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Lecture – 25 **Sales Force Management Training** 

[FL]. We will now be moving into the last lecture of the fifth module of our course on

Sales and Distribution Management. This is lecture 25 and the topic we shall be which

we shall be discussing is training. Now training again is a part of Sales Force

Management. Once companies have you know gone in for job analysis and they gone in

for recruitment and selection, the next stage or next kind of activity that we must involve

themselves into is training. However, this training is something which is not always an

initial training meant for fresh recruits, but it is something which could be you know a

lifelong over the career life or a career span of an employee or of a sales employee or a

sales manager.

So, we shall be discussing this topic on you know training in this particular lecture. Now

this topic which is training is spread over two lectures which is lecture number 25 and

number 26. So, we shall talk about you know training what is training, why is training

required and we should also start the process of training in this particular lecture and we

shall continue with the process of training in the subsequent lecture. So, this particular

topic which is training shall be covered in two lectures which is lecture 25 and lecture

26.

So, let us begin with this topic which is training for sales force management. And three

and here we again as I said we shall be focusing upon both the initial sales training and

the continual sales training programs.

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What are the topics we shall be covering? We shall talk about the meaning and purpose of training then we shall move on to discussing you know how to bring you know go about effective training for the employees of the organization or for the sales employees of their company, and then we shall see how do we build a build or design a sales training program.

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Now, let us first start with the meaning and purpose of training. And now training is a systematic process by which a job by which job related k s as or knowledge skills and abilities of employees are enhanced for the overall improvement in job performance.

Now, we have seen that you know when we go for a job analysis, what emerges out of it is one the nature of the duties responsibilities and the tasks to be performed by the employee or by the salesperson in our case and this is explained through the job description which tells you about the job title, the job position the nature and you know and scope of you know every job position and it also talks about the duties, the roles, responsibilities. The second part or the second outcome of the job analysis is the job specification which talks about the knowledge skills and abilities of people, their educational background, their experience you know and the different kinds of qualities which are required by bias by a person to be able to perform well on a job position. So, we called this as job specification. So, both job description and job pacification which actually start the entire process of sales force management, you know we will be able to explain and give insights into the number of people required the kind of people required to fill up a sales job position.

Now, a once people fill up these positions at the entry level, they may or may not possess all the cases required for a job to be performed effectively. When people are hired not at the entry level, but at middle or senior levels even there they may need some kind of a skill enhancement or some kind of a you know enhancement in their abilities, in their you know grooming in their orientation to be able to perform well at middle and higher levels.

So, this means here that what organizations must ensure is that, there is a training mechanism in place so, as to be able to enhance the knowledge skills and abilities of people at you know either if the entry level or at other levels so, as to be able to lead to good performance or good performance at the job position. So, a training is a systematic process by which job related knowledge skills and abilities of people are enhanced for the over for their overall performance on the job overall improvement in the job performance.

Now training not only aims at preparing the newly joined employees for better job performance, but also aims at refining the knowledge skills and abilities of people in the present jobs or the present employees ok. So, training here would not only be you know aimed at in preparing newly joined employees for better job performance, but would also mean refining the skills of a company's present employees or the current employee base so, that even their knowledge skills and abilities can be enhanced, can be upgraded, can

be updated for a good performance at the individual level, at the group level in the team level or at the organizational level.

Now, training plays a very critical role in enhancing the capabilities of people for performing the various tasks which are given to them.

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Now, as I said training is necessary for freshly joined sales persons as well as for preparing existing employees for higher level jobs. Now freshly joined sales people you know, for them companies going for an initial sales training program to help them perform their job satisfactorily and increase their overall efficiency on the job. So, very comprehensive and long training programs are designed for them some of which may last for even you know months 3 months or 6 months or even up to a year.

On the other hand for existing employees continual sales training programs are designed to help them enhance their knowledge skills and abilities. Now these are more intensive and shorter programs and they could be periodic refresher courses or continuing sales programs or even sales training programs. Now all of these programs are basically meant to update their knowledge levels about company, about the products, about new technologies about new market segments, it could also be to enhance their you know skills like could be leadership skills or team building skills and so, forth. So, the better at the you know entry level or at the middle and higher level training is something which is very very important for organizations.

