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CUSTOMER SERVICE AND THE DILEMMA OF PRODUCT WARRANTY:
A CASE OF FASTTRACK MOTORS INDIA LIMITED

Sushil Kumar
Shailendra Singh

Responding to economic liberalization and realizing the great market potential, a number of multinational enterprises (MNEs) based in developed countries are expanding their operations to the developing world, either through foreign direct investment or through joint ventures. These MNEs are trying to translocate product quality standards as well as customer service standards from their home countries to host countries. In the process, customer expectations from these MNEs in the developing countries have risen very high, but the MNEs are struggling to meet them, especially with respect to the customer service aspect. They are facing many constraints; the major ones have to do with the archaic outlook and traditional mode of doing business by their dealerships. This case summarizes some such problems being faced by one multinational automobile giant in India—FastTrack Motors India Limited. The case has a strong essence of customer satisfaction and deals with different stages of customer reaction.

Keywords: Customer rates faction, dealership management, difficult customer, emotional intelligence, anger management

CUSTOMER SERVICE AND THE DILEMMA OF PRODUCT WARRANTY:
A CASE OF FASTTRACK MOTORS INDIA LIMITED

'We are going to buy a medium sized car when we go back to India and not a small car like the Maruti 800 that we had six years ago,' said Sonia to her husband Dr Rajat Mitra. They were planning to return to India with their eight-year-old daughter Arpita for good after almost six years in Toronto, Canada¹. The family arrived in India in the middle of the peak summer season—April 2005—and after a few days of settling down, started surveying the burgeoning Indian automobile market for a mid-size car. Mitra, though aware

¹ For the purpose of anonymity, the names of all characters in this case have been changed.

of the unprecedented growth of multinational companies in India in various sectors, including automobiles, found himself lost when it came to making a choice among different car companies and the models available in the mid-size car segment in the Indian market. On the one hand, was the well-established and trusted Maruti with an extensive service network throughout the country and on the other were the strongly emerging Korean company, Hyundai, and the American giant, Ford. All the three companies had mid-sized car models which were within Mitra's affordable price range. Technical, exterior and interior features of all these cars were almost similar, except for some minor variations. Finally, on the basis of his experience of FastTrack Motors in Canada and on the advice of friends and relatives, Mitra opted to go in for a FastTrack Motors car.

On 8 May 2005, Mitra along with his family, a relative and a friend visited M/s Akash Sales and Services, a dealership of FastTrack Motors India Ltd. (FTMIL) located in Karnal, Haryana. Though Mitra was to start a job in Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh, he preferred to buy the car from his home state to avoid the hassles of doing a market survey in an unknown town. Moreover, he wanted a vehicle urgently on his arrival in Lucknow. Mitra and his family members were pleasantly surprised by the treatment given to them by the very courteous sales staff at Akash Sales and Services. The facilities, services offered and the overall ambience of the place were comparable with any car showroom in North America. After some negotiations over free/complimentary accessories with the new car, the family decided to go for a silver FTTM Regular.

After about three hours of waiting, the dream car was brought out of the service station, located at the back of the showroom. The sales staff at the showroom requested Mitra's family members and friends to have a thorough look at the car before preparing the delivery papers and completing other formalities. Sonia was very excited, as it was on her insistence that her husband had decided to buy this mid-size car so she was extra observant while inspecting it. This extra observation was appreciated by everyone when she discovered a small dent on the left rear door. The sales staff at Akash Sales and Services said that such dents in new cars were not uncommon and were largely the results of transportation from Chennai, Tamil Nadu, where FTMIL's manufacturing plant was located. They admitted that their technical staff in the service station should have taken care of this before bringing it for delivery to the customer and apologized on their behalf. Mitra refused to take this car even if the dent was removed. On this, he was told that he would be given another car and it would take one and a half to two hours.

