



RETAILING WITH VISION

10 ways to improve your service and stay ahead of the game...

Ok so you're surviving the recession. You've cut your costs, been more targeted in your buying and you're keeping the cash flow as tight as you can...

So what... so is everyone else!

Maybe now is the time to start being creative. To come out from behind the barricades, to focus on what's right with your business, to get back to basics, to serve the customers with the same passion and verve that you started with and to do what you should be doing...

Enjoy yourself again...

Down with the economists, begrudges, bankers, politicians and 'nay' sayers.

Remember the old quote... *'if you think you can you can, if you think you can't you're right'?*

So here's 10 ways you could refocus and serve the customer better.

1. Smile a bit more...

There is nothing more infectious than a smile it creates happiness in the home, fosters good will in business and is the countersign of friends. Encourage your people to smile. Put up smiley faces in stockroom and staff areas. Try putting a mirror on the door to the sales floor. Check yourself out. Reward happiness!

2. Under promise and over deliver...

Tell a customer you can get an item for them by Wednesday and have it for them by Tuesday. Deliver direct to a customer's house.

Source things from another shop just to complete an outfit. Make it a magic experience for the customer. Keep a customer database and cherish it! Make sure you collect customer names, phone numbers and email addresses. Ask them if you can send details of events, new stock, competitions, changes to your website. Manage the information on your PC. Reward the staff member who collects the most names. Cherish the list and keep in touch with the customer.

4. Treat a complaint as a gift!

Did you know that only 1 out of 26 customers will take the time to complain? Think about it for a moment, when you are treated poorly, do you complain? Most people don't! They say: 'I'm never coming back here again'. If a customer does complain, he / she is more likely to come back thereby increasing customer loyalty. If a complaint is dealt with quickly 82% of people will buy from you again!!!

5. Don't treat the counter as a crutch!

How often have you been in to a store where the assistants seem glued to the counter? If you really want to engage with the customer come out from behind the counter, use open body language, smile, let them see how you dress! Be present!

6. Less is more!

You need to offer choice to your customer of course you do. But equally don't cram the rails or shelves so full that you resemble TK Maxx! Don't keep the garment bag over the lighter garments either - Do your customers have dirty hands? A well merchandised shop with product that is handled with care and presented beautifully will entice any shopper to buy.

7. Sweat the small stuff that concerns the customer...

Have you ever forgotten a birthday? Was it a big thing or a little thing? Understanding and responding to the needs of each customer and delivering consistent outstanding service provides a competitive advantage that makes your business a strong customer choice. Your customers judge you by HOW you actually serve them so execute the task with courtesy, professionalism and speed. After all, anything less makes you the same as your competition!

8. Accept that you and your people will make mistakes...

So practice your recovery skills which means mess up, fess up and dress up! Remember that customer perception is all there is so look to manage those 'moments of truth' or all those 'touch points' with the customer - in person, over the phone, by email. It is the culmination of all the moments of truth that determine their satisfaction with your products or services.

9. Don't think you have all the answers...

The world is changing rapidly so it's hard for anyone to keep up. New and better ways of serving customers are being tried all the time - go have a look what's going on. Give yourself customer service time. Check out what your competitors are doing (they will be checking you out!). Talk to your competitors - you may have common ground you can work on together.

10. Remember the killer B's for dealing with Customers...

Be sincere
Be consistent
Be knowledgeable
Be responsible
Be Happy!

This article is courtesy of Duncan Graham Managing Director of Retail-vision.