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Now, as well as the sales department is concerned, training will help employees in different way. One it would help them acquire knowledge about the product and the selling process of the company. Very clearly when freshly joined recruits or freshly joined you know salespeople you know they may not have the knowledge and skill their knowledge about the about the company, about the market, about the segments, about the products. So, acquiring knowledge about the products is something which is essential for them and also to know about the selling procedures and policy of the company is something which is very critical to them.

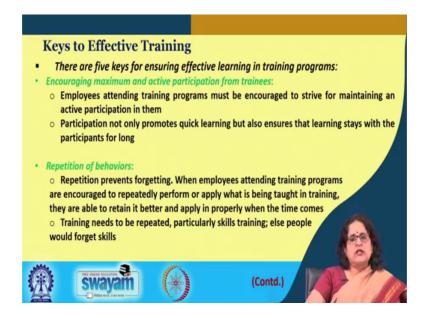
As far as newly hired employees are concerned this is crucial, but even for people who are already working in an organization, their knowledge base about products, about new technologies, about changes in selling procedures and policies may be you know which have changed may these people may need to be updated. And so, it is very important that you know training is conducted fun for fresh employees to help them acquire knowledge about the products and selling procedures or procedures and policies of a company. And it is also conducted for the already existing employee so, that their you know knowledge it can be updated with respect to products or technologies or new market segments or changes having been bought in the selling procedures and selling policies of a company.

Training also helps gain insights about the market of the company and the competitors of the company, it people are able to learn the art of dealing with customers by travelling with existing persons on calls. So, when people this is this is which is which can be more you know aptly named as on the job training when you know freshly hired recruits are made to travel and make sales presentations with already existing sales persons who are more experienced.

So, the fresh freshly hired sales persons or the sales trainee, they travel with the more experienced ones they make presentations. They learn how to make presentations by observing the more experienced ones and so, this is something which we refer to as on the job training. Also it would help ease adjustments for sales people in the organization. Adjustments with respect to how to deal with you know you know crucial situations or serious situations and because people are trained together they get you know get to know each other better, they also get to know from each other's experiences about how problems can be sorted out and how you know things can be you know brought to order or you know brought into control. And so, the sales training helps employees in acquiring knowledge, skills, abilities, enhancing them also to give them knowledge about the company, about the market, about the competitor, about the selling procedures.

The trainees also get to learn the art of dealing with customers, with channel members, when they travel with the more experienced ones and learn how to make presentations with them and it also helps ease adjustments for sales people in the organizations.

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Now, there we there are certain keys to effective training and as I said earlier that and you know it is very very essential for organizations to have to design very effective you know training programs. And these training programs must be very systematically conducted so, as to benefit you know trainees and so, as to in you know ensure that the cost which are you know incurred in the training program is something, which will give huge benefits. And the benefits in terms of increased performance by the trainees on the job will actually you know be more than the cost which have been incurred one them.

And so, in this way what we are talking of is that overall the training program will be beneficial for a company. So, in a nutshell if effective training programs must be designed so, that the cost incur incurred you know on conducting them are offset by the benefits you know in terms of increased job performance by the sales person. And so, in this way the company would be able to ensure that it has a workforce or in a sales team, which is well equipped with k s as and can perform well on the job in the market with the customers, with the clients, with the channel members etcetera.

So, what are the different keys for ensuring that effective learning has taken place? One is encourage maximum participation and active participation from the trainees. Now employees attend training programs and they must be encouraged you know to actively participate in them. Because participation not only leads to quicker learning, but also ensures that learning stays with the participants even after the training program is over. Now many times the training becomes you know a one-way exchange one way that becomes a one-way dialogue and a two-way exchange is missing.