At around 3:00 PM, another new car was brought out of the service station after thorough washing and cleaning. This time everyone in the group was extra observant, but it was

not needed as a big scratch right on the bonnet could be seen easily. Even the sales staff was speechless. How could this happen? Did it mean that people working in the service station were completely incapable and careless? Mitra listened, aghast, to a proposal put forward by the sales personnel—‘we will replace the rear door of the previous car with the rear door of this car.’ He just could not imagine the FTMIL dealership removing and replacing parts like this in new cars. He replied, ‘We haven’t come here to purchase a used car in which you can replace part(s) of one car with another. We are here to buy a brand new car and we are paying for it.’ The sales staff started discussing the matter among themselves as they didn’t have another car of this model and colour. By this time, Mitra had become so frustrated that he decided to leave and buy an FTTM Regular from another showroom in Chandigarh, or indeed another make. He was thinking about the futility of such hospitality, facilities and great ambience if the ultimate goal of the customer—delivery/quality of the actual product—was not being properly taken care of. Now he was able to differentiate between the quality of customer service in India and in Canada. In India, sales personnel focussed all their attention on making the customer feel comfortable during the time he/she was in the showroom, without bothering about the way their products were being handled or delivered by the technical staff. In Canada, companies adopt a holistic approach in their showrooms in providing quality service to their customers.

While Mitra was discussing this with his friend, the manager of the showroom tried to pacify him by saying that the scratch on the car might be the result of some improper cleaning by their technical staff in the service station. According to him, the scratch was not permanent and would go away with proper polishing and rubbing. The manager took the car inside the service station, and after five minutes or so brought it back. This time it was all clean, without any scratch. He explained that the scratch might have possibly been the result of the rubbing of a bracelet, which one of their technical staff was wearing. When asked if it was not the duty of the sales staff or anybody else to thoroughly inspect a new car before its final delivery to the customer, the manager could not give a satisfactory answer. Exhausted after a wait of over seven hours and on the advice of his friend and relatives, Mitra decided to accept the car. When all formalities were completed, the manager of Akash Sales and Services offered a complimentary remote locking/security system as compensation for the inconvenience caused to Mitra and his family. He requested them to bring the car back the next day to have it fitted.

The next day, the car was brought back to the showroom. On the way, Mitra purchased an audio system. The remote locking/security system as well as the music system were

happily installed by Akash Sales and Services. Mitra paid some extra money towards the cost of jumpers, which he was told, would help in keeping the original wiring of the car intact and under warranty.

Mitra travelled to Lucknow in his new car along with his wife and daughter. He started his new job and found a place to live about 20 km from downtown Lucknow. Since his family had come to India after six years, they needed to purchase every household item, right from kitchen items to bedroom furniture and electronic appliances. Being new in town, much surveying needed to be done. At this juncture, their FTTM Regular was their true companion and proved to be of great help. Its comfortable driving, efficient air-conditioning system, spacious sitting capacity, soothing interiors and sufficient trunk space did much to ease the trouble of settling down in a new town. Rajat thanked Sonia for her insistence on buying a mid-size car.

Starting July 1 the Mitra daughter started going to a school that was about 12 km from home. Though local transport was available, her parents drove Arpita to school to make her comfortable during her initial transitory period in India. After all, public transport in Lucknow was not what it was in Canada. They did not want to take risks in the beginning that would make it difficult for Arpita to forget her comfortable lifestyle in Canada. Moreover, both of them took extra care to take her out every weekend to different places in and around the city including McDonald's, Pizza Hut and various amusement parks.

Life was going well and the family was slowly but steadily settling down with their faithful FTTM Regular performing true to their expectations. On Friday, 22 July 2005, Mitra was travelling to Delhi by the Shatabadi Express to meet a friend who was visiting from Canada. At about 4:30 pm, in the train he got a call on his mobile phone from Sonia: 'Our car stopped on the way back home. All of a sudden, there was smoke in the car and it stopped. What should I do?' Mitra asked Sonia to contact a family friend of theirs who could be of help. Sonia contacted Vivek Kumar, who in turn contacted the local FastTrack Motors dealership, M/s Avadh Motors. People from Avadh Motors came to where Sonia was stranded within a reasonable time and towed the car to their service station.

The next day, while still in Delhi, Mitra was told by Kumar, that the entire wiring of his car was burnt and would need complete replacement. Mitra was very upset with this whole incident and narrated the story to his friend from Canada. At this time, Kumar had not managed to find out the exact cause of the mishap from the Avadh Motors service station. After returning to Lucknow, the first thing Mitra did was to visit the Avadh Motors service station. He met with cold treatment and an unsatisfactory response. The person incharge of technical matters did not attend to him properly; after uttering a sentence or two, he would go to listen to other customers' complaints/issues, leaving Mitra guessing

in front of the service station. Here was Mitra with his damaged car in the service station, looking for an answer from the company's representatives, and the only thing they told him was:

The complete wiring of the car has been burnt and needs replacement. We have asked the regional service manager for approval to do this. On getting the approval, we will place an order with the company's head office in Chennai for dispatching a new 'wiring kit' and on receiving this we will replace the damaged wiring of your car. We are not sure how much time it is going to take.

