Retail reality check

WHY SHOPPERS ARE LEAVING STORES EMPTY HANDED

And how to fix the problem
Consumers are walking into retail stores expecting to get fast, smart guidance while they shop. But they aren’t getting the answers they need. Of the 500 consumers who don’t know exactly what to purchase, 93 percent can’t find the right person to help them.

When they can’t, nearly 90 percent of these shoppers take their business elsewhere.

To win over frustrated shoppers, retailers must quickly connect them with the very best resource to help them find – and buy – exactly what they need.
RETAILERS’ SECRET WEAPONS FOR CUSTOMER SATISFACTION – AND HIGHER SALES

Knowledgeable sales associates are more powerful – and vital to retailers’ success – than ever before.

When they connect with indecisive shoppers, more than 93 percent are likely to make a purchase.

In fact, sales increase because of these very interactions. Nearly 85 percent said they would spend more money if they could just get the help they need, and 84 percent would leave the store more satisfied.

According to the 60 major retailers that TimeTrade surveyed in late 2013, they know what’s at stake: 80 percent noted that sales increase by 25-50 percent when shoppers are assisted by knowledgeable retail associates.

The impact extends far beyond one store visit as nearly 90 percent of consumers would shop with that retailer again.

If shoppers can get on-demand customer service, that’s even better. Nearly 75 percent would book personal, in-store appointments before coming into a retail location, if given the opportunity. Shoppers can connect with the exact person they need, without the waiting or hassles.

One consumer said fast access to the right sales rep was a major part of what made Nordstrom stand out from the crowd, “At Nordstrom, you can always book appointments with any associate, and they call when they find something you would love.”

Shoppers aren’t asking for anything revolutionary – personal attention and fast service when it’s most convenient for them – but in order to deliver that, retailers need to have the right people on store floors. And our new survey proves these demands are consistent – regardless of age and income.

“I’VE HAD SO MANY POOR EXPERIENCES THAT I COULDN’T CHOOSE ONE SPECIFICALLY. I CAN NEVER FIND A SALES ASSOCIATE, AND MANY TIMES I GET EXASPERATED AND JUST LEAVE THE STORE.”

– One surveyed customer

So what really matters?

The surveyed consumers also shared their best retail experiences in the past six months. The common denominator: sales associates on the floor who could quickly answer shoppers’ questions and make smart product recommendations.
Consumers’ expectations of retail workers have evolved dramatically. Here’s what makes the ideal sales associate.

**SMART**

The #1 thing on nearly two-thirds of consumers’ wish lists: on-target recommendations. Part-time, inexperienced employees must morph into experts that understand product features and specs, shoppers’ lifestyles and challenges.

**MOBILE-ENABLED**

To do this, sales associates need more information about shoppers before they even ask for help. When associates know exactly who’s coming into the store, what they’ve purchased before and what they’re looking for now, consumers get faster service and more tailored guidance.

**FAST**

Consumers are running low on time and patience. Employees need to figure out what shoppers want and give them the answers that they need faster than ever before. If retail associates can do that, consumers are actually more inclined to spend more time – and money – in the store. It’s even better when shoppers can decide who should help them, when.

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**CHANGING THE TIDE, ONE Shopper At A Time**

Consumers may have access to more information than ever before, but it isn’t making their lives any easier. In fact, deciding what to buy is a lot harder today.

Shoppers are fed up, and no longer walk into a store expecting to get the helpful recommendations and convenient service they crave. If retailers can surprise them and deliver an unexpected experience, they’ll turn frustration into lifelong loyalty. And that’s the ultimate goal.

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**FIND OUT HOW APPLE CRACKED THE RETAIL EXPERIENCE CODE**

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About the Survey

In January 2014, 1,087 anonymous survey responses were collected online via Survey Sampling International (SSI). American adults, 18 years and older, regardless of annual income, were surveyed.

More than 100 million connections have been made between consumers and businesses using TimeTrade's scalable Responsive Engagement Platform, directly translating into more than $2 billion in commerce every year.

About TimeTrade

The world's most well respected brands in retail, banking and industries worldwide use TimeTrade to deliver on their brand promise of a truly personalized customer experience. TimeTrade's Responsive Customer Engagement Platform allows consumers to connect with a brand, anywhere, anytime — and then gives companies deeper insight than ever before about what consumers want next. The result: higher sales and lifetime, repeat customers.

TimeTrade integrates easily with enterprise sales, marketing, service, CRM and business process management systems to accelerate bottom-line business results and drive inbound sales, while enhancing customer experience and loyalty.

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