Now in this case, it is the trainer who talks and the trainer who shows and the trainer who dominates the entire you know activity. How this of course, is never fruitful because sooner or later over a period of a day or a few sessions the trainees begin to lose interests. So, it is very important that instead of the trainer dominating the you know the process, it is a it should be a two-way exchange where both the trainers and the trainees actively participate in the process. The trainees because of their active participation will be able to learn faster and they would also be able to you know retain whatever they have learned for longer periods of time, because they have actively participated in the process. Second is repetition of behaviours.

Now, we spoke about refresher programs a little while ago for existing employees, who

must be updated with their cases as you know as company you know as companies you

know change their you know product lines or enter into new businesses or you know

they move into new markets etcetera. So, we spoke about the refresher program that

maybe must be conducted for the existing employees to improve and update their cases.

It is also important that the fresher courses are undertaken to slow down the process of

forgetting. Because if you know if you do not repeat things sooner or later people will

forget, people would forget the company background or company history or company

achievements. They would forget you know the different kinds of product lines and

businesses that the companies into they would also tend to forget the new technologies,

that that have been you know adopted or the new kinds of products that they would not

know about all. These things at all they would neither know about the new products and

services that the company is into new product new business lines or new processes or

new technologies etcetera.

So, its important that you update your existing you know custom I still update the cases

of your existing salespeople, but it is also important that you have such courses which

will which are meant to revise what they have learnt in the past because repetition

prevents forgetting. If you do not repeat certain you know pieces of information or

certain modules in a course, which is which is crucial or important so, your

sales people will sooner or later forget them.

So, when employees attend training programs and you know they are also encouraged to

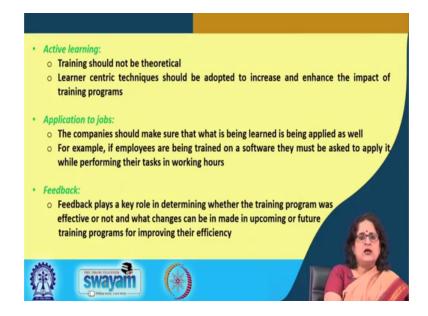
repeatedly perform or apply what is being taught to them in training and they are able to

retain it better and apply it properly when it comes to you know actual job play job

working when it comes to the actual field. Training needs to be repeated particularly

skills training as people would also forget the various skills and how they are to be used.

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Learning must be active training should not be theoretical, learner centric techniques should be adopted to increase and enhance the impact of the learning training programs. And whatever is learned is something which should be applicable to job. So, the training program must be application oriented; companies but ensure that what is being learned by the trainee is something which he will apply and you know periodic assessment must be done to see if the trainee is actually applying what he has learnt during the training program.

So, for example, if employees are being trained on a software, they must be asked to apply it while performing on the task during working hours. So, this is how it is important that you ask or encourage your employees to apply what they have learnt on their in their training program. And the fifth element for effective training programs is feedback; feedback will play a very important role in determining whether the training program was successful or not, whether people have whether with whether the trainees have learnt something new or whether they have you know been updated on their cases and you know how effectively they are being able to apply them.

If it is realized that the training program has not been effective, then it means that the HR and the sales and marketing team must sit together and decide on the content of the training program and other methods of the training program they must revise them and conduct new programs. So, that you know the Laconia or the shortfall in the previous training programs is something, which can be you know met with and better training programs can be organized.

So, feedback plays a very critical role in determining whether the training program was effective or not and what changes have to be made in upcoming or future training programs for improving the efficiency of the people.

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So, how do you make it effective? One company should have a very strategic vision that it should be a learning organization and people must be encouraged to learn either at individual levels or it at group levels and in the teams. Resource allocation must be there by the top management, resource allocation here with respect to both time and financial resources, very very comprehensive and systematic approaches to training must be appropriate. There is a very famous model which is the ACMEE where Aim Content Method Execution Evaluation.

So, the aims of the training program need to be decided the content is to be developed the methods of execution in terms of when will it be conducted where, how needs to be decided you know in the execution stage and evaluation training has to be evaluated as well. So, the aim is the a for the first a which is ACME the A is aim, where the aim of the training program must be decided upon; c is content which is what needs to be decided upon; methods have to be agreed upon the in terms of what are the methods that will be used for training and then execution will be where will it take place, when will it take place, how will it take place and then it is very important that the training program is evaluated as well.