The in-charge could not give a convincing reply as to why the wiring of the car had been burnt in the first place. Finally, Mitra managed to meet the service station manager and asked him to explain everything in detail. He too was apathetic to start with, but on finding out that Mitra had recently returned from Canada, he became politer and started listening more seriously. He told Mitra that approval from the regional service manager was awaited and he expected to receive this by the end of that day or, at the most the next day, and after that he would place an order for a new wiring kit with FTMIL. Normally, it took the wiring kit 3–4 days to reach Lucknow from Chennai and it would take them a day or two to replace the wiring system. So, by 1 August Mitra could expect to get his car back. On being asked about the likely cause of the burning of the wiring system, the manager said that most probably it had to do with some overloading on the fuel pump. Not convinced with this hypothetical explanation, Mitra asked (i) why there should be overloading on the fuel pump, (ii) why instead of the fuse getting blown off, the whole wiring system was burnt, and (iii) how would they rectify the problem in the fuel pump. To these queries, no one at the service station could provide satisfactory answers. These were very critical issues, since the car was less than three months old, and what was the guarantee that without finding out the basic cause of the mishap, the wiring system would not burn again? Second, for no fault of his, why should the customer suffer? Third, why didn't the companies provide similar customer service in their service stations as in their showrooms? Mitra thought that he should contact the regional service manager, FTMIL and therefore, asked the manager of the Avadh Motors service station for his telephone number. The answer he got was highly surprising: 'Sorry sir, we do not have his phone number.'

Mitra left the service station with an assurance from the manager that he would keep him posted about the progress over the phone.

With many issues lurking in his mind, Mitra decided to contact FTMIL directly. He sent a detailed e-mail to the customer relationship division. To his pleasant surprise, a

reply was dispatched to him within 15–20 minutes, and it was not an automated one (Exhibit 1).² Though there was nothing particularly informative in the reply, the assurance from FTMIL that they would take up the issue with Avadh Motors was a big relief. The next day, in response to Mitra's reminder, FTMIL replied that they had talked to Avadh Motors who was looking into the likely cause of the accident. He was also informed that they were in the process of approving/dispatching the new wiring kit and were expediting the repair of the vehicle (Exhibit 2). However, Mitra was still sceptical of the competency of the technical manpower deployed at the Avadh Motors service station and therefore wanted FTMIL to take the matter seriously at their level.

FTMIL, in its e-mail, (Exhibit 3) informed Mitra that the company had decided to send a team of its engineers to Lucknow to make a thorough inspection of the car to find out the likely cause of the burning of the wiring system. This was a heartening response from FTMIL.

On 29 July when Mitra called the Avadh Motors service station to enquire about the wiring kit, he was told that the dealership had received the kit and would soon start replacing the damaged wiring of his car. He was told to pick up his car on 1 August. He was also told that he would be informed of the exact time he could come and pick up the car. Mitra who had been undergoing much inconvenience due to the unavailability of transport and limited mobility, was relieved to know that finally he would be getting his car back in the next 3–4 days. Sonia and Arpita too were excited to hear the news, as they had not been able to go out for about a week. The public transport system was near non-existence where they lived. The first thing Arpita wanted to do when they got their car back was to go to McDonald's for lunch. Sonia wanted to buy urgent household items from the market. All three were eagerly looking forward to getting their car back.

Finally, the much awaited day came and Mitra called Avadh Motors to know the exact time he could pick up his car. The manager replied:

Sorry sir, we are not in a position to hand over the vehicle today, it will take one more week to get the repairs done. The FTMIL team of engineers was here on last Saturday and after inspecting your car, they decided that the wiring kit that we received is not appropriate for this car. Secondly, they also found that the wiring of the power steering system was the likely cause of the mishap so they advised us to replace that as well, along with the fuse box. We have sent in the demand for all these parts to the company and will undertake repairs once we get everything.

² Information presented in this exhibit and all other exhibits hereafter, is based on Mitra's personal communications with Ford India Pvt. Limited.

The manager spoke in a very indifferent tone. It seemed that there was nothing wrong if the customer had to undergo inconvenience because of the fault of the company/dealership; it did not matter if the customer was not informed on time (or at all) of the delay on the part of dealership/company; the customer was supposed to feel obliged that the dealership at least told him/her the storyline.

