

**Retailer Newsletter**

**June 1, 2022**

**Tom’s Business “TIPS”**

***“To Improve Profits”***

**RE: My Recent Retail Experience**

**Hi,**

**If you have been a subscriber of *Tom’s Tips* for any period of time, you have likely noticed that many of my articles involve my everyday experiences as a C-store and full-service facility owner, as well as my day-to-day travels (store visits). Sometimes I am amazed how some store operators can manage to stay open when they conduct their business in such unconventional ways. My latest experience *(a truly frustrating encounter)* was a situation I recently observed as I walked into a store. I immediately saw and heard the retailer berating (scolding, insulting, and screaming at) a vendor. I never fully understood the complete problem, but I am pretty sure it was a matter of price and/or product availability. I watched as the vendor kept his head down and tried not to antagonize his ‘customer’ any more than necessary. The retailer was shouting 4-letter words so many times that even I was embarrassed. If I were a customer of this store and this was the type of behavior that was clearly being exhibited, I would certainly consider finding another place to do business. If I were a person walking in the door with the intention of applying for a job, I would immediately turn around and run from this location. If a business owner speaks to vendors like this (no matter how mad they are), would they possibly talk to customers or employees in the same way? The answer is obvious, YES! As a business owner, I remember the days when I would walk into a situation at my own store and overhear a customer yelling at one of my staff members. As I attempted to defuse the situation and find out the problem, it was generally something simple or dumb. For example, the customer had claimed, “Your gasoline price is too high” or “Why don’t you carry a certain candy bar?” or (and this is a good one) “It should be illegal to charge sales tax on newspapers.” When the customer left I would always try to reassure the employee that things were OK. I would remind my employee that some people treat everybody that way, family members, people they work with, etc. I would also ask, “Aren’t you glad he/she doesn’t work here?” or “Aren’t you happy he’s not your brother?” I firmly believe people who act that way, do so with everyone they know or work with. What a shame!**

**The moral to this story is “we are what we are.” Meaning people react to certain situations sometimes poorly and sometimes downright insulting. I hope everyone who reads this will remember the next time they are frustrated to the point of blowing up, to simply *Pause, Take a Couple of Deep Breaths, and Count to 10!***

**A recent article in Convenience Store News states, “C-Store Retailers Should Prepare for Tighter Overtime Rules.” C-stores are at a special risk because they have a substantial number of hourly workers. This can be a particular problem for retailers operating in more than one state. Some regulations may apply in one state and not the other. I remember the days when I owned stores in both Missouri and Kansas. Many rules differed, including unemployment benefits, reporting timelines, and withholding payment procedures, etc. Risky areas to avoid are:**

* **Working off-the-clock.**
* **Working remotely off-the-clock.**
* **Incomplete record keeping, including time cards.**
* **Classifying a CSR as a manager in an effort to avoid paying overtime.**
* **and many others.**

**Read the complete article.**

**[https://csnews.com/c-store-retailers-should-prepare-tighter-overtime](https://csnews.com/c-store-retailers-should-prepare-tighter-overtime-rules?utm_source=omeda&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=NL_CSN+Daily+Digest&utm_keyword=&oly_enc_id=1138E0799701E6U)**

**One idea I learned from fellow BP/Amoco retailers when facing a wage & hour audit is not to frustrate the examiner by just handing over a box that is crammed full of timecards, time reporting documentation, and other required papers. Be a professional and take the time to organize the essential items. Thankfully I had only one W&A audit in my almost 30 years in business and I felt like the audit went extremely well. I had a total staff count of 100+ people, at 5 locations in two states. The auditor scrutinized all the documents requested, he went to all my stores and interviewed several employees. After a week, the investigation was over, I held my breath waiting for the final verdict. In the end, I was only required to write a check that amounted to about $400.00 (whew 😊). I asked if a disgruntled employee could cause me to go through this again. The examiner told me that if a future complaint was filed, they (the state initiating the investigation) would check their records and see if previous audits indicated flagrant violations or not, and that would be a key factor with their decision to conduct another one or not!**

**Remember, it only takes one unhappy employee to cause you an unimaginable about of time, energy, and $$. Be $AFE not $ORRY!**

**As we gracefully exit ‘The Great Pandemic of the 21st Century’, I truly hope some tricks we learned stay with us. For example:**

* **Clean and sanitary surfaces, doors, cabinets, and cooler handles.**
* **Hand sanitizer availability.**
* **Restroom cleanliness including:**
* **Touch-free sinks, toilets, urinals, soap, and hand dryers**

**If you are considering any type of remodel, don’t forget the restrooms. Emphasize to all staff members exactly what ‘clean’ is. If you offer any type of food service – restroom conditions are vital indicators of your cleanliness and image. Customers like to see Cleaning Schedules posted.**

**Consider third-party certification such as *Safe Shop Assured* which is available to retailers that meet the highest standards for appearance, sanitation, hygiene, and community safety.**

[**https://www.safeshopassured.com/**](https://www.safeshopassured.com/%20)

**I will finish with a phrase I use often in training seminars, “Statistics state: 94% of customers will not return to your business if you have dirty restrooms.” I follow that up with my best comeback, “If 94% of your customers will not return if you have dirty restrooms, what percent will not return if you have NO restrooms available?”**

**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!**

***Speak in such a way that others love to listen to you.***

***Listen in such a way that others love to speak to you.***

**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!**

Tom
Thomas W. Terrono

**T&S Management Services, LLC
Instructor / Consultant for the Convenience Store Industry
Lee's Summit MO 64082-4864**

**816.550.8048**



**tom.tsms@gmail.com**

**[www.tsmanagementservices.com](http://www.tsmanagementservices.com)**

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