors at an average rate of 71.8% during baseline. During intervention, subject 1 received training and checklists to record her customer service behavior. Figure 2 shows that her performance increased to 99.2%. Subjects 2 and 3 only received training and their customer service behavior increased to only an average of 89.6%. When the checklists were implemented for subjects 2 and 3, their performance increased to an average of 99.7%. When the checklists were withdrawn, subject 1's performance decreased to 91.5% and subjects' 2 and 3 performance decreased to an average of 89.3%. Checklists were reimplemented for all three subjects and their performance increased to an average of 99.8%. Again, the checklists were withdrawn and the performance of the subjects decreased to an average of 88.9%.

Overall Performance

Figure 3 shows the salespeople's overall performance
Figure Caption

Figure 2. The percentage of target behaviors emitted by subjects 1, 2, and 3 during each phase of the study. This figure also shows the mystery shoppers' ratings for each subject (represented by the unconnected pts.).
Figure Caption

Figure 3. The percentage of overall performance for subjects 1, 2, and 3 while on the selling floor.
while on the selling floor. Each date point represents the percentage of behaviors--selling, stockwork, miscellaneous, idle time--the salesperson engaged in during each observation session. The results show that although there was not much improvement in the salespeople's overall performance during the intervention phases, their overall performance did not decrease below baseline during the phases in which the checklists were withdrawn.

1. Selling. Selling behaviors averaged 28.3% during baseline for all three subjects. Subject 1 engaged in selling behaviors 40.5% after training and checklists. Subjects 2 and 3 received only training and they engaged in selling behaviors 33.9%. When they received the checklists, they engaged in selling behaviors at an average rate of 42.22%. When the checklists were withdrawn subject 1's selling behavior decreased to 31% and subjects' 2 and 3 selling behavior decreased to an average of 30.3%. When the checklists were reimplemented for all three salespeople, they engaged in selling behaviors at an average of 35.5%. The checklists were again withdrawn and selling behavior decreased to an average of 32% for all three salespeople.
2. **Stockwork.** During baseline, stockwork behavior averaged 24.3% for all three salespeople. Subject 1's stockwork behavior increased to 34.8% when she received training and checklists. Subjects 2 and 3 received only training and their stockwork behavior increased to 36.2%. When they received checklists, their stockwork behavior averaged only 32.3%. The checklists were withdrawn for all three salespeople and subject 1's stockwork behavior increased to 46% and subjects' 2 and 3 decreased to an average of 39.3%. When checklists were reimplemented, the three subjects stockwork behavior averaged 37.2%. The checklists were again withdrawn and their stockwork behavior decreased to an average of 34.1%.

3. **miscellaneous.** The amount of time spent on miscellaneous behaviors averaged 11.1% for the three subjects during baseline. Subject 1 engaged in miscellaneous behaviors at a rate of 10.8% after training and checklists. Subjects 2 and 3 engaged in miscellaneous behaviors at an average rate of 5.9% when she only received training. When the checklists were implemented for subjects 2 and 3, their miscellaneous performance averaged 5.6%. The checklists were withdrawn and subjects
1's miscellaneous behavior decreased to 5.5% and subjects' 2 and 3 decreased to an average of 7.4%. When the checklists were reimplemented for all three subjects, miscellaneous behaviors averaged 9.9%. During the last phase in which the checklist was again withdrawn, miscellaneous behaviors decreased to an average of 8.9% for all three subjects.

4. idle time. Subjects spent an average rate of 36.3% engaging in idle time behaviors during baseline. Subject 1's idle time behavior decreased to 14% after receiving training and checklists. Subjects' 2 and 3 idle time behavior decreased to an average of 22.8% after training when the checklists were withdrawn, subject 1's idle behavior increased to 17.8% and subjects' 2 and 3 increased to 28%. The checklists were reimplemented for all three subjects and their idle time behavior averaged 18.7%. When the checklists were withdrawn again, idle time behaviors averaged 25.1% for all three salespeople.