Mitra sent an e-mail to FTMIL on 2 August detailing everything. However, till 4 August there was no response. On 4 August Mitra called Avadh Motors to find out if they had received the parts and was told that the dealership was still waiting for the consignment to arrive. Not able to control his feelings, he called Govindan Murali, Customer Service Coordinator, FTMIL on 4 August and spoke in a very harsh tone. As can be seen from his e-mail to FTMIL later the same day (Exhibit 4), Mitra was deeply hurt by the kind of customer service being provided through the dealership of a world-class, renowned automobile company.

In reply to his e-mail, Murali of FTMIL called Mitra immediately and tried to pacify him. Mitra categorically told him that he was repenting his decision of purchasing a FastTrack Motors vehicle instead of a Maruti one and intended to take legal action against FTMIL. Murali assured him that the company would look into the issue seriously and would deliver his car at the earliest possible. After two hours, the manager, M/s Avadh Motors called and asked, 'When and where do you need the taxi, sir?' Apparently, FTMIL had instructed its dealership to take care of the transport problem of Mitra. On inquiry from FTMIL, Mitra was told that he would get transport facility till the time he got his own car back from the service station (Exhibit 5). This, no doubt, was a very welcome gesture on the part of FTMIL. In fact, Mitra utilized this transport facility as and when needed, till his car was delivered to him.

On 8 August, Mitra was informed by Avadh Motors that his car had been repaired completely and could be picked up any time on the next day. Mitra picked up his car in the evening and went for a test ride with the manager of Avadh Motors service station.

Mitra observed that the manager was manually locking and unlocking the doors instead of using the remote locking system. When asked about the reason for not using the remote locking system, to Mitra's dismay he replied:

Sir, the remote locking/security system in your car was of 'Xenox' make and FTMIL does not approve installing this security system in its vehicles. Therefore, we have removed it. You need to spend about Rs 4,000 to install the 'AutoCop' remote locking/security system, which is approved by FTMIL for its vehicles.

When told that the remote locking/security system was provided as well as installed by the FTMIL dealership in the new car as a complimentary gift, the manager said,

Sir, that is the reason the company decided to replace the wiring system free of cost: it was aware that this system was given to you by its dealership. Had you had it installed from the market you would not have been able to get the wiring system replaced under the company's one year warranty scheme.

This was surprising news for Mitra. In fact, in response to one of Murali's queries, he had told him about the source of installation of the remote locking system and the music system (Exhibit 5). Moreover, strange as it may sound, the Avadh Motors service station personnel did not feel it necessary to at least inform the owner before removing the remote locking/security system from his car!

Mitra called/e-mailed (Exhibit 6) FTMIL and told them that since their dealership—M/s Akash Sales and Services—had provided and installed the remote locking/security system in his car as a gift, the company should take up the issue with its dealership for (i) providing and installing a non-approved system in the first place, and (ii) to install the AutoCop remote locking system in his car. Murali of FTMIL immediately got in touch with both FastTrack Motors dealerships, Akash Sales and Services in Karnal and Avadh Motors in Lucknow.

On 29 August Murali of FTMIL informed Mitra that M/s Akash Sales and Services, Karnal, had dispatched an AutoCop security system to Avadh Motors in Lucknow, and he would be contacted by Avadh Motors on receiving it (Exhibit 7).

Mitra was relieved that after such a long and eventful period, the matter was about to be resolved amicably. He was mistaken.

On 30 August Murali called Mitra and told him that Akash Sales and Services had informed FTMIL that the security system in Mitra's car was neither provided nor installed by the dealership. This was shocking news for Mitra. He told Murali that the security system had indeed been provided as well as installed by Akash Sales and Services as compensation for the harassment Mitra had had to undergo at the time of purchasing the car. On hearing this, Murali held a teleconference involving Mitra and Vijay Bansal of Akash Sales and Services, Karnal. During this teleconference, Bansal categorically said, 'Xenox make security system in Dr Rajat's FTTM Regular car was neither provided nor installed by us. We do not install any accessory in FastTrack Motors vehicles which are not approved by FTMIL.' When asked why he had dispatched AutoCop security system to Lucknow for installation in Mitra's car, Bansal replied that it was just on the insistence of Murali that

they had agreed to provide the new security system to him. Murali, though sympathetic, wanted some proof from Mitra. Now Mitra's integrity and honesty was being doubted, and this was too much for him. He told Murali that in addition to his wife, his relative, Vivek, and a friend, Prem Singh, were also with him when the Xenox security system was installed in his car by Akash Sales and Services, as a gift. Vivek was called to participate in the teleconference and he said what Mitra had been saying, but Bansal insisted that the incident had not taken place. The teleconference ended without a solution. Anguished, Mitra called Murali and once again told him the whole story. Murali said that FTMIL intended to take action against Akash Sales and Services for installing unapproved accessories in new cars, but for this he would need documentary proof.

