

instincts

Instincts is a monthly publication on branding for clients, associates and friends.

Leading and inspiring all those who touch the enterprise
to understand, embrace and enhance the power of your brand.

Customer service comes up shorts...

Recently my wife purchased a pair of shorts for me at Harry Rosen, Canada's men's wear legend. It was her way of saying 'happy birthday' and at the same time telling me she hates the pair I am wearing ...it worked. Upon opening the gift, we realized the salesperson had given her the wrong size. Ahhhh!

She returns to the store and finds they will need to order the right size. Ahhhh!

So the initial visit which, in our crazy lives, is hard enough to find time for is turning into three trips. Ahhhh!

A week later, and feeling my wife has done enough - I suggest that I pick up the now arrived shorts and see what else I need. Entering the store 9 pairs of eyes assess me and track my every move. The guy that I would be most unlikely to pick to assist me (our tastes don't come close) approaches with his greedy grin - I'm his turn. The second I say I'm there to pick something up he droops his shoulders, spins on his heel and waves me off to the counter - quickly signaling his fellow vultures that I don't count as 'his turn'.



Now at the counter, an equally uninterested clerk checks who made the original sale to my wife and pages him. She pages again. One of the aging, lounging salesmen mumbles that my guy is with a customer - he is the only guy in this giant store who is! She pages him again anyway. Across the room, I watch my guy excuse himself from his client, make his way over to me, only to apologize that he is busy and that he will get one of these formerly mentioned, unengaged guys to help. They scatter like minnows in a pond as he looks desperately for help - finally he grabs and twists an arm belonging to someone who obviously owes him a favour.

Now, I don't need to tell you that this nabbed guy is not interested in me or my shorts and the 10 minute encounter reminds me why I haven't shopped there in the past 10 years . Ahhhh!

When are these old-model stores going to figure out that the 'commission' selling model does not drive an acceptable customer experience? Harry Rosen spends millions turning people onto his stores only to have his incensed guys turn them off.

What would brand coach suggest?

Harry baby, check out Best Buy where they actually tell you they are not on commission and where the sales folks are happy, helpful and knowledgeable. These people deliver a good customer experience as they walk you through the dizzying world of today's electronics. They are pleasant, they work hard, and boy do they know their stuff. This is a group who, thanks to a real CBO (Chief Brand Officer), are inspired to work, NOT just incensed. Great customer experiences need people who have it in their hearts.

Retailers would do well to hire and train people who love the products but have never worked in an old-model store - try waitresses, off-duty firemen, nurses - these are people who instinctively care for people, and would love a chance to work with customers who aren't hungry, burning or bleeding - like Harry.