

# 5 Mistakes that keep your Customers from Spending Their Money

Unknowingly, we make it hard for customers to spend money. Whether a large corporation or a hometown store, business leaders, managers, and owners constantly put up barriers to the thing we need most: SALES! Here are five easy ways to lose a sale OR keep them coming back!

## **Mistake #1: Losing Sight of the Big Picture**

I spend a significant amount of money at organic grocery stores, including a local Seattle food co-op. It's a 15-mile roundtrip to get to the store, and every visit, there's a new excuse from the Meat Department Manager for why they don't have my favorite turkey thighs:

- Turkeys only come on Fridays
- We only get 2 at a time
- It takes a long time to put them on the shelf
- You will have to wait until Thanksgiving
- No, you can't special order them

Their constant excuses make it hard for me to spend not only \$20 on turkey, but an additional \$200 I would spend for my weekly groceries. How many other thousands of dollars in lost sales do they incur because of these excuses?

## **Mistake #2: Not Creating Options**

I also shop at that *other* national healthy grocery store for their awesome cookies. One cookie is so good that they run out quickly and are not re-stocked on a timely basis. Here's a sampling of the excuses I got from the Bakery staff:

- Those cookies are really hard to make.
- We didn't make any last night.
- They only come on Thursdays.
- They take too long to make.
- We ran out of chocolate chips.

If you tell people NO long enough, they'll leave...even if you have an awesome product. In this case, I contacted the store manager who called me, acknowledged my complaint, sent me a \$20 gift card, and used my letter as a training tool for his staff. Directing the customer towards another product or offering a discount on their next visit can entice the customer to keep coming back, even if you don't have what they need.

### **Mistake #3: Not Respecting the Customer**

I attended the open house of a dance studio with specialized equipment. It was obvious that the owners were struggling financially and their sales event showed why.

- The studio owners hid in the back room during the event and did not mingle with their guests.
- They served stale snacks and cheap wine.
- No chairs were provided, forcing 50 women to sit on the floor for over 2 hours.

The owners briefly appeared after 45 minutes, announcing the demonstration would begin in an hour. I got frustrated and left – and took my potential sale with me. The owners were shocked that I was leaving. *I gave you 45 minutes to sell me and you did nothing.* They were not respectful of my time or money at this free event, so why would I trust them with my future time and money?

### **Mistake #4: Making Refunds Difficult**

I recently bought a generic \$50 video backdrop from a foreign-based Amazon vendor and decided to return the unused product to the vendor. Here's what I had to do to get my refund:

- Read a tearful email about how hard it is to return items to them because they are in a foreign country.
- Pay out of pocket for shipping to a US address.
- Follow my USPS tracking number and notify *them* when *they* received it.
- Wait 5 days for their US Agent to process the returned product.
- Wait another week to process my refund.

It took ONE MONTH to process my return. I will never buy from them again. I could have written a scathing review, but decided it wasn't worth my time. Support your customer in making a legitimate refund. Your sob story won't win you any customers, especially if you have competition for your commodity product.

### **Mistake #5: Disrespecting the Customer**

I've lost track of the times that a store cashier answered a phone instead of ringing up my sale. Or the number of times I've had to drag an employee away from their smartphone or interrupt their private conversation with other staffers. Being disrespectful seems to have become the norm for many retailers. If you can provide an awesome customer experience, you'll create raving fans and more sales. Here are my favorite experiences:

- **The Ritz Carlton Doorman greeted me by name.** "Good Evening, Ms. Michael, how was your day?" Not "Hey Dude" or "What's Up, Man?". He gave me a respected greeting that took NO money, just effort.
- **The hair stylist who gave me an incredible scalp massage.** I was so relaxed that he could have shaved me bald and I wouldn't have cared.

- **The Southwest Airlines Pilot who personally took care of my parents.** He escorted my elderly parents, including a wheelchair and luggage, to their connecting flight with a smile and a thank you.

Treating people with respect may seem antiquated, but is still appreciated. We live in a hyper competitive market, but simple respect can go a long way towards keeping your customers – and making it easier to spend their money.

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