Mitra started looking at all the documents provided to him by Akash Sales and Services at the time of delivery of the car, and luckily found the warranty card for the security system. In this warranty card, it was clearly mentioned that the security system was provided as well as installed by M/s Akash Sales and Services, Karnal. Mitra told Murali this and faxed him a copy of the warranty card. He also threatened that he would move to court to seek compensation for all the harassment he had had to undergo (Exhibit 8). Murali, upon receiving the fax, apologized on behalf of FTMIL and assured Mitra that he would take up the matter with Akash Sales and Services. After three days, Kumar, the owner of M/s Akash Sales and Services, Karnal, called Mitra and conveyed his apologies on behalf of the dealership for the inconvenience caused to him. Mitra took his car to M/s Avadh Motors, Lucknow, where the AutoCop security system was finally installed in his car.

Exhibit 1

From: Prof. Rajat
 Sent: 25 July 2005 13:44 PM
 To: Ustmail, Customer (C.)
 Subject: Complaint—Please do reply at the earliest

Dear Sir/Madam,

After living in Canada for over six years, I came back to India to join the Indian Institute of Management (IIM) Lucknow as an Associate Professor in April this year. I was looking for a reliable and comfortable car, and with my impression of FastTrack Motors India Limited being a trusted company in North America, I purchased an FTTM Regular (HR41B-2468, Engine No. 5MA5931) on 08/05/2005 from Akash Sales and Services, Karnal.

This car, till 22 July 2005, was performing true to my expectations. But somehow, on a very short trip within the city of Lucknow, there was suddenly intense smoke in the car. I called the local FastTrack Motors service station (Avadh Motors) in Lucknow and the people from there were kind enough to take my car to the service station. Next day I was told that 'complete wiring' of the car had been destroyed and needed to

(Exhibit 1 contd)

(Exhibit 1 contd)

be replaced. And since the car is under warranty (it is two and a half months old), the service station sent the case to the Regional Service Manager for approval on 23 July 2005. Today i.e. 25 July 2005, I went to the service station and was told that the approval hasn't come yet. Once approval is received, the service station will send in a request to the Chennai Office for dispatching the wiring kit. It will take over a week's time before I get my car back, I was told.

From the above case, I have the following concerns and will very much appreciate it if somebody from the company can respond to them:

1. I have time and again asked the local service station—Avadh Motors—about the likely cause of this accident. But to my dismay, I have received all kinds of speculations. If there is some technical problem in the vehicle that led to the burning of the wiring system, I am sure the FastTrack Motors company will be interested in finding that fault so as to avoid such happenings in the future (anyway I am concerned). One of the reasons given by the technical people there has to do with the pressure on the fuel pump. But what if this happens again? I request FastTrack Motors to get a thorough check-up done before handing the vehicle back to me.
2. I have been told that after receiving the wiring kit from Chennai, the technical people of the local service station—Avadh Motors—will replace the complete wiring of the car. Can FastTrack Motors assure me of the competency of the local service station in undertaking such a major replacement? This issue arises in my mind given the fact that the local service station people, with all their capabilities, have not been able to find the actual cause of the accident.
3. Will the quality of the wiring system and its functioning be the same as in a new car? You will realize that my car is only two and a half months old and no one would like to face recurring problems in a brand new car; in fact that is a major reason one goes in for a new car.
4. Can the process of replacement of the wiring be expedited? The place I live is 20 km away from the city and my daughter goes to a school which is about 12 km from my house. Therefore, I am in need of a vehicle urgently. I believe FastTrack Motors must have some kind of a policy in such cases to meet its customers' needs.
5. Finally, I am not at all comfortable with the kind of customer service provided by the local service station—Avadh Motors. With my experience with FastTrack Motors in North America, I was expecting world class service from the company here too. But I am sorry to say that it is nowhere near that. People do not pay attention to you. The reason might be that they know that the customer will not be paying anything for this kind of work (my wild guess!!). I was very happy with the kind of service provided when I went to purchase the car. It seems once a customer has purchased a car, he/she is not of much value to the company; which I believe should not be the policy of a company like FastTrack Motors. The people at the local service station even refuse to provide me contact details of Mr. Saurabh Arya, Regional Service Manager.

