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# CONTENTS

Sr. No.	TITLE & NAME OF THE AUTHOR (S)	Page No.
1.	<b>AVAILABILITY OF EDUCATION LOAN IN INDIA - A CRITICAL STUDY: WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO STATE BANK OF INDIA</b>  <i>Dr. N. N. PANDEY</i>	1
2.	<b>WORD OF MOUTH MARKETING AND ITS IMPACT ON ONLINE SHOPPING</b>  <i>Dr. REENA MODI</i>	6
3.	<b>PROBLEMS AND PROSPECTS OF SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES (SMEs) IN WARANGAL URBAN DISTRICT – A STUDY</b>  <i>K.SIGMATEENA &amp; J. PRANEETHA</i>	12
4.	<b>ROLE OF ORGANIZED RETAILERS IN DEVELOPING AGRICULTURE PRODUCE MARKETS - A CRITICAL EVALUATION OF FRUITS AND VEGETABLES MARKET</b>  <i>Dr. SUMATHI.K &amp; SUJATHA.K</i>	15
5.	<b>A STUDY OF WORK LIFE BALANCE AMONG PROFESSIONAL WOMEN</b>  <i>RENU SINDHU</i>	19
	<b>REQUEST FOR FEEDBACK &amp; DISCLAIMER</b>	23

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**WORD OF MOUTH MARKETING AND ITS IMPACT ON ONLINE SHOPPING****Dr. REENA MODI****ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR****MALLA REDDY COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING & TECHNOLOGY****HYDERABAD****ABSTRACT**

*As the technology is advancing; there is a drastic change in the customers buying behavior all over the world. With the advent of IT sector and the progress in it, we see that customers are making more and more use of it in their daily lives. Customers are more aware about the products available in the market. One of the most important emerging means of promotion of a product is word of mouth marketing (WOM). Thus, in this paper different aims were drawn; the initial aim of this research is to study the attention of the customers in word of mouth to power their online purchasing activities. The next aim is to analyze the people influenced by interest of word of mouth and other media of promotion.*

**KEYWORDS**

customers buying behavior, word of mouth, online purchasing.

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**INTRODUCTION**

From the very beginning, humans have always communicated with each other, sharing and talking about anything and everything anytime. During these kind of conversations, it is quite easy to share point of views, experiences, or give advices and to build up informal communications. Hence, it becomes easy for the people to share their last experience without any difficulty and give their views about the product, the website, and other aspects related to the purchase. Word of mouth (WOM) is not a new concept, right from the era of barter system, the WOM started as human tends to share their experiences with everyone who is near and dear to them. Thus, word-of-mouth (WOM) marketing is the most old, and still, most effective, forms of marketing. In the last thirty years we have visualized the fast development of the Internet and the different methods to communicate with each other has made the sharing of information much easier and more effective. As we are living in a very fast world and also the customers have evolved highly due to awareness created from different media, where everything is changing rapidly, where products and services are fast becoming obsolete, and where companies promise to the customers an ever more diverse product mix and product line, companies need to face the tough competition that engages companies to attract customers. Consumer buying behavior is becoming more observant what they buy. People gather concerning information and opinions about product from people before purchasing. 75% of people don't believe in advertisements, but 92% believe brand recommendations from friends. People are four times more likely to buy when referred by friends. WOM generates two times more sales than paid ads.

Word-of-mouth is defined as any positive or negative remark made by customer's experiences about a product or company, which is made available to a mass of people and any place using the Internet. Word of Mouth (WOM) can also be clear as the method of communication between two non-commercial people and without any profit in the business they are discussing about.

After consuming the product, the feedback of the consumers will increase day by day, creating an exchange of information between consumers and increasing the Word-of-Mouth marketing. There are number of forums, blogs and social networking websites in the World Wide Web that present customers the means of obtaining and sharing this type of information. Thus, the Word-of-Mouth trend began firstly through one to one personal communication and now there are many ways of communicating available by means of all the technologies together with the Internet, most important consumers to the e-Word-of Mouth trend. The Internet enhanced the chances to be in touch with people around you or around the world. Online word-of-mouth became more admired with better use of online social networking sites such as Facebook, twitter, linkedin, and many more.