Number of Sales

The number of sales transactions each subject engaged in is represented in figure 4. The results
indicate that there was not a substantial increase in the number of sales. All three subjects engaged in an average of 23 sales during baseline. Subject 1's number of sales increased to 27.9% after training and checklists. When checklists were implemented for subjects 2 and 3, their number of sales averaged only 23.5%. When the checklists were withdrawn, subject 1's number of sales decreased to 23 and subjects' 2 and 3 decreased to an average of 17.8%. The checklists were reimplemented for all three subjects and their number of sales averaged 23. Again, the checklists were withdrawn and the number of sales decreased to 22. (figure 4)

Frequency of Responses

Table 2 represents the frequency of correct responses emitted by each subject. The table shows that training increased the frequency of the target behaviors for all three subjects. Subject 1 received training and checklists; the table shows that her response rate increased higher than subjects 2 and 3, who received only training. Subjects 2 and 3 responses increased after receiving checklists. The table also shows that the response rate of all three subjects decreased during the phases in which the checklists were withdrawn.
Figure Caption

Figure 4. The number of sales for subjects 1, 2 and 3 during each phase of the study.
Table 2. The frequency of the target behaviors emitted by each of the subjects.
Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Baseline</th>
<th>Training</th>
<th>Checklist</th>
<th>No Checklist</th>
<th>Checklist</th>
<th>No Checklist</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>subjects</td>
<td>subjects</td>
<td>subjects</td>
<td>subjects</td>
<td>subjects</td>
<td>subjects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 2 3</td>
<td>1 2 3</td>
<td>1 2 3</td>
<td>1 2 3</td>
<td>1 2 3</td>
<td>1 2 3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Approach | 46 62 58 | 100 78 81 | 99 100 | 90 67 89 | 99 100 100 | 87 72 75 |
| Greeting | 57 53 52 | 100 84 89 | 100 100 | 84 71 95 | 100 100 100 | 82 87 88 |
| Courteous | 31 23 29 | 97 68 78 | 96 100 | 65 55 86 | 98 100 100 | 58 73 67 |
| Helpful | 100 100 100 | 100 100 100 | 100 100 | 100 100 100 | 100 100 100 | 100 100 100 |
| Ringing Up | 100 100 100 | 99 96 100 | 100 100 | 98 100 99 | 100 100 100 | 100 99 97 |
| Sales Approach | 25 42 44 | 98 88 71 | 100 100 | 97 79 87 | 99 100 100 | 93 83 73 |
| Closing | 100 100 100 | 100 100 100 | 100 100 | 100 100 100 | 100 100 100 | 100 100 100 |
| Appearance | 100 100 100 | 100 100 100 | 100 100 | 100 100 100 | 100 100 100 | 100 100 100 |
| Name Tags | 100 100 100 | 100 100 100 | 100 100 | 100 100 100 | 100 100 100 | 100 100 100 |

*Subject received training and the checklists during this phase.*
and increased during the phases in which the checklists were reimplemented. Table 2 shows that although each of the subjects were performing four of the target behaviors—being helpful, ringing up sales appropriately, having a neat appearance, and wearing their name tags—at a 100%. These target behaviors were kept in the study to enhance the occurrence of the other target behaviors.
CHAPTER IV

DISCUSSION

The present study examined self-recording as an alternative to the "traditional" feedback methods in which feedback on salespeople's customer service performance is dependent on a number of external sources. Salespeople were taught to use a checklist to record their customer service behavior. The results indicate that the self-recording checklist proved to be an effective job aid for maintaining salespeople customer service performance. Thus, the results of the present study supports Gilbert (1978) who suggests the use of job aids to enhance the performance of workers. The results are also consistent with McKenzie (1974); Broden et al. (1971); and Johnson et al. (1971), who found self-recording to be an effective assessment tool and a behavior change agent.

All three subjects attended a training session. Although training improved their performance, the results show their performance measures decreased shortly after training. Thus, the results are also consistent with Brown (1980), Komaki et al. (1980), and Gilbert (1978) who suggest training is an insufficient method for improving and maintaining performance.
The findings provide evidence that two of the salespeople performed the eight target behaviors when they received checklists to record their behavior as opposed to training alone. Subject 1 who received training and checklist in the same phase, performance increased and was maintained at a high level. It can be concluded that subject 1's customer service performance was maintained by the checklists.

Data were recorded on the salespeople's overall performance during each observation session. The purpose was to examine the effects of training and the checklist on the salespeople's overall performance. Throughout the study, the observers recorded the behavior in which the salespeople was engaging in at the end of a sixty second interval, by checking the appropriate category (selling, stockwork, miscellaneous, and idle time). Throughout the study the salespeople were unaware that the data were being recorded on their overall performance. The results show that the checklists did not have any significant effect on the subjects' overall performance. The results also show that the subjects' selling, stockwork, and miscellaneous behavior increased slightly during the phase in which training was implemented, but was not maintained over a period of time. There are several interpretations which may
explain why the checklist and training had little, if any effect on the salespeople's overall performance.

