AUTOMOBILE

Customer Engagement and Lead Conversion in an Automobile Dealership: A Descriptive Study of the Sales Process at a Mahindra Dealership

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Abstract

This paper examines customer engagement and lead conversion in an authorised Mahindra dealership operated by Salasar Avenue Mega Corp Private Limited, with a focus on the Panvel branch. It is based on the author's Summer Internship Project (SIP) undertaken from 15 June to 17 July 2026. The study uses a descriptive qualitative approach and draws on the daily activity log, weekly progress reports, product-training activities and direct workplace observations. The analysis follows the customer journey from product knowledge and initial enquiry through product explanation, quotation, booking, delivery and dealership record management. The internship observations indicate that product knowledge supports clearer customer conversations; enquiry handling and follow-up help maintain customer interest; and coordination between sales executives, the senior booking team and the backend team is important to continuity. A documented example involving an XUV 3XO enquiry on 13 July 2026 illustrates the handover from product explanation to a senior executive, while deliveries of the XUV 7XO and Scorpio N on 16 July illustrate the final handover stage. The study does not use customer survey results, internal sales figures, conversion rates or customer satisfaction data. Therefore, it describes the process and its operational links but does not claim to measure the effect of any activity on sales performance. Recommendations include stronger enquiry records, more visible stock information, standardised reporting, improved inter-team handovers and consistent use of digital tools.

Keywords: customer engagement; lead conversion; automobile retail; product knowledge; sales process; dealership operations

1 Introduction

Automobile retail involves more than displaying a vehicle and completing a transaction. A prospective buyer typically moves through several stages: identifying a need, enquiring about models, comparing features and variants, considering price and availability, receiving a quotation, making a booking and taking delivery. The quality and continuity of the interaction across these stages can shape the customer's experience of the dealership.

This paper studies those activities at Salasar Avenue Mega Corp Private Limited, an authorised Mahindra dealership with operations across Thane and Raigad districts. The author completed the internship at the Panvel branch during 15 June 2026 to 17 July 2026. The dealership's sales structure, as observed during the internship, involved frontline sales executives handling enquiries and customer interactions, a senior team managing bookings, and a backend team maintaining dealership

data. Interns supported product learning, customer explanation and data-related work but did not set prices or independently take bookings.

The subject is relevant because the dealership operates within a competitive automobile market and has limited control over manufacturer-set vehicle prices. In this setting, the dealership's customer-facing processes—such as product explanation, response to enquiries, quotation support, follow-up and delivery coordination—are important parts of its retail operation.

2 Background and rationale

The SIP records training and practical exposure to Mahindra passenger-vehicle models including the XUV 7XO, XUV 3XO, Thar, Thar ROXX, XEV 9e, XEV 9S, BE 6 and Scorpio N. It also records customer interaction, quotation support, learning about follow-up practices, data work using Cerebro, Salesforce, Spotlight and SQL, and visits to the inventory yard, workshop and body shop.

The rationale for the study arose from observing that a vehicle sale is a connected process involving multiple employees and functions. Product knowledge informs the first customer conversation; the conversation helps identify customer requirements; a quotation turns interest into a specific offer; the senior team manages booking; the vehicle is prepared and handed over; and dealership records support continuity between the stages. A gap in communication or documentation may make the process less clear for the customer and the employees involved.

3 Research problem

The research problem is to understand how customer engagement and lead-conversion activities are carried out at the Panvel branch of Salasar Avenue Mega Corp Private Limited, and how the stages of the sales process are connected from initial enquiry to delivery. The available internship records do not permit a statistical assessment of actual sales performance, so the paper focuses on the process observed rather than on a measured causal impact.

4 Research questions

1. How were customer engagement and lead-conversion activities carried out during the internship?
2. How did product knowledge and training support communication with customers?
3. What roles did quotation support, booking, delivery and dealership data play in the customer journey?
4. What operational issues or improvement opportunities were visible from the internship observations?

5 Research objectives

1. To describe customer engagement and lead-conversion activities observed at the dealership.
2. To examine the role of product knowledge and training in customer communication.
3. To map the connection between enquiries, quotations, bookings, deliveries and dealership records.
4. To identify practical opportunities to make the sales process more structured.

6 Scope of the study

The study is limited to the sales-related activities undertaken or observed by the author at the Panvel branch during the internship period. It covers product training, customer interaction, quotation support, follow-up practices, observed booking handovers and deliveries, backend data work, and visits to the inventory yard, workshop and body shop. It does not examine the dealership's HR, accounts or other functions in detail. It does not measure customer satisfaction, revenue, branch sales, lead-to-booking conversion or the performance of the company's other branches.

