Dilemma of a Sales Executive

DIACUT is a Coimbatore-based tool-tip manufacturer of all machines like: turning centres, machining centres, grinding machines, etc. The company has marketing offices in Pune, Chennai, Bengaluru and New Delhi. Jaffer is a sales executive with the company for the past 4 years attached to the Chennai region. He has won several rewards from the Governing Board of DIACUT for his excellent job of meeting and sometimes exceeding the targets.

Jaffer’s job involves meeting the heads of Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) that are into auto components manufacturing, die making, etc., introducing them to some of their new products and discussing with them about their products’ advantages over the other existing products. As the awareness about the products has a direct relation to the sales, the company fixes targets on the number of companies’ heads to be visited by the sales executives. DIACUT has a policy of finalising the monthly, quarterly as well as annual targets in consultation with the executives concerned. The top management believes this to be the best way of involving the entire organisation in the decision making process and it is observed that the executives become more accountable and generally abide by the decision, as they were a part of the decision making process. To meet the current target, considering the number of visits that can be made per day, Jaffer needs to meet 100 more SMEs in Chennai in the remaining 29 days of the quarter.

Meanwhile, Jaffer’s head and regional manager, B. Laxman (Laxman), requested Jaffer to address fellow sales executives in the current term. He was asked to make a presentation and interact with the executives, highlighting the factors that helped him achieve his targets successfully, which would be a motivating factor for other executives. Bengaluru was chosen as the venue for the presentation. Jaffer needed a day exclusively for the preparation and was also aware that he requires at least 27 days to complete his target. As such, Jaffer felt that it was possible for him to take a day off required to go to Bengaluru.

However, Jaffer knew pretty well that there are some days, when he cannot travel or meet the company heads due to the following exhaustive reasons:

This case study was written by R Muthukumar, IBSCDC. It is intended to be used as the basis for class discussion rather than to illustrate either effective or ineffective handling of a management situation. The case was prepared from the generalised experiences.

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Background Reading: Chapters 4 and 5, “Probability I : Introductory Ideas” and “Probability Distributions”, Statistics for Management, 7th Edition (Richard I. Levin and David S. Rubin)
Firstly, in this region, it is common for some political or social organisations, trade unions to announce *bandh* or *hartal*, as a mark of protest against some policy of the Government or to highlight a specific problem facing the society. During these days, there is total restriction on movement of the public. And, therefore, on such days he will not be able to meet the company heads.

Secondly, because of the ongoing monsoon season, rains cause havoc, flooding some parts of the city. As a result of this, some of the roads get blocked, and hence, on these days Jaffer will not be able to meet the company heads.

Thirdly, a Trade Exhibition and Conference, which all the SME heads will attend, is due this season. As a result of this, he will not be able to meet the company heads during these days.

Since Jaffer is not willing to miss the target, he wants to make sure that he works for at least 27 days to meet the target. At the same time, he is very keen to go to Bengaluru to address his fellow workers, as this will not only be a professional boost to his career, but he can also help his fellow workers to excel. In order to ensure that he has enough working days, he wants to find out the frequency of the happenings of these three events.

After going through the newspapers of the last 2 years, Jaffer observed that during the monsoon, there is a one in 30 chance that, on any day in this season, the roads are blocked due to flood in the city. He also observed from the records of the civic administration that the movement in the city was restricted either due to *bandh* or *hartal* for 14 days in the last 2 years i.e., 14 days in about 730 days. He also observed from the records that the Trade Exhibition and Conference in the city was for 15 days in the last 3 years, i.e., 15 days in about 1095 days. What conclusion did Jaffer arrive at after making this research? What are the methods that Jaffer used to arrive at this conclusion?