**Retailer Newsletter**

**November 1, 2021**

**Tom’s Business “TIPS”**

***“To Improve Profits”***

**RE: Is Your Store Safe, Today?**

**Hello,**

**To operate successfully, we know that every day the small business owner, must wear many hats. We are constantly focusing our energy on the current, most serious situation. Many owners I have known over the years spent the majority of their time ‘putting out fires’. By that I mean they never had the time necessary to manage their business successfully because they were running from *‘this problem*’ to *‘that problem’*, and never seeing the full extent of the issues that may have been affecting their business each day. In other words, they are not overseeing/managing the operation in its entirety, just the ‘fires’. Many of these owners spend the majority of every day as a CSR at the store. I always say, “If you are a full-time CSR at the store, you are *working* at the store, you cannot manage the store”.**

**A convenience store in suburban Kansas City recently experienced a homicide nearby and the victim ran to the c-store and collapsed at the front door. The police arrived and cleared the store and barricaded the parking lot and pumps for most of that day. Where did the CSRs go? Did they just go home? Who stayed and assumed the position of the business supervisor, the security of the store? Did anyone?**

**Now we can all assume when the staff ran out of the store, they had their phones with them. If this had been your store, do you have your staff members phone numbers or your manager’s number?~~.~~ Do you have their phone numbers so you could contact them (in the event of an emergency?”) Incidents like this do happen and they can happen to you without any warning. A little pre-planning and preparation now can save you a ton of frustration later. Here are just a few items you should add to your to-do list this week:**

* **Emergency Phone Numbers:**
	+ **Obtain cell phone #s from all your employees and put them in your phone, by location for easy retrieval. (For example, begin each CSR’s name with the name, or initials, of that store.)**
		- **Set a reminder to verify the #s once a quarter.**
	+ **Be sure your staff has yours and your managers phone numbers.**
	+ **The Alarm Companies, Account Number & Emergency Code Word.**
	+ **The Local Power & Light Company, Water, Natural Gas Service (Propane), Internet Provider, and POS Help Desk.**
	+ **Your Fuel Supplier**
* **Storm Safety Procedures and Evacuation Meeting Place.**
	+ **This is a location where your staff goes in the event of an emergency evacuation. They must stay there until dismissed by you or another manager.**
	+ **Identify the ‘safe room’ in your store in the event of a severe storm/tornado.**
* **Injury Procedures – name and address of nearest ER or Urgent Care Facility.**
* **What is your policy regarding employees carrying weapons while on duty? My thought is employees should never carry weapons in the store. Too many bad things can happen when armed CSRs are confronted by armed robbers.**
* **General Instructions:**
	+ **What to do if you are robbed.**
	+ **What to do if electricity or water is off.**
	+ **What to do if you run out of fuel.**
	+