So, its very essential that a comprehensive and a systematic approach to training is adopted, and there are linkages between organizational operational individual training needs. Organizational is as more macro operational is something which would be more functional and day-to-day and individual training needs which is a micro at the level of the person or the individual himself are something which are taken care of.

So, in order to make training effective, it is important that the company has a has a vision and has a mission of developing its it sets in the organization the human assets, because we all agree that human assets are the most important assets as an organization has.

So, the top management must be committed with respect to resource allocation whether it is in terms of time or it is in terms of financial you know resources. Second is a very comprehensive and systematic approach needs to be developed. the ACMEE is an approach where the A speaks about aim, C speaks about content or what is to be delivered, the M speaks about the methods to be adopted the E peaks about execution which is where will it be conducted when and how, and the evaluation is to basically have you know confirm as to whether the training program has been effective or not. And of course, companies one ensure that there's a linkage between organizational operational and individual needs.

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So, now let us come to how do you build a sales training programs. Training programs must be need-based and that is why it is very essential the training needs are determined.

There are wide number of training programs which can be organized by a company depending upon the skills that it wants to impart to the new as well as to the existing employees, and a proper analysis of training needs must be done before training programs are organized.

Because training is an expensive exercise both in terms of time and in terms of money, and it is very very essential that a sales training program is designed such that which meets the training requirements or the training needs of the people. So, the trade sales training process would involve include an assessment of the sales training needs, a designing and executing an effective program and evaluating and reinforcing the same.

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So, we have here we start with assessment of training needs, which will mean determining the training needs. Why is training required and what should be imparted and then there is the implementation of the training program which is to select the method and execute the same, which is where will the training take place, when will it take place and how will it take place, who would be the trainers and then of course, the program has to be evaluated to determining to determine its effectiveness and so, you know it is a job here is to compare the training outcomes against the objectives. So, both group and individual assessments need to be made.

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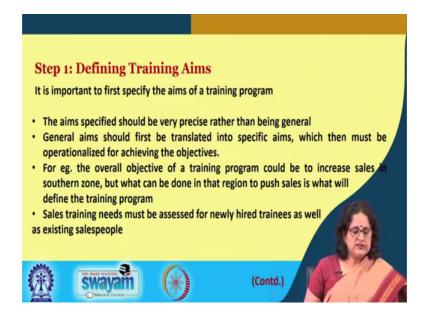
Now, let us come to the more crucial part, which is building a sales training program. Now building an effective sales training program would involve a series of steps which we would describe as follows and we will be speaking about each of these stages subsequently.

We start with the defining the training aim. As I said in the previous slides its very very important that training needs assess assessed because it is based on these needs that the content and methods would be exact we decided and the execution would take place. Now if these needs are wrongly assessed, it would mean that it would it would mean that the program which is designed may not suit the objectives of training or the purpose of training and so, you know ultimately what result would be that the while the management expected people's to perform well on the job, the opposite may hold go to where the people you know were not provided with the kind of training which was required to be provided. And so, they are not able to achieve you know the desired performance and the whole exercise of the training program is something which would be a waste.

So, it is very very important that you define the training aims; based on the aims is the training content. So, decide and prepare the content which is to be delivered to the trainees, whether it is the freshly hired trainees or whether it is the existing employees in the organization. And then you select the training methods which could which they are large number of methods which can be adopted for training you implement the training program, which would involve you know where how who whom who will be the

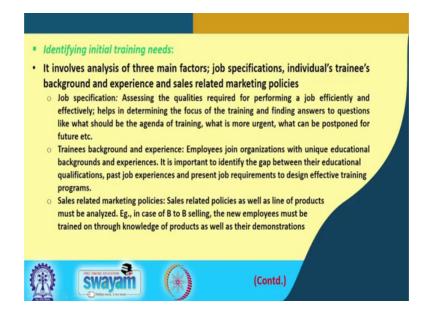
trainees, who would be trained, where will it take place, when will it happen how will it happen and so, forth and then you evaluate the training program. So, these are the five different steps or five different stages in the training program in designing a training program.