7 Review of literature

7.1 Customer engagement

Brodie et al. (2011) discuss customer engagement as a concept grounded in interactive experiences and value co-creation. This perspective is relevant to automobile retail because a customer's interaction with a salesperson can involve explaining needs, comparing alternatives, answering questions and arranging a test drive. Engagement is therefore not limited to the moment of purchase.

7.2 Product knowledge in automobile selling

Van Blois (1968) examined the relationship between an automobile salesperson's product knowledge and selling effectiveness. Although the work is historical, it supports the continuing relevance of product knowledge in vehicle selling. The SIP's product-training sessions and subsequent customer explanations provide a practical setting in which to consider this relationship. Training is an input to product knowledge, but the internship records do not quantify its effect on sales.

7.3 Lead conversion

Monat (2011) considers lead-conversion modelling in industrial sales and notes the complexity of managing leads through a sequence of stages. The setting differs from automobile retail, but the process perspective is useful: a lead must be identified, understood, followed up and progressed. In the dealership observed, these stages included enquiry, product explanation, quotation, booking and delivery.

7.4 Consumer decision-making context

Consumer-behaviour literature, including Schiffman and Wisenblit (2015), provides a broad framework for understanding how consumers recognise needs, seek information and evaluate alternatives before purchasing. The SIP, however, does not contain a completed customer survey or a systematic record of individual buyers' decision criteria. Accordingly, this paper uses consumer decision-making as background and does not claim to identify statistically significant purchase factors among dealership customers.

8 Conceptual framework

The framework developed from the internship observations is:

Product Knowledge → Customer Enquiry and Engagement → Quotation → Booking → Delivery and Handover

Dealership Data and Records support continuity across the stages

The framework represents the sequence observed and the supporting role of dealership records. It is not a tested statistical model. The author participated mainly in product learning, customer engagement, quotation support and data work, while booking and delivery activities were observed or handled by the relevant senior employees.

9 Research methodology

9.1 Research design

The study adopts a descriptive and qualitative, practice-based case-study design. It aims to describe work processes and observations rather than establish cause and effect.

9.2 Sources of data

- Primary internship records: daily activity log and five weekly progress reports.
- Direct observations: product-training sessions, customer interactions, quotation support, observed deliveries and visits to the yard, workshop and body shop.
- Workplace exposure: supervised use or observation of Cerebro, Salesforce, Spotlight and SQL in dealership data work.
- Secondary sources: academic literature cited in the SIP and the CARE Ratings press release on the company dated December 2025.

9.3 Data collection and analysis

Activities recorded during the internship were grouped under the stages of the conceptual framework: product knowledge, customer engagement, quotation, booking, delivery and dealership data. The observations were then compared with the concepts in the literature review. The analysis is narrative and descriptive; no statistical tests were conducted.

9.4 Ethical and confidentiality considerations

No customer names or personal identifying details are included. The paper relies on the author's permitted internship observations and does not reproduce confidential customer records or internal sales data.

10 Findings and discussion

10.1 Product knowledge and training

The daily log records model training across 29 June to 2 July 2026: XUV 7XO on 29 June; Thar and Thar ROXX on 30 June; XEV 9e and XEV 9S on 1 July; and BE 6 and XUV 3XO on 2 July. The training covered model features and positioning. The author subsequently used this knowledge while explaining vehicles to customers under the sales team's guidance. For electric vehicles, customer questions included range and charging-related concerns. The evidence supports the finding that training was used in customer conversations; it does not measure whether training increased bookings.

10.2 Enquiry handling and customer engagement

The internship records indicate that enquiries reached the sales team mainly through showroom walk-ins and phone enquiries, with existing dealership records also supporting follow-up. The author

welcomed or interacted with customers, explained models and passed customers to senior employees when appropriate. The SIP records 11 customer engagements in one section and refers elsewhere to enquiries recorded over 31 days; these are activity-log descriptions, not a verified count of unique customers or qualified leads. They should not be interpreted as a conversion measure.

10.3 Illustration: XUV 3XO enquiry on 13 July 2026

A customer visited the showroom with an interest in the XUV 3XO. The author explained product information and features, and the customer appeared impressed by the features available within the customer's budget. The author then referred the customer to a senior executive, who handled the booking and completed the purchase. This example illustrates a handover from initial product explanation to the senior booking stage. It is one observed case and cannot establish a general conversion rate or prove that the explanation alone caused the purchase.

