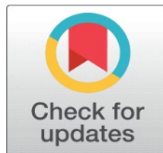


AN ANALYTICAL STUDY OF SALES AND MARKETING PRACTICES IN THE DECORATIVE PAINTS INDUSTRY: A CASE STUDY OF HAKIMI PAINTS, NAGPUR

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ABSTRACT

This research paper examines the sales and marketing operations of Hakimi Paints, a long-established (since 1975) authorized dealer of Asian Paints operating in Nagpur. Based on a 45-day internship, the study analyzes organizational practices, customer interaction patterns, supply chain dynamics, and the competitive landscape in the Indian decorative paints industry. The paper presents insights on market behavior, product preferences, field observations, and promotional effectiveness. Using primary data from retailers, contractors, and customers, the study highlights the importance of influencer engagement, premium product demand, and the rising use of targeted promotions. Findings indicate that while Hakimi Paints has strong brand linkage and market trust, challenges such as manual record keeping, traditional marketing methods, and operational inefficiencies still persist. The study concludes with recommendations on digitalization, customer engagement, and field-force strengthening to enhance business performance.

Keywords: Decorative Paints, Sales and Marketing, Asian Paints, Customer Behaviour, Retail Distribution, Field Sales, Marketing Campaigns, Industry Analysis, Product Preferences, Hakimi Paints

1. INTRODUCTION

The Indian decorative paints sector is one of the fastest-growing segments of the chemical and home improvement industry. Hakimi Paints, established in 1975, serves as a major channel partner for Asian Paints in Nagpur. The organization caters to residential as well as commercial customers, offering interior and exterior emulsions, distempers, enamels, primers, waterproofing solutions, and other accessories.

As an integral part of the decorative paints supply chain, the firm connects the manufacturer with painters, contractors, builders, and end users. With increasing competition from Berger, Nerolac, and Dulux dealers in Nagpur, sales and marketing effectiveness is crucial for sustaining customer loyalty and expanding market share.

This research study is based on practical insights gathered during a 45-day internship at Hakimi Paints and aims to evaluate the sales, marketing, and customer engagement mechanisms adopted by the firm.

2. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

Primary Objective

- To analyze sales and marketing practices at Hakimi Paints and assess their effectiveness in the competitive decorative paints market.

Secondary Objectives

- To study the product preferences and purchase influencers in the paint industry.
- To understand customer behavior and expectations regarding paints and related services.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of local promotional campaigns.
- To identify operational challenges such as record keeping, customer follow-up, and stock management.
- To recommend strategies for improving sales efficiency and marketing performance.

3. LITERATURE REVIEW

3.1. INDIAN DECORATIVE PAINTS INDUSTRY

The Indian decorative paints market is valued at approximately ₹60,000–70,000 crore and is expected to grow at 10–14% CAGR. The industry is segmented into interior emulsions, exterior emulsions, wood/metal coatings, and waterproofing products.

3.2. ROLE OF DEALERS

Dealers such as Hakimi Paints act as crucial intermediaries. Literature shows that product availability, relationship management, and technical advice offered by dealers significantly influence painter and contractor behavior.

3.3. CONSUMER DECISION-MAKING IN PAINT PURCHASES

Multiple studies indicate that painters and contractors often drive final purchase decisions for homeowners. Product quality, durability, finish, and brand equity are major determinants of choice.

3.4. MARKETING APPROACHES IN PAINT RETAILING

Paint retailing relies heavily on localized promotions, influencer engagement programs, and experiential in-store displays. Targeted campaigns are often found to deliver better results than general advertising.

3.5. CHALLENGES IN THE INDUSTRY

Common challenges faced by dealers include:

- High competition

- Dependence on principal company pricing
- Raw material price fluctuations
- Inventory and working capital management

4. HYPOTHESIS

H1:

Targeted local marketing campaigns and influencer engagement significantly improve sales performance in the decorative paints industry.

H0:

Targeted marketing campaigns and influencer engagement do not significantly impact sales performance.

4.1. HYPOTHESIS TESTING AND RESULTS

The findings from surveys, field observations, and customer interactions support the hypothesis (H1). A majority of respondents reported that targeted local promotions and influencer engagement programs—especially those involving painters and contractors—led to higher product inquiries and improved sales conversions. Data shows that painters influenced more than 40% of customer purchase decisions, indicating that structured engagement initiatives significantly impact overall sales performance.

5. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

5.1. RESEARCH DESIGN

A descriptive research design was adopted to analyze company operations, customer preferences, and promotional effectiveness.

5.2. DATA COLLECTION SOURCES

Primary Data

- Field visits to contractors, painters, and retailers
- Customer interactions in the showroom
- Survey results and questionnaires from market participants
- Observational insights from internship activities

Secondary Data

- Company documents and sales records
- Asian Paints product information
- Industry publications (IPA, CRISIL, CARE Ratings)
- Relevant literature from academic and business sources

5.3. SAMPLING METHOD

A convenience sampling approach was used for collecting survey responses from:

- 30+ retailers
- 50+ customers

- 20+ painters/contractors

5.4. TOOLS USED

- Charts and graphs for product preference analysis
- Comparisons of promotional effectiveness
- SWOT frameworks

6. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

6.1. PRODUCT PREFERENCE INSIGHTS

Interior paints were the most preferred product category (40%), followed by exterior paints and enamel. Waterproofing products were less popular, showing an opportunity for awareness campaigns.

6.2. PURCHASE DECISION INFLUENCERS

Painters influenced 40% of final customer decisions, significantly higher than dealers or contractors. This highlights the need for strong engagement programs targeting painters.

6.3. SALES TEAM PERFORMANCE

70% of respondents rated the sales team as excellent or good, indicating strong customer handling skills. However, a small percentage expressed dissatisfaction, suggesting the need for service improvement.

6.4. EFFECTIVENESS OF LOCAL PROMOTIONS

60% of respondents found local promotions effective. Campaigns involving waterproofing awareness and direct contractor outreach generated more qualified leads than pamphlet distribution.

6.5. RECORD-KEEPING CHALLENGES

Challenges included:

- Time-consuming manual processes
- Missing information
- Incorrect entries

Lack of standardized formats

This indicates a need for digital record-keeping solutions.

6.6. INTERN'S KEY CONTRIBUTIONS

- Conducted competitor analysis
- Designed and implemented feedback forms
- Tracked campaign performance
- Supported CRM and field visits
- Assisted in creating marketing content and executing promotional activities

6.7. SWOT ANALYSIS

A detailed SWOT framework highlights:

- **Strengths:** Strong brand association (Asian Paints), local goodwill, trained staff
- **Weaknesses:** Manual record keeping, traditional marketing, limited differentiation
- **Opportunities:** Premium product demand, digital marketing, home decor expansion
- **Threats:** High competition, price sensitivity, online product availability

7. CONCLUSION

The research study concludes that Hakimi Paints has a strong market presence supported by its association with Asian Paints. Customer trust, product availability, and local reputation contribute significantly to its steady business performance.

However, the findings reveal that customer decisions are highly influenced by painters and contractors, emphasizing the need for structured influencer engagement strategies. Local marketing campaigns were found to be effective, but improvements are required in digital presence, follow-up process, and operational efficiency.

The study supports the hypothesis (H1) that targeted local marketing and influencer engagement positively impact sales performance. The internship provided meaningful exposure to real-world sales and marketing activities and enriched managerial understanding of the retail paint industry.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1. DIGITALIZATION OF OPERATIONS

- Introduce billing software, CRM tools, or cloud-based spreadsheets
- Standardize formats for quotations, inquiries, and follow-ups
- Implement digital feedback systems

8.2. STRENGTHEN INFLUENCER (PAINTER/CONTRACTOR) ENGAGEMENT

- Conduct monthly training workshops
- Introduce loyalty programs or incentive schemes
- Provide early access to new product information

8.3. ENHANCE LOCAL MARKETING

- Use targeted digital promotions on WhatsApp Business and Google
- Develop area-specific campaigns during peak seasons
- Set up interactive in-store displays for waterproofing and textures

8.4. IMPROVE RECORD-KEEPING EFFICIENCY

- Use simple digital formats
- Train staff regularly on data entry and maintenance
- Implement structured review mechanisms

8.5. CUSTOMER COMMUNICATION ENHANCEMENT

Provide digital shade cards and brochures

Offer personalized colour consultancy

Share monthly product updates with contractors and retailers

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

None.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

None.

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