

**Retailer Newsletter**

**August 1, 2022**

**Tom’s Business “TIPS”**

***“To Improve Profits”***

**RE: Getting Customers Into Your Store**

**Hello,**

**I recently read several excellent articles about customers spending less money in c-stores due to the high price of fuel. I’m not telling you anything you don’t already know. The most recent statistics state: “22% of pay-at-the-pump customers will come into the store.” If ever there has been a time to WOW your customers with GREAT CUSTOMER SERVICE whenever they come in, that time is now! You and I understand the complexities that go along with high fuel prices, unfortunately customers do not. That is why we need to be more understanding when our customers come in and we can see they are actually struggling just to find the $$ to put gas in their cars. I realize your CSRs are also feeling the pinch in their own wallets when buying gas, but they need to show a little compassion for YOUR customers. Other ideas to get more customers into your stores include:**

* **Clean pumps, clean driveway, clean trash cans.**
* **In store special offers.**
* **Clean windows – I am a firm believer that a store with all the glass covered with beer and cigarette signage does not look ‘inviting’ to customers. I also do not believe it enhances the beer and cigarette sales you think it does. I am old school when it comes to Safety & Security; “If I cannot see into a business prior to entering, I could be walking into a dangerous situation.”**
* **Clean, available restrooms. Remember, if 94% of your customers will not return because of dirty restrooms, how many will return because *you DO NOT offer restrooms?***
* **Clean, organized store layout.**
* **Price all store products.**
* **And many more . . . .**

**No secret right, that I have written extensively on Recruiting and Retaining good employees? I just read an article on the advantages of offering employees health care benefits. Now I can hear you grumbling as you read this, but please just hear me out. I have read the cost for the average store would be approximately $15,000 per year. Check with your regular insurance agent, friends in small business, or even your supplier for sources of medical insurance. If other companies are offering salary and benefits that you do not, think about the type of people you are attracting. I have consulted with numerous store owners; and as I interview their staff members, I am often amazed at the people working there. Sometimes these people drive expensive automobiles that the average CSR could not possibly afford. So, I must ask myself, “How/Why are they working here?” They are working at a retail location that pays the minimum salary and provides no benefits. WHY? Are they supplementing their pay with cash and products stolen from this store? The answer in many cases is YES & YES! Now as the retailer, you must ask yourself, “what would it cost me if I paid the going rate of wages for my area and offer some benefits like: paid vacation and medical insurance?” I believe it will cost you less than hiring someone for minimum wage + *all they can steal*. Through the years many of my training seminars have covered the crucial topic of Cash Controls/Shrink. After showing the attendees numerous examples of how employees could steal up to $100 per day, many people challenge me by saying that their CSRs could not steal that much in cash and products without them knowing it. I usually follow these comments up with a simple question, “How often do you take inventory of your store?” Very often their answers are, “No, I never do” or “once a year.” I always follow this up by asking, “if you don’t take inventory of your store’s products, then you really don’t any idea how much is stolen from your store, do you?”**

**I can sum this up simply by saying, “I think it’s possible to pay a decent salary and offer benefits by controlling shrink and maintaining correct gross profit guidelines in your store.”**

**I find myself quoting several of the emails I receive each day. I want to be sure you are reading them as well. Here are just a few of the industry news I view every day.**

* **CSP Daily News**
* **NACS Daily**
* **CStore Decisions Daily**
* **Convenience Store News**
* **The Editors of RIS News**
* **Fuel Market News**
* **CStore Products**

**If there is something you are reading that I did not list, please let me know.**

**“Reading one hour per day in your chosen field will make you an expert in in a few years.” In other words, reading leads to knowledge, and knowledge to expertise, and expertise leads to success.**

**How often do you check GasBuddy.com? You should regularly check to be sure the prices listed for your store(s) are correct. I’m sure your customers are checking. Everyone is looking to save a few dollars these days. If the price is incorrect, you may send in corrections. However, do not post misleading or inaccurate prices. You could be blocked from making future changes. I suggest you use GasBuddy to check on your competition as well. I would not use this as the only method to check on your competition, because driving past your competition daily is still the best.**

**Fuel prices are dropping in many parts of the country, some are falling at an incredible rate. Please try to stay as competitive as you can with nearby locations, because your customers are looking for the best value when deciding where to go. If you purchased you load of fuel a few days ago, your neighbors may have purchased theirs more recently at a lower price and are displaying that on their signs. To stay competitive, you need to replenish your tanks with product at a lower price as soon as you can.**

**If your store is not as profitable as you think it should be, give me a call or email. If you are a supplier or organization with retailers, and they are struggling to maintain profitable stores, please reach out to me. We can help these stores operations and improve profitability!**

**“When there is no consequence for poor work ethic, and no reward for good work ethic, there is no motivation.”**

**- JD Roberts**

**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!”***