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So, the first step here is to define the training aims. So, it is very important to define the aims as I said because until unless you define the training aims, you would not be able to reach the desired objective. So, aims specified should be very precise rather than being very general aims can be can be decided, but then they have to be translated into specific aims, which then must be operationalized for achieving the objectives. For example, if the overall objective of a training program is to increase sales in the southern part of the country, what should be done in that region to push sales is what will define the sales training program. So, sales training needs must be very carefully assessed for newly hired recruits trainees as well as for the existing sales persons.

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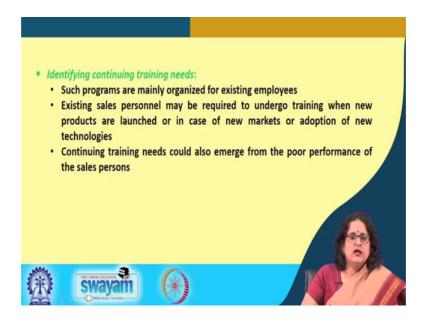
So, now again when we identify training needs for the fresh recruits or in other words when we are talking about identifying initial training needs, it would involve an analysis of three factors. One the job specification, two the individual trainees background in terms of his k s a's and three you know the sales related marketing policies. So, the job pacification here would imply assessing the quality is required for performing a job efficiently and effectively, and it would help and determine determining the focus of the training and you know looking for answers to questions like what should be the agenda of training, what is more urgent to be imparted, what can be postponed for future etcetera.

So, because of the job specification for a particular job, it would be very very clear that what are the skills and what are the qualifications which are necessary for a person to be able to perform that job effectively. And if you know in case of newly hired recruits it maybe suddenly realize that there is a gap between what the trainee possesses and what is actually required. So, in this case, the sales job at sales specification acts as a sorry the sales job specification acts as a very vital tool, in you know in understanding initial training needs. The second is the trainees background and experience. Again as I said employees join organizations with unique you know k s a's they have their they have knowledge skills and abilities which are very different to each other and so, there will always be a gap between what is something which the job specification lays out and what is that something which the freshly joined kind of training actually possesses.

So, it is important to identify the gap between his education between the trainees or the fresh recruits educational qualifications past job experiences and present job requirements, to design effective sales programs. Also the sales related marketing policies as well as the line of products need to be analysed. For example, in the case of B to B new employees must be trained on the knowledge about the product how to make presentations have to give demonstrations etcetera.

So, initial training needs for freshly hired you know trainees can be can be you know identified through the job by taking help from the job specification, and by looking at the individual trainees background and also a look at the sales related marketing policies.

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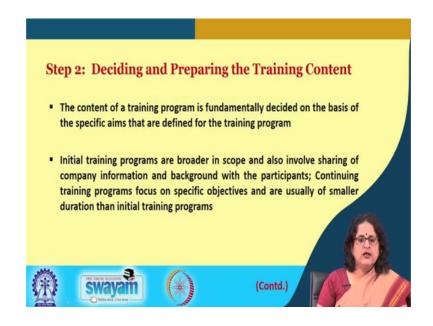
With respect to existing employees, it would this training needs here or a training the assessment would mean identifying continual training needs. So, or identifying continuing training needs. So, such programs are mainly organized for existing employees to update their cases. Existing sales person may be required to undergo training when new products are launched or in case of new markets or adoption of new technologies and so, continual training programs need to be conducted for them.

Continuing training programs could also emerge from the poor performance of salespeople. In other words, if it is realized their people or in particular sales positions you know are not able to do well or not performing well, it may be realized that and some kind of a training needs to be imparted. Now this training could be not only

training related to you know product knowledge or sales related marketing policy, it could also be you know training with respect to skill enhancement like interpersonal skills or you know team building or motivation or things like that.

So, control sales training program would either be because new information or new knowledge has to be imparted to the existing employees and the cases have to be you know enhanced it could also be because it is realized that, the sales performance of the current sales persons is not well up to the mark and they need to be improved upon.