I will appreciate it if someone in the company can get back to me and address my concerns.

Thanks!
Rajat

(Exhibit 1 contd)

(Exhibit 1 contd)

From: Ustmail, Customer (C.) [custmail@fasttrackmotors.com]
Sent: Monday, 25 July 2005 2:02 PM
To: Prof. Rajat
Subject: RE: Reply from FastTrack Motors India Limited

Dear Mr Rajat,

Thank you for contacting FastTrack Motors India Limited. We appreciate the time you have taken to write us regarding your FTTM Regular. We have noted the content of your letter and have taken up the issue with the dealership M/s Avadh Motors. We will revert to you after we receive relevant information from our dealership.

We assure you of our best service and continued support at all times.

With Warm Regards

Sarita

FastTrack Motors Customer Service Division

Exhibit 2

From: Prof. Rajat
Sent: Tuesday, 26 July 2005 5:42 PM
To: 'Ustmail, Customer (C.)'
Subject: RE: Reply from FastTrack Motors India Limited

Dear Ms Sarita,

I am still waiting for the detailed reply from your side. I will appreciate an early response to all my queries.

Thanks!

Rajat

From: Murali, Govindan (G.)
Sent: Wednesday, 27 July 2005 8:06 AM
To: Rajat
Cc: Ustmail, Customer (C.)
Subject: RE: Reply from FastTrack Motors India Limited/Avadh Motors

Dear Prof. Rajat,

This is in continuation to our earlier communication, we wish to inform you that our technical team is in touch with the dealership to understand and to resolve the concern.

With respect to the spare part, it is being approved and dispatched to our dealership. We assure you that our dealership engineers are competent enough to fix the component in your vehicle. We have requested our dealership managers to thoroughly test the car before delivering it to you.

(Exhibit 2 contd)

(Exhibit 2 contd)

We assure you that we will extend our fullest cooperation and ensure that the car is delivered to you in a very good condition at the earliest.

We seek your cooperation on this.

Thanks & Regards

G. Murali

Customer Relationship Coordinator

FastTrack Motors India Limited

From: Prof. Rajat

Sent: Thursday, 28 July 2005 2:10 PM

To: Murali, Govindan (G.)

Subject: RE: Reply from FastTrack Motors India Limited/Avadh Motors

Dear Mr Murali,

Thank you very much for your reply as well as the assurance. I rechecked with Avadh Motors regarding likely cause of this mishap and was told that it might have happened because of overload on the fuel pump. Though not completely convinced with the explanation, I have to accept it. But then I get concerned about the future—how do I avoid it? ANY SUGGESTIONS.....?

Secondly, please, please expedite the process of replacement.

Thanks!

Rajat

Exhibit 3

From: Murali, Govindan (G.)

Sent: Thursday, 28 July 2005 2:55 PM

To: Prof. Rajat

Cc: Ustmail, Customer (C.)

Subject: RE: Reply From FastTrack Motors India Limited/Avadh Motors

Dear Prof. Rajat,

Thank you for the understanding.

Our FastTrack Motors engineers will be flying to inspect the car and we will address the issue to your satisfaction. The necessary parts have already been airlifted from our site.

Thanks & Regards

G.Murali

Customer Relationship Coordinator

FastTrack Motors India Limited

Exhibit 4

From: Prof. Rajat
Sent: Thursday, 4 August 2005 12:11 PM
To: 'Murali, Govindan (G.)'
Subject: RE: Reply from FastTrack Motors India Limited/Avadh Motors

Dear Mr Murali,

I am sorry for the rudeness but then I am so frustrated with the kind of service I am receiving not only from your local dealer but from the company itself. I sent you an e-mail day before yesterday and after two days I have to remind you telephonically that I have not received any response to it.

The local FastTrack Motors dealer has assured me a number of times that he will keep me updated of the progress but I have not received a single phone call. If, on the basis of the company engineer's assessment, there was going to be a delay in delivery of the vehicle to me, wasn't the local dealer or the company duty-bound, morally or ethically, to at least inform me of the situation? It was I who called the local dealer on Monday this week—the day I was supposed to get my vehicle back—and was told that 'sorry' it would take another seven days to get my car back. Now what do I do with this big 'sorry'? In fact I am feeling so sorry that I bought a FastTrack Motors car instead of a Maruti. Please, please I want my car back. Do not force me to go in for legal action.

Can you please suggest to me a higher officer in your company? I need to talk to him/her.

Exhibit 5

From: Murali, Govindan (G.) [mailto:gvenugo1@fasttrackmotors.com]
Sent: Thursday, 4 August 2005 4:10 PM
To: Prof. Rajat
Cc: Ustmail, Customer (C.)
Subject: Reply from FastTrack Motors India Limited/Avadh Motors

Dear Prof. Rajat,

Thank you for your call. We trust our dealership had made necessary arrangements for your transport. Sorry I was unable to contact you over the phone. Thanks for your understanding and cooperation.

Thanks & Regards

G.Murali
Customer Relationship Coordinator
FastTrack Motors India Limited

From: Prof. Rajat
Sent: Thursday, 4 August 2005 6:45 PM
To: 'Murali, Govindan (G.)'
Subject: RE: Reply from FastTrack Motors India Limited/Avadh Motors

Dear Mr Murali,

Thanks for the concern, but please let me know when I will be getting my car back? Secondly, as requested in my e-mail as well as discussed with you over the phone, please refer this case to the higher-ups in your company or suggest to me the person concerned.

Rajat

(Exhibit 5 contd)

(Exhibit 5 contd)

Dear Prof. Rajat,

Our dealership is expecting the part by this evening or by tomorrow morning. Our dealership will get in touch with you and intimate the time of delivery after receipt of the part. Our higher-ups are aware of the situation, in fact the decision of sending our engineer for the inspection, arranging transport were decided by our team only. However, if you would like to correspond with my higher-ups please send your communication to custmail@fasttrackmotors.com and address it to Mr Saurabh Arya, Regional Service Manager.

Can you provide some more information about your car please? Where were the music system and remote system purchased and fitted?

Regards
Murali

From: Prof. Rajat
Sent: Friday, 5 August 2005 10:11 AM
To: Murali, Govindan (G.)
Subject: RE: Reply from FastTrack Motors India Limited/Avadh Motors

Dear Mr Murali,

Thank you for the prompt response! Will the transport arranged by your dealership be available to me till I get my car back? I will send an e-mail to Mr. Saurabh Arya explaining everything. Regarding the remote system, it was provided as well as fitted by the dealership I purchased the car from—Akash Sales and Services, Karnal. The music system I purchased from Karnal but again the fitting was done by Akash Sales and Services. In fact, I paid some additional money to the dealership towards the cost of jumpers as they suggested that in this way the original wiring system would remain intact.

Rajat

From: Murali, Govindan (G.) [<mailto:gvenugo1@fasttrackmotors.com>]
Sent: Friday, 5 August 2005 8:44 AM
To: Prof. Rajat
Cc: Ustmail, Customer (C.)
Subject: RE: Reply from FastTrack Motors India Limited/Avadh Motors

Dear Prof. Rajat,

Yes, the transport will be provided until the completion of repairs. Thank you for the information.

Regards
Murali

Exhibit 6

From: Prof. Rajat
Sent: Friday, 12 August 2005 9:29 AM
To: 'Murali, Govindan (G.)'
Subject: RE: Reply from FastTrack Motors India Limited/Avadh Motors

(Exhibit 6 contd)

(Exhibit 6 contd)

Dear Murali,

Thanks for your continuous support throughout the period my car has been in the service station. Please do let me know if you have been able to resolve the issue of the remote locking system of my car.

Thanks!

Rajat

From: Murali, Govindan (G.) [gvenugo1@fasttrackmotors.com]
Sent: Thursday, 18 August 2005 1:26 PM
To: Prof. Rajat
Cc: Ustmail, Customer (C.)
Subject: RE: Reply from FastTrack Motors India Limited/Avadh Motors

Dear Prof. Rajat,

Thank you for your mail. We will request our dealership to do the needful. Don't worry, we are with you.

Regards
Murali

Exhibit 7

From: Prof. Rajat
Sent: Monday, 29 August 2005 10:56 AM
To: Murali, Govindan (G.)
Subject: RE: Avadh Motors

Dear Mr. Murali,

I am sure by now you must have talked to your dealerships. I will appreciate it if you can please let me know the outcome.

Thanks!
Rajat

Message From: Murali, Govindan (G.) [gvenugo1@fasttrackmotors.com]
Sent: Monday, 29 August 2005 3:01 PM
To: Prof. Rajat
Cc: Ustmail, Customer (C.)
Subject: RE: Avadh Motors

Dear Prof. Rajat,

We deeply regret the delay and inconvenience.

M/s Akash Sales and Services have sent the security system to M/s Avadh Motors Mr. Sayed is expected to receive the system by today or by tomorrow morning, he will coordinate with you and resolve the issue.

I really cannot find words to apologize to you.

Regards
Murali

Exhibit 8

From: Prof. Rajat
Sent: Tuesday, 30 August 2005 4:43 PM
To: Murali, Govindan (G.)
Cc: Ustmail, Customer (C.)
Subject: RE: Avadh Motors

Dear Murali,

The conference I just had over the phone not only proves my hypothesis—FastTrack Motors India Ltd. dealerships are very bad in their dealings with customers—but goes a step further—they even deny owning the products they have installed in their customers' cars. This is the height of irresponsibility and I fail to understand how FastTrack Motors India Ltd. can afford to have/retain such dealers. I was deeply hurt to hear the statement made by Mr Vijay Bansal during our conference call— 'Security system in Prof. Rajat Mitra's car was not provided or installed by us.' My advice to future potential customers of FastTrack Motors vehicles:

TAKE A VIDEO CAMERA WITH YOU WHEN YOU GO TO PURCHASE A FASTTRACK MOTORS VEHICLE AND MAKE A RECORDING OF EVERY EVENT, OR RATHER, AVOID BUYING A FASTTRACK MOTORS VEHICLE UNTIL AND UNLESS YOU HAVE THE MEANS TO ACCESS THE COMPANY PERSONNEL DIRECTLY FOR AFTER SALE SERVICES.

See, Murali, the way Mr Vijay Bansal denied the fact that his people installed the security system, actually raises a finger on my integrity and honesty. And, to be very frank, that is the last thing I can tolerate. I have sufficient proof/evidence that it was M/s Akash Sales and Services who provided as well as installed the 'Xenox' security system in my car as a complimentary gift. I have had to undergo a lot of mental stress and have also had to devote a good chunk of my time in trying to sort out the issues and don't know how much more it will take.

In fact, had this incident happened in the home country of FastTrack Motors, or for that matter in any developed country, things would have been diagonally opposite. FastTrack Motors would have been after the customer and not the customer after FastTrack Motors. My experience of after-sale customer service in North America has been great—the customer is not asked to prove his/her credentials as the companies believe him/her. Here in India, we only write on the signboard the famous saying by Mahatma Gandhi— 'Customer is my God'—and hang it over the counter without even understanding the meaning of it let alone practicing it.

Not only did my car get damaged through no fault of mine, I was without transport for about 15 days. After spending about Rs. 500,000, I have a car that has undergone major repairs. I have had to manage with initial apathy of the local dealership—M/s Avadh Motors, the security system from my car was removed without any prior information to me, and now fingers are being raised about my integrity, honesty, and truthfulness. I think all this is too much for a customer like me to bear with. I have decided to go to court to claim compensation for the car damage and the delay in repairing.

Rajat

(Exhibit 8 contd)

(Exhibit 8 contd)

From: Murali, Govindan (G.) [mailto:gvenugol@fasttrackmotors.com]
Sent: Wednesday, 31 August 2005 7:15 AM
To: Prof. Rajat
Cc: Ustmail, Customer (C.)
Subject: RE: Avadh Motors

Dear Prof. Rajat,

We appreciate your feelings. We deeply regret the inconvenience. We are very thankful to you for the kind cooperation that you have extended to us and to our dealership. We will have a discussion with our team and definitely ensure corrective action at our dealership. Moreover, we will request our dealership M/s Akash Sales and Services to get in touch with you to resolve the issue. We apologize on behalf of our dealership. Once again Prof. Rajat, we request your kind cooperation.

Yours truly,
Murali

—Original Message—

From: Prof. Rajat
Sent: Wednesday, 31 August 2005 10:38 AM
To: Murali, Govindan (G.)
Cc: Ustmail, Customer (C.)
Subject: RE: Avadh Motors

Dear Mr Murali,

Hope you have received a faxed copy of the warranty card of the Xenox security system installed in my car by M/s Akash Sales and Services, Karnal. In this warranty card, the name of the dealer—M/s Akash Sales and Services, Karnal—is clearly mentioned. I think you should now have a conference call with Mr Vijay Bansal, Deepak, our relative who is helping the family and I. I have proved my honesty and integrity and now let us hear what your dealership has to say. I will wait for your reply before I go to court for my compensation claim.

Thanks!
Rajat