Customer-Centric Service as a Trust Catalyst: A Case Analysis of Kore Mobile Retail Outlet in Vadodara City

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ARTICLE DETAILS	ABSTRACT
	The Indian mobile telecoms industry is witnessing a period of competition and rapid technological change, driven by the acce rollout of 5G networks, an increase in smartphone penetration ra increasing customer demands for reliability. On the national subscribers for 5G have surpassed 365 million by mid-2025 inc increasing penetration of urban and semiurban markets (T Regulatory Authority of India [TRAI], 2025). Key market including Reliance Jio, Bharti Airtel, Vodafone Idea and Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL) continue to influence the struc the market and focus on service quality as a differentiation p supported by regulatory and government investment in infrast (GlobeNewswire, 2024). In that larger backdrop, Vadodara (po ~1.82 million) is a microcosm of the opportunity and challenge In 2025, Vadodara has 147 telecom service provider's outlets mobile network operator points of sale (Rentech Digital, 2025). Service infrastructure is enhanced: Airtel infrastructure in Va district, which serves as a significant source of influence he

expanded in the past through 320 villagers' hamlets that covered approximately 425,000 population (TelecomTalk, 2024a). Airtel's 225 additional cell towers in Vadodara in 2022–2024 (TelecomTalk, 2024b). Vodafone Idea has introduced 5G services in Vadodara as part of its roll-out across Gujarat, starting at ₹299 per month (The Economic Times, 2024). This case study of Kore Mobile explores how customer-centric service quality—through responsiveness, infrastructure reliability, and transparency—can act as a catalyst for building trust among users in such a competitive environment. Evidence suggests that in Vadodara, where service variation among operators is visible even at local level, trust built via superior service leads to greater customer loyalty and potential for local or regional providers to differentiate.

Introduction:

India's mobile telecommunications and smartphone market has grown rapidly over the past decade, driven by rising smartphone penetration, expansion of mobile broadband (4G and 5G), and digitalization initiatives. In 2022, despite global declines, the offline channel of the Indian telecom market recorded **36% value growth**, driven largely by premium smartphones. The average selling price (ASP) rose, and 5G-enabled devices contributed about **44% of smartphone revenue** (GfK, 2023).

Conversely, online channels experienced a surge, particularly during the pandemic. In 2020, about **45% of mobile phone sales in India** were through online platforms (Counterpoint Research, 2021). During the second wave of COVID-19, online phone sales briefly overtook offline, with over **50% of shipments in Q2 2021** coming from online channels (IDC, 2021). However, this shift was concentrated in urban and Tier-1 markets, while rural and smaller towns still relied heavily on offline channels (SiliconIndia, 2023).

More recently, there has been a rebalancing. In Q1 FY2025, the offline channel regained dominance with **58.1% of smartphone shipments**, while online shipments fell over 20% year-on-year as brands pushed into smaller towns (Outlook Business, 2024). Moreover, during the 2024 festive season, offline sales grew **9% year-on-year**, while online sales fell **2%**, showing the resilience of physical retail (TechInsights, 2024).

This dual-channel structure has shaped how consumers perceive service and trust: offline channels enable personal interaction, while online channels depend on digital trust signals such as return policies and reviews.

Comparison: Online vs. Offline Mobile/Smartphone Market in India

Aspect	Online Channel	Offline Channel
Market Share	Reached 45–53% of smartphone shipments during 2020–2022 (Counterpoint Research, 2021; IDC, 2022)	Regained 58.1% of share in Q1 FY2025 (Outlook Business, 2024)
Geographical Reach	Dominant in Tier-1/urban markets (ET Brand Equity, 2021)	Strong in Tier-2/Tier-3/rural markets (SiliconIndia, 2023)
Consumer Preferences	Driven by price deals, convenience, and comparison (ET Brand Equity, 2021)	Driven by trust, touch-and-feel experience, and local support (The Economic Times, 2024)
Recent Trend	Growth slowed; brands shifting to omni-channel (Outlook Business, 2024)	Strong value growth in 2022 and 2024 festive seasons (GfK, 2023; TechInsights, 2024)

Literature Review:

The mobile telecommunication industry in India has witnessed exponential growth over the past two decades, driven by increasing smartphone penetration, affordable data tariffs, and a growing digital economy. According to the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI, 2024), India has over 1.17 billion mobile subscribers, making it the second-largest telecommunications market globally. This growth has fostered the rise of both **offline retail outlets** and **online platforms** selling mobile devices and related services.

Trust and Service in Offline Markets

Research indicates that trust-building is a crucial determinant of customer loyalty in offline mobile retail settings (Gupta & Singh, 2021). Physical stores like Kore Mobile offer personalized service, immediate product availability, and post-sales support, which enhance perceived reliability and customer satisfaction

(Kaur & Mehta, 2022). Moreover, face-to-face interactions facilitate the development of emotional connections, a key driver of trust (Choudhury & Dey, 2020).

Trust and Service in Online Markets

Conversely, online mobile retail has rapidly expanded, dominated by e-commerce players such as Flipkart and Amazon (Bansal & Verma, 2023). While these platforms offer competitive pricing, vast assortments, and doorstep delivery, they often face challenges in building trust due to issues like counterfeit products and inconsistent after-sales service (Saxena & Jain, 2022). Trust in online markets relies heavily on secure payment systems, transparent return policies, and customer reviews (Deloitte, 2024).