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The second is to decide and prepare the training content. Now that content of a training program is basically decided on the basis of the objectives of the program. So, you know what are the specific aims whether it is with respect to the initial training program or the control sales training program. This would answer to this would it would actually you know be relevant in defining the content of the program.

So, initial train training programs are broader in scope, longer duration, more comprehensive and exhaustive and they involved sharing of company information and background with the participants on the other and training them to about the products about the business lines etcetera so, that they can perform well.

Continuing training programs focus on specific objectives and usually a smaller duration than the initial sales training program. Initial session program would be long very

exhaustive you know and very comprehensive and very structured and all the fresh recruits would be made to go through that program, but on the other hand continued training programs will focus very we will be narrowly defined and focus on specific objectives, they would be of smaller duration than the initial sales training programs.

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So again a moving if weagain make a comparison between what the content of an initial training program would be and what the content of a continual sales training program would be. We get to see here that the initial sales training program focuses on preparing new salespeople on all the aspects of the job, topics relate you know which should be covered in the training will include sales dated marketing policies and procedure sales department relationships with other departments, also the sales departments personnel policies and company information.

So, they will talk about the product knowledge, which is very very essential for sales people become very important for salespeople to have an in-depth knowledge about the kind of product and services they will be dealing with so, the sales persons are the one who deals with customers with prospects with members of the trade channel and so, it is very important that they have the product related knowledge. The second you know thing which the fresh trainees must know is about them is about the market, the knowledge of the existing as well as potential markets can play a key role in assisting sales persons in generating leads and preparing advance plans for approaching the customers.

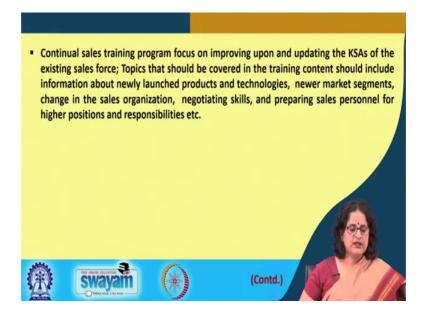
So, here the market knowledge would include both you know in knowledge and information about the customers, existing and prospective it also would mean having knowledge about competitor and compete competitors products and competitors product offerings.

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So, they must also have information and knowledge about the company the salespeople act as a vital link between the prospective buyers and the company. So, as representative the company, they should know about the company the company history, the company vision and mission the strategic you know plans of the company, they must also know about the success stories, the important clients or important accounts that the company has and they must also possess other company information like sales related policies and procedures for dealing with customers efficiently.

Also the newly hired trainees must you know big goal, must be given you know training on selling skills and sales techniques. New salespeople must be trained well to deal with customers; they must be well prepared you know while presenting themselves to customers. Selling skills here play a very very important role in bridging the gap between an average sales call and an outside it is called. So, it is very important that there is a skill development here, skill development this the that the trainees are made to go through a process of skill development. And those who already possess, these skills may go through a process of skill enhancement.



On the other hand, continuous training programs will focus on improving upon and updating the knowledge skills and abilities of the existing sales force. It could be as I said either to update them or newer developments in the company; be it new businesses, be it new success stories, be it new clients or accounts or be it new product lines and technologies it could also be you know the aimed at improving their performance.

So, here then the content does not relate much to the company, but the content would relate to you know issues like you know team building leadership motivation you know so, so that the people can begin to work better and they can turn out to be you know they can be good performers from just being average or below average performance. So, the topics that should be covered in the training content should in include information about newly launched products and technologies, newer market segments, change in the sales, organization new skills even negotiation skills and preparing them for higher you know roles or higher responsibilities in life.

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So, with this we come to an end of the first lecture on training. The references are Cundiff and still Govoni and Puri Sales and Distribution Management Pearson India. Panda and Sahadev Sales and Distribution Management 2nd Edition, Oxford University Press and Greenberg, Behaviour in Organizations Glocal Edition 10th Edition, which is Pearson Education in Services.

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So, this brings us to an end of the 5th lecture on the 5th module of the course I hope you found this lecture beneficial.

Thank you.