**NEED OF THE STUDY**

Marketing is all about connecting to the audience. It only means connecting to people at the right place at the right time. So, today people are spending much time on the internet and the companies are trying to connect with them on the internet where people spend most of the time. This is where digital marketing has taken place of marketing. The need for the present study is to know the prospects response to the various promotional tools with special regards to internet marketing.

**SCOPE OF THE STUDY**

The scope of the present study is limited to customer's perceptions about products formed by word of mouth and also their experiences while purchasing online

**OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

1. To study how the public utilizes and multiplies word of mouth information about online purchasing experience.
2. To understand how communities perceive word of mouth marketing and study their behavior while shopping online.

**LITERATURE REVIEW**

Studies carried out in the past on WOM have shown that it plays a very vital role in customers buying decision (Allsopet al.2007), and also helps in creating post purchase wakefulness. In today's competitive world WOM creates Man's drastic effects on the customers and also the company. Initially it may create a positive or a negative impact in customer's mind. Secondly, it may create impact on the products or services and also on the employees of the organisation (McGriff, J. A, 2012). A product may be successful due to positive WOM and lack of negative WOM (Mcgriff, J. A, 2012). If a product is new to a market, its success will depend on the WOM created by the people in the market and also the promotional tolls used to get a favourable WOM.

In the olden days online shopping was restricted to only rich and affluent class (Chai, S., & Kim, M, 2010). Now a days it's easy for the customers to make decisions as the quality and other concerns have been taken care of due to the feedback system on websites (Sharma &Arroyo, 2012). Customers who want to purchase online need positive, dependable and honest feedback from the consumers. e-WOM (electronic word of mouth) has made it easily accessible for the customers. At present we can find technology all around us. These updated technologies have improved our way of interconnecting up to a great extent. Now people use emails, mobile messaging, WhatsApp and other social networking websites (Herr et. al. 1991) which are far faster ways than face-to-face or mails used in the past days. The major platform for WOM in today's scenario are the social networking sites on the world wide web. These websites can be in the form of Facebook, twitter, linkedin etc. (Vilpponen et al 2006).

In these kinds of websites, the information regarding a product passes one individual to other individual and then to yet other individuals in the form of a chain. Over a period of time gradually the website becomes popular amongst the public and ultimately the customers become loyal to that particular website for online

purchasing. This has become a challenge for the companies to retain their customers as with the advent of time the competition in online marketing has become very fierce. So the companies need to maintain quality of the products with competitive pricing.

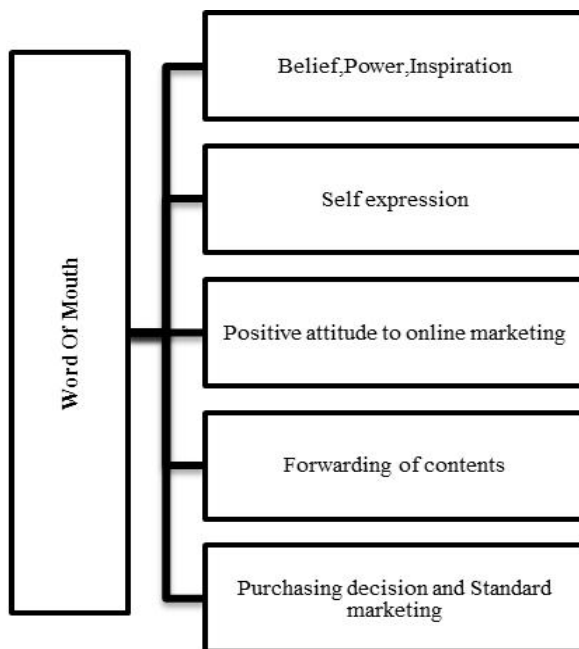
Word of mouth affects the customer buying behavior. A customer will consult his family members or friends or even relatives before making a purchase. But now due to advancement in technology the websites will have a review and feedback space where experienced consumers can post their reviews and comments. So now there's no need to depend on face to face communication for online purchasing.

**METHODOLOGY**

**Research design**

Impact of word of mouth on purchasing behavior of people is seen in this research. And for that descriptive study will be done on consumer attitudes and behaviors in relation to shopping, personal productivity, advertising, and entertainment.

