**Retailer Newsletter**

**July 1, 2021**

**Tom’s Business “TIPS”**

***“To Improve Profits”***

**RE: Customer Service aka Great Customer Service**

**Hi,**

**I write often about Customer Service, or as I prefer calling it, ‘Great Customer Service’. I often reflect on situations that occurred at my stores, and how I would have made some different decisions if I had thought about the long-range effects of Great Customer Service. Recently, after a week of rain I found myself in line for a car wash. You can imagine, the line was long; and after a couple of minutes, I noticed it had completely stopped. After a 10–15-minute delay, the cashier came to each car in line (approx. 30) and told us they would be down temporarily but should be up and running in a few minutes. Since I was blocked in front and back and to my side, I decided to wait it out. After 20 minutes, some cars started to leave, so I had the opportunity to move my car out of the line. As I was about to turn around, a different cashier came by and said she was sorry I had to leave. I asked what the problem was, and she said their payment system was down. I asked, “Could I have paid cash and received a wash?” Her answer was, “Well, I guess so.” She then handed me a $2 off coupon (to be used when purchasing their most expensive wash. I said, “NO THANK YOU!” The thought occurred to me as I was driving away, what would have been the benefit if they had allowed each customer to receive a Free Wash? Sure, they would not have earned any revenue for an hour or so, but think how many happy, satisfied customers would leave with a clean car and a happy shopping experience? The answer: unknown! During the opening segment of our training sessions, I often ask attendees as they introduce themselves, to tell me the biggest obstacle they face. I often hear the comment, “Too much competition.” Thinking back to my car wash experience; what if that car wash had a customer friendly approach to the days when equipment was down? Did they go out of their way to accommodate the inconvenienced customer, or did they just send dirty cars away to go elsewhere. If that business continually faces declining sales, do they also complain, “Too much competition is hurting our business?”**

**I can see many of you shaking your head and saying out loud, “I don’t have a car wash, how does this relate me?” Well, I’m about to tell you.**

* **Have you ever experienced longer than expected down time at your pumps while doing a price change that turned into a 10-minute delay? How many customers waited or just left?**
* **Did a customer ever mention your fountain was out of Coke or Pepsi and you had to run to the back and switch the BIB? Then you had to run the fountain until the product was back on.**
* **When was the last time a customer came in your store and said the receipt paper was out at the pump?**
* **A morning customer told you the coffee has run out and you had to brew a fresh pot while the customer waited.**

**Now I’m sure all of these scenarios could or did happen to you at one time or another. How did you compensate the frustrated customer? How long was the delay? What would you do in the same situation? How long would you wait before you left to go elsewhere? *And here is the important question,* “When the customer goes somewhere else, do they find it a pleasant shopping experience? Do they continue to return to their newfound store?” That’s how a business can experience a slow decline in customer traffic and the owner scratches his/her head and wonder, “Where did they go?”**

**Several months ago, I discussed Virtual Recruiting & Hiring. I’m curious to hear from you if you tried it and how well it worked, or did you try it, and it didn’t work. Please let me know.**

**Please check our website, *‘Safety & Security Tips’* monthly. Some of these tips could save your business or your family from harm.**

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**I’ve noticed several c-stores are still stocking Ice Melt, Snow Brushes, and Ice Scrapers on shelves. I have to ask, “WHY, WHY, WHY?” Please take these items off the shelves and floor display and put them in storage until they are needed (next winter). These items detract your customers from looking for items they do want and need. They also appear be collecting dirt and dust.**

**From time to time, I have discussed handwritten, unprofessional ‘out of order’ signage in the c-store, especially on fountain equipment. I recently found this sign and I thought I would share it. You could print your own, using your store name/logo and post as needed. I suggest using masking tape since it will not leave a residue commonly found with scotch tape.**



**I hope you are still continuing with your pandemic-inspired cleaning and sanitizing procedures. Please keep a hand sanitizer dispenser available for your staff and customers to use. I’m still seeing signs posted on store entrances requiring masks for all customers and staff, and nobody is adhering to the notice. Please be sure to check around your stores to be sure signage is current AND accurate. If local regulations do not require a mask, be sure you remove old notices.**

**I recently updated 2020 State of Industry Store Sales on our website. Check it out, how do YOU compare?**

**Don't be a victim of the 5 Dangerous Words –**

***‘Maybe I’ll Do It Tomorrow’***

**Do it today because tomorrow (~~could be~~) will be too late!**

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***“Our business is making your business better!”***