10.4 Quotations, booking and follow-up

The author learned how to prepare quotations and support the sales team. The dealership's role was to explain the offer and the vehicle because vehicle pricing was set by Mahindra. Booking was managed by the senior team, and interns did not set prices or take bookings. The SIP describes a usual follow-up call approximately two days after a customer's showroom visit when the customer had enquired but had not booked. The available records do not show how many quotations resulted in bookings or how many follow-up calls led to purchases.

10.5 Delivery and handover

On 16 July 2026, the author observed deliveries of the XUV 7XO and Scorpio N. These observations provided exposure to the final handover stage and reinforced that the customer journey continues after booking. The records do not provide delivery-time or satisfaction measures.

10.6 Dealership data, inventory and after-sales support

The author worked with the backend team on dealership data using Cerebro, Salesforce, Spotlight and SQL, including sorting and cross-checking data under supervision. Visits to the inventory yard, workshop and body shop showed how vehicle stock and after-sales operations support the wider dealership process. The records demonstrate exposure to these systems and functions, but they do not measure data accuracy, processing speed or the effect of the systems on sales.

10.7 Summary of findings

Table 1. Summary of what the internship records support and what cannot be concluded from them.

Area	What the internship records support	What cannot be concluded
Product knowledge	Training was conducted on seven models and used in customer explanations.	The effect of training on sales or conversion.
Customer engagement	Walk-in and phone enquiries were handled; the author supported customer conversations.	Customer satisfaction or the quality of every interaction.
Quotation and follow-up	The author learned quotation support; follow-up was generally around two days after an enquiry visit.	Quote-to-booking or follow-up-to-sale conversion.
Booking and delivery	Senior staff handled bookings; deliveries of XUV 7XO and Scorpio N were observed.	Booking volumes, delivery performance or delays.

Area	What the internship records support	What cannot be concluded
Digital records	Cerebro, Salesforce, Spotlight and SQL were used in backend data work.	The systems' measurable impact on revenue or efficiency.

11 Recommendations

1. Strengthen enquiry records: capture the model of interest, budget, expected buying time, enquiry source, responsible executive and next follow-up date.
2. Improve follow-up discipline: maintain a pending-enquiry list and review it weekly so that enquiries are not overlooked.
3. Improve stock visibility: share an updated list of available models, variants and colours with the sales team and update it when stock arrives or is delivered.
4. Standardise sales reporting: record enquiries, test drives, quotations, bookings and deliveries in a consistent daily format.
5. Improve inter-team handovers: use a short handover note containing customer requirements, model and variant, budget, quotation and next action.
6. Use digital tools consistently: record enquiries, quotations and bookings in the dealership's existing systems; provide refresher training and check for duplicate or incomplete entries while maintaining data security.

These recommendations are practical proposals arising from the author's observations. They have not been tested through a before-and-after evaluation and should not be presented as proven interventions.

12 Limitations of the study

- The study covers one branch and approximately five weeks of internship activity; it cannot represent every branch or the full Mahindra dealer network.
- The records are based mainly on the author's daily log, weekly reports and observations, and are therefore self-reported.
- The author was an intern and did not independently take bookings or set prices; those stages were observed rather than managed.
- Internal sales data, customer-level records, lead-to-booking conversion rates and customer satisfaction results were not available.
- No customer survey results are included. The SIP contains a proposed survey instrument, but the results section was marked for completion after responses were collected.
- The descriptive design does not establish cause and effect or quantify the contribution of each activity to sales performance.

13 Conclusion

The internship at Salasar Avenue Mega Corp Private Limited provided a practical view of the sales process at an authorised Mahindra dealership. The observations show that customer engagement and lead conversion involve connected activities: product knowledge, enquiry handling, product explanation, quotation, booking, delivery and accurate dealership records. Product training helped

the author explain vehicle features, while the XUV 3XO enquiry on 13 July illustrated the handover from a frontline conversation to a senior executive. Deliveries observed on 16 July demonstrated the completion of the customer journey. Backend data work and visits to the inventory yard, workshop and body shop showed that sales depend on coordination beyond the showroom floor.

The evidence supports a process-based understanding, not a numerical assessment of performance. Further research could combine the process observations with anonymised enquiry and booking data and direct customer feedback to examine conversion patterns and customer decision factors more rigorously.

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