Comparative Insights

Studies comparing offline and online channels highlight that while online markets excel in convenience and price, offline stores outperform in building long-term trust and ensuring service quality (NITI Aayog, 2023). Hybrid or omnichannel approaches are increasingly being adopted to blend the advantages of both models (PwC, 2024). For local players such as Kore Mobile, emphasizing personalized service and localized trust-building can serve as a competitive differentiator against large-scale online retailers.

Research Methodology:

This paper is prepared base on the class room assignment on 'Studying Success Story of Retail Outlets in Vadodara City'. Exploratory Research Design was used to prepare this paper. Both Primary and Secondary Data Sources were used to collect the Data. Primary data was collected through the personal Interview of the owner of Kore Mobile Retail Store. We studied Kore Mobile Store which is situated at manjalpur area of Vadodara city. Primary objective behind this research is to know the daily activities of Mr. Piintu Bhatt as an owner of Kore Mobile Store, How he started his journey, what and how he is motivated for starting this store, what he done during difficulty times like covid, How he contact with his customers, How he use Social Media for reaching to target customers, future plans, etc.

Case Study of Kore Mobile Store:

Kore Mobile is one of the trusted mobile stores in Vadodara city. Since its establishment in 2014-15, the store focused on delivering the best quality mobile phones at affordable prices. Along with sales, it also

provide excellent after-sales service, which has helped the store build strong customer loyalty. Under the leadership of Mr. Pintu Bhatt, Kore Mobile has earned a good reputation among the people of Vadodara. The store has created its own special identity in the city's competitive market. its main branch is located at Kunj Plaza, Palace Road, near polo club, Vadodara.

The Origin Story

Kore Mobile was established by Mr. Pintu Bhatt with the vision of offering quality mobile phones and reliable services to customer in Vadodara. The main motive behind starting Kore Mobile was to provide the latest technology at affordable price while also ensuring excellent after-sales service. With growing demand for smartphones in the mid-2010s, Mr. Bhatt identified an opportunity to cater to this market and started Kore mobile.

His focus was not only on sales but also on creating long-term trust and relationship with customers. By combining competitive pricing, product variety, and customer-centric services, Kore Mobile quickly gained popularity in Vadodara's competitive market.

> ➢ **Financial Problems:**
> Starting a mobile business required significant investment in stock, showroom setup, and branding. Managing was a major challenge.
> ➢ **Competition**:
> Vadodara already had several established mobile stores. Competing with big names and building customer trust was not easy.
> ➢ **Customer Awareness and Loyalty:**
> Being a new entrant, Kore Mobile had to work hard to attract customer and establish credibility in the market. Gaining customer loyalty in the initial days required consistent efforts.

Growth and Expansion

The first big success in Vadodara came when Kore Mobile Achieved a major sale and gained strong customer trust. After this milestone, they expanded by opening another branch in the city. Developed modern showrooms with attractive interiors and comfortable shopping experience Hired more staff and

trained them in customer service, Adopted technology for stock Management and customer data handling. Promoted actively on Social Media platforms like Facebook and Instragram to connect with youth.

Challenge Faced

Kore mobile faced multiple challenges while competing in the dynamic mobile retail market. The company had to deal with intense competition from large retail chains as well as fast growing e-commerce platforms like Amazon and Flipkart, which often offered heavy discount and wider product choices. During the COVID-19 pandemic, lockdowns severely reduced customer footfall in physical stores, directly impacting sales. In addition, supply chain disruption led to delays in stock availability, creating difficulties in meeting customer demand. Changing consumer behaviour also posed a challenge, as more customer preferred the convenience of online shopping over visiting offline retail stores.

Unique Selling Proposition

Kore Mobile stands out by offering affordable prices, genuine product, and personalized service. Unlike online platform it ensure immediate availability, after sales support, and customer trust. With local presence, experience that builds lasting customer relationships.

Customer and Community Impact

The store has improve the shopping experience for customer by providing one stop access to multiple mobile brands, quick service, and trustworthy guidance. Instead of facing confusion in the online market, people get clarity and confidence before purchasing. For the community Kore Mobile has played a role in building local connection, encouraging word-of-mouth marketing, and supporting small retailers around Vadodara. Its growth has not only benefited customer but also strengthened the local business ecosystem.

Digital Transformation

Active social media presence with updates on new launches and offers, along with WhatsApp ordering online payments, and quick delivery for customer convenience, helping improve engagement and build customer loyalty.

Achievements and Recognition

The store has achieved steady growth by providing customers with a wide range of mobile devices at affordable price. It has earned recognition in the local market for its reliable service, genuine products,

and customer friendly approach. By building strong relationship with buyer and ensuring availability of the latest models, the retailer has gained trust and loyalty from the community.

Conclusion:

Kore Mobile journey in Vadodara is a true example of how a local business can grow into a trusted brand through hard work, customer focus, and innovation. From a single small shop to becoming a recognized name in mobile retail, Kore Mobile has built its success on quality service, customer trust, and adaptation to new technologies.

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