DIAGRAM 1



**Population and sampling**

To confirm that the sample selected is representative of the population, simple random sampling was used in this research where each individual in the population of interest has an equal likelihood of selection, and a random sample was taken. For this study, a well-designed questionnaire was exercised. The questionnaires were directed to 62 respondents constituting the sample size.

**Data collection**

Data was collected through the use of primary or secondary sources. Questionnaire was prepared and sent to people, who were selected randomly. The respondents were given five options to choose one from. 5 pointer ordinal Likert scale was used. Secondary data was collected from research papers, articles, journals etc related to purchasing behavior of the customers for online purchasing.

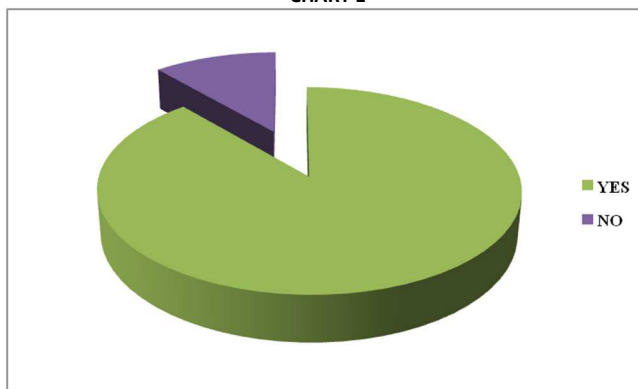
**DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION**

**1. Do you shop online?**

TABLE 1

1	NO	3
2	YES	59

CHART 1



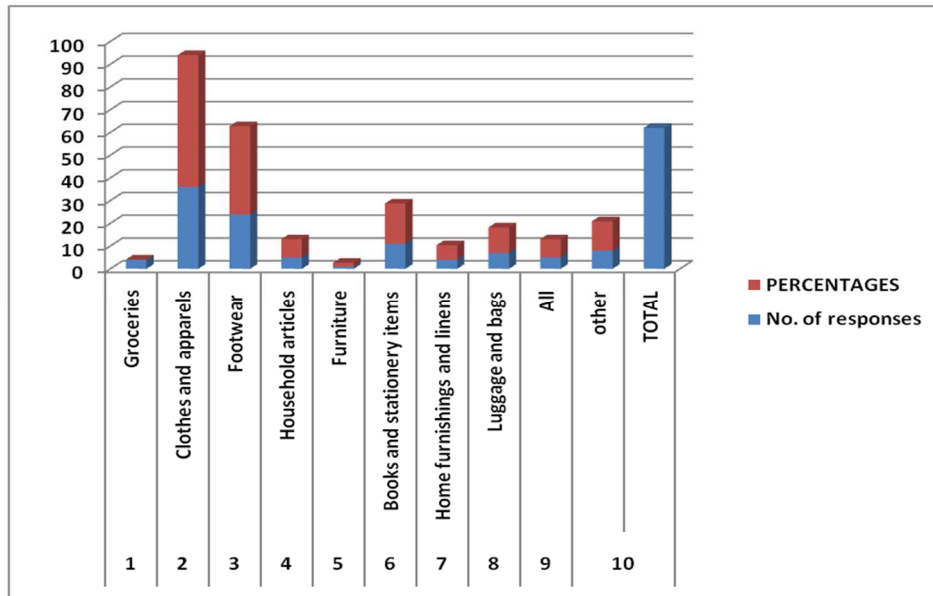
**Interpretation:** From the above analysis it is observed that out of 62 respondents 59 people do online shopping. Only 3 respondents don't buy online. Hence, I interpret that majority of respondents do online shopping.