One interpretation may be that the checklist consisted of target behaviors that were relevant only to the subjects' customer service performance. The checklist did not contain behaviors that were relevant to their performance when they were not engaging in a sales transaction. Thus, the checklist does not seem to comply with McFall's (1979) list of factors to enhance self-monitoring as an assessment tool or a treatment component.

Another interpretation of why training only had short term effects may be because of the lack of reinforcing contingencies to maintain salespeople performance. That is, although training provided the salespeople with the knowledge of perform the appropriate behaviors, it is possible that because of the lack of or delay of feedback, actually engaging in the appropriate behaviors was not reinforced. This interpretation suggests that when training is being used to enhance workers' performance and job aids are not used to maintain their performance, then managers should alter their behaviors either by providing more reinforcing contingencies or providing more feedback.

Luthans', et al. (1981) provide evidence that feedback
plays an important role in enhancing salespeople’s non-selling performance. The present study shows the importance of feedback when enhancing customer service performance.

At this point, a note should be made about how feedback on customer service was administered to the salespeople prior to conducting the present study. A mystery shopper was hired to engage in a selling transaction with the salespeople. The salespeople were aware of the mystery shopper, but were unaware of their presence or who they were. After the transaction, the mystery shopper completed a checklist and a questionnaire on the service they received as a customer. The manager and the mystery shopper reviewed and discussed the checklist and comments. If the salesperson did not complete the target behaviors (90% or better) they were given a warning. At this point the salesperson had approximately thirty days to improve his or her performance. Again, the mystery shopper engaged in another selling transaction with the salesperson. No improvement in the salesperson's service, resulted in a dismissal from the job. Because it seemed evident that salespeople were not receiving enough feedback on their customer service performance, a self-recording checklist was introduced in attempt to solve this
problem.

After reviewing the results several issues can be addressed as to why self-recording had a significant effect on the salespeople's performance.

The first issue involved feedback. Because the salespeople were required to complete a checklist after each sales transaction, the salespeople received feedback on their customer service performance immediately after engaging in the target behaviors. Thus, feedback was not contingent on an external source to be delivered.

A second issue concerns the accuracy of completing the checklist. There were no contingencies for accurately completing the checklist. According to Rosebaum and Drabman (1979) self-recording does not need to be accurate in order to produce desirable changes in target behaviors. Kadzin (1980) asserts that the accuracy of self-monitoring is not a crucial issue when it is used as a behavior change procedure. Mystery shoppers were continuously being used in the present study. Their ratings suggest that although the salespeople may have "cheated" or inaccurately completed the checklist, they had performed the target behaviors at least 95% during intervention.

Yet another issue concerns the checklist itself. What caused the salespeople to complete the checklist?
The checklist was designed so that it would take less than 10 seconds to complete. Completion of the checklist may have acquired reinforcing properties. Thus, a completed checklist may have been reinforcing for the salesperson to continue completing the checklist. Also, the checklist was to be completed immediately following each transaction, so there wasn't a long delay of time between the target behaviors and completing the checklist. The checklists were placed near the cash register so that it took less time and effort on the part of the salesperson to remember to complete a checklist. (figure 5)

It should be noted that during each phase of the study the observers were aware of each phase in which each subject was in. Thus, this might have yielded possible bias in the observers recording.

Although the checklist had a significant effect on the salespeople's customer service, it did not seem to affect their number of sales. After training and checklist, the number of sales decreased back to baseline.

In conclusion, the present study demonstrated that checklists can serve as an effective job aid for providing feedback on customer service. Future research may investigate the frequency in which checklists
Figure Caption

Figure 5. Behavior checklist.
Behavior Checklist

Name (Int.) ______________________

Date ______________________

# of Sales Transaction ______________________

After Each Sales Transaction, Please mark the Appropriate Box:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>YES</th>
<th>NO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Did I greet the customer appropriately?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Did I wait on the customer promptly?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Was I courteous?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Was I helpful?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Did I have difficulty ringing the register?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Did I close appropriately?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Was my appearance neat?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Was I wearing my name tag?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

are needed to maintain desired level of performance.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


Seymour, F. W. and Stokes, T. F. Self-recording in training girls to increase work and evoke staff praise in an institution for offenders. Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis, 1976, 9, 41-54.


