

Three Retail Mistakes You Don't Know You're Making

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As the saying goes... RETAIL IS DETAIL, and when it comes to running your retail business, it's all about making each detail the best it can be. For many retailers, however, details become lost in their everyday responsibilities and as a result, their store suffers. And while some of the details seem obvious, it's hard to ignore the reality of countless merchants who choose to overlook them every day.

DETAIL #1: Merchandising

Merchandising is an art to some... and to others a chore, dreaded task or simply something they move again and again to the bottom of their to-do-lists. Unfortunately for these folks, however, merchandising "speaks" your store story to every customer that walks into your space.

Is your store cluttered and challenging to navigate? Your customers may think you lack care and organization - and as a result, lack the appeal they need to spend. Is your store plain and boring - resulting in a space that leaves customers wondering if you're going out of business or worse... what other stores they can find what they are looking for from? Possibly and hopefully, however, you have found the perfect merchandising balance in your store that both welcomes customers and thoughtfully allows for items to be on display. Merchandising is not something to take lightly. Instead, it should be a constant responsibility on your everyday to-do-list.

DETAIL #2: Promotion

We live in a media obsessed world-plain and simple. Gaining press isn't always easy, but it's typically always worth it. As for how you can start to gain promotional attention today? Use social media! It isn't going anywhere, and it needs to be an essential part of any small business owner's marketing strategy to stay relevant in a competitive consumer environment.

Whether it's the latest hashtag trending with news of the #RoyalBaby or #NepalEarthQuake, consumers - aka also just regular folks reading the news and social media threads- are constantly gaining media impressions. As a result? You can either choose to be a part of them or not.

One way to gain promotional attention is to seek local publicity from your local media. Sharing news of recent inventory arrivals may not do the trick, however. Instead, consider creating experiences (in-store events such as book signings, charity focused events or anniversary celebrations) to help generate more excitement about your store and therefore, helping to increase the chance you will gain media attention. You can also consider sharing interesting news about an employee... possibly someone has a unique skill, is a war veteran or randomly experienced something unique and extraordinary.

DETAIL #3: Employees

The face of your business may be you... but to your customers, the faces of your business are anyone and everyone who works for you. Which leads me to ask-are you sure your employees are the best representation of you and your business? Failing to evaluate existing staff, deliver frequent employee trainings and update all sales associates on new inventory and vendors isn't just lazy... it's bad business. If your goal is to gain as much sales as possible each and every day your store is open, then that means having a rock-star team of employees who are personable, engaging and educated in knowing everything they need to about your business. From customer care to operational procedures to inventory news to national consumer trends and more, your employees help keep the heartbeat to your business alive... make sure they are qualified and regularly trained to do so.

Running a store is a one thing. Efficiently operating a store is another thing. Avoid overlooking these retail mistakes to help your store run as efficiently as possible.