2. What do you shop?

TABLE 2

No. of items	Names of items	No. of responses	percentages
1	Groceries	4	6.40%
2	Clothes and apparels	36	58%
3	Footwear	24	38.7%
4	Household articles	5	8%
5	Furniture	1	1.6%
6	Books and stationery items	11	17.7%
7	Home furnishings and linens	4	6.4%
8	Luggage and bags	7	11.2%
9	All	5	8%
10	Other	8	12.9%
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>62</b>	

CHART 2



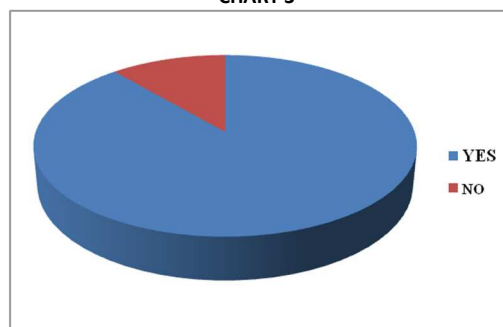
**Interpretation:** From the above table it can be interpreted that 6.4 percentage of respondents buy groceries online, 58 percentage of respondents buy clothes and apparels, whereas 38.7 percentage of respondents buy footwear, 1.6 percentage of respondents buy furniture, 17.7 percentage of respondents buy books and stationery, 6.4 percentage of respondents buy home furnishings and linens, 11.2 percentage of respondents buy luggage and bags, 8 percentage of respondents buy all the items in the list and 12.9 percentage of respondents buy other items which are not mentioned in the list. Hence, I interpret that most of the respondents buy clothes and apparels online.

3. Do you refer customer reviews for online purchasing?

TABLE 3

YES	53
NO	9

CHART 3

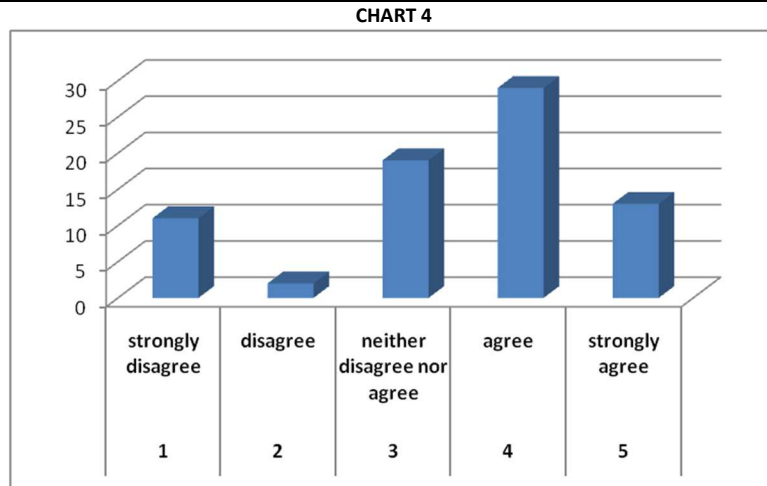


**Interpretation:** From the above analysis it is clear that only 9 respondents do not refer to reviews for online purchasing, whereas 53 respondents refer to reviews for online purchasing. So, I interpret that majority of the respondents refer to reviews for online purchasing

4. How far the reviews influence your online purchasing?

TABLE 4

1	strongly disagree	11
2	disagree	2
3	neither disagree nor agree	19
4	agree	29
5	strongly agree	13

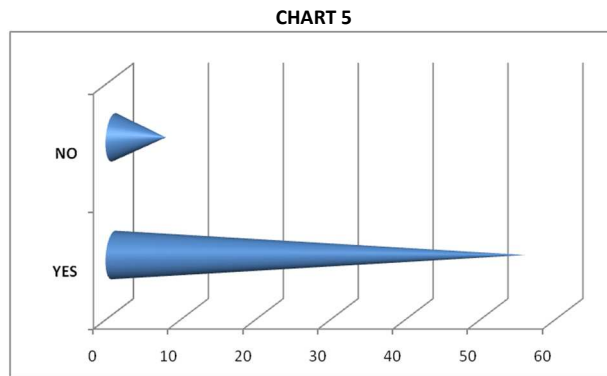


**Interpretation:** From the above analysis it is observed that 11 respondents strongly disagreed that the reviews influence their online purchasing, 2 respondents disagree that the reviews influence their online purchasing, 19 respondents neither agreed nor disagreed, 29 respondents agreed that the reviews influence their online purchasing, 13 respondents strongly agreed that the reviews influence their online purchasing. So, I interpret that majority of respondents agree that the reviews influence their online purchasing.

**5. Are you a loyal customer to any website for online purchasing?**

**TABLE 5**

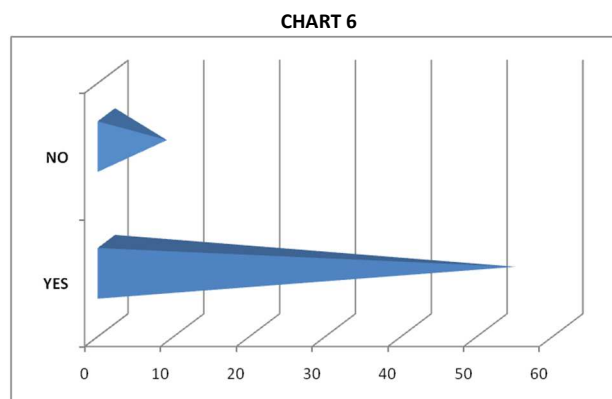
YES	55
NO	7



**6. Do you get information about offers, discounts or sale on your regular shopping site?**

**TABLE 6**

YES	54
NO	8



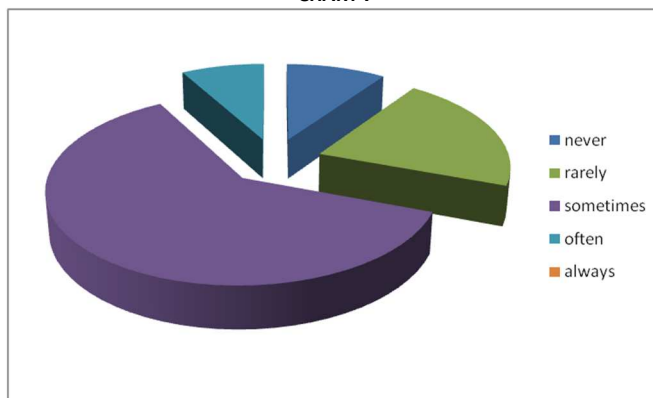
**Interpretation:** From the above table it is clear that 54 respondents get information about offers, discounts or sale on your regular shopping site and 8 respondents do not get information about offers, discounts or sale on your regular shopping site. Hence, I interpret that majority of respondents get information about offers, discounts or sale on your regular shopping site.

**7. Do you rely on views of your family members/ friends/ relatives for online purchasing?**

**TABLE 7**

never	6
rarely	13
sometimes	38
often	5
always	0

CHART 7



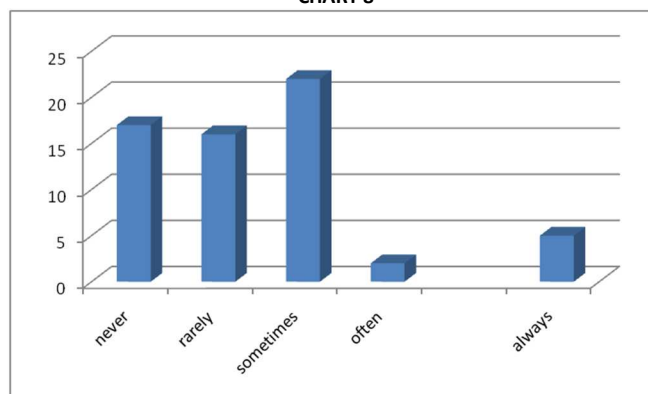
**Interpretation:** From the above analysis it is observed that 6 respondents never rely on views of your family members/ friends/ relatives for online purchasing, 13 respondents rarely rely on views of your family members/ friends/ relatives for online purchasing, 38 respondents sometimes rely on views of your family members/ friends/ relatives for online purchasing, 5 respondents often rely on views of your family members/ friends/ relatives for online purchasing, none of the respondents never rely on views of your family members/ friends/ relatives for online purchasing. Hence, I interpret most of the respondents rely sometimes on views of your family members/ friends/ relatives for online purchasing.

**8. Do you prefer to shop from advertisements on social media?**

TABLE 8

never	17
rarely	16
sometimes	22
often	2
always	5

CHART 8



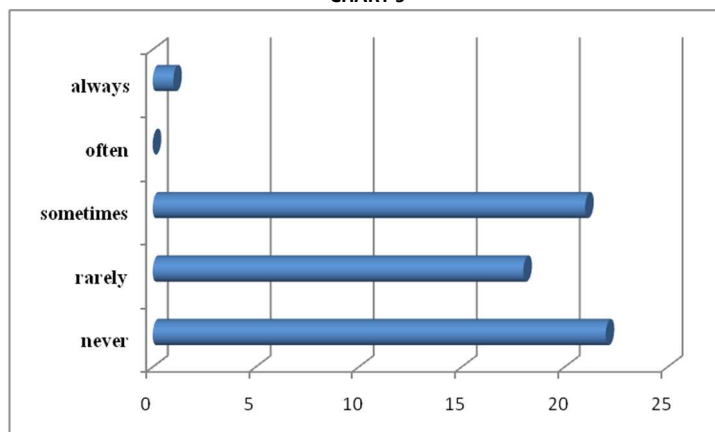
**Interpretation:** From the above analysis it is observed that 17 respondents never prefer to shop from advertisements on social media, 16 respondents rarely prefer to shop from advertisements on social media, 22 respondents sometimes prefer to shop from advertisements on social media, 2 respondents often prefer to shop from advertisements on social media, 5 respondents always prefer to shop from advertisements on social media. Hence I interpret that majority of respondents sometimes prefer to shop from advertisements on social media.

**9. Do you prefer to shop from advertisements on TV/Radio?**

TABLE 9

never	22
rarely	18
sometimes	40
often	0
always	1

CHART 9



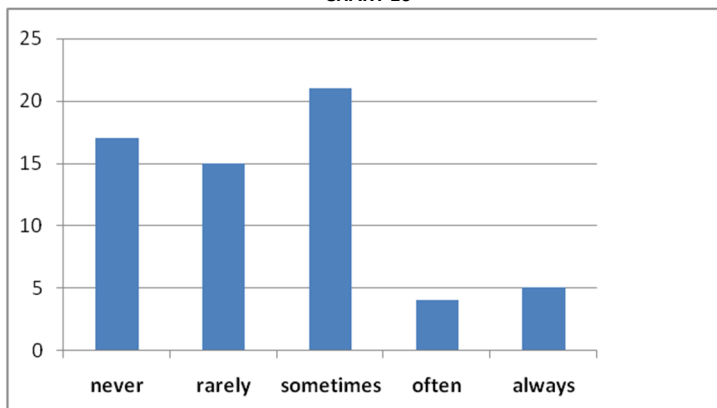
**Interpretation:** From the above analysis it is observed that 22 respondents never prefer to shop from advertisements on TV/Radio, 18 respondents rarely prefer to shop from advertisements on TV/Radio, 21 respondents sometimes prefer to shop from advertisements on TV/Radio, none of the respondents often prefers to shop from advertisements on TV/Radio, only 1 respondent always prefer to shop from advertisements on TV/Radio. Hence, I interpret that most of the respondents never prefer to shop from advertisements on TV/Radio but sometimes some respondents may prefer to shop from advertisements on TV/Radio.

**10. Do you prefer to shop from advertisements on print media?**

TABLE 10

never	17
rarely	15
sometimes	21
often	4
Always	5

CHART 10



**Interpretation:** From the above analysis it is observed that 17 respondents never prefer to shop from advertisements on print media, 15 respondents rarely prefer to shop from advertisements on print media, 21 respondents sometimes prefer to shop from advertisements on print media, 4 respondents often prefer to shop from advertisements on print media, 5 respondents always prefer to shop from advertisements on print media. Hence, I interpret that majority of the respondents sometimes prefer to shop from advertisements on print media.

**FINDINGS**

- 1) Most of the respondents go for online shopping, specifically for clothes and apparels.
- 2) Most of the respondents refer to the reviews online and also get influenced by them up to a certain extent.
- 3) Majority of the respondents are loyal customers to a website for online purchasing.
- 4) They also rely on reviews of their family/friends/relatives for online purchasing, up to a certain extent.
- 5) They do not refer much to other media of advertising like TV, radio, newspapers, journals and magazines.

**CONCLUSION**

Word of mouth creates an immense impact on the purchasing behavior of the customer's due comments and reviews on social media. The customers will evaluate the pros and cons of their purchase on the basis of quality and price of the products. Hence, marketers become aware of customer's preferences and can modify their products to attract new customers and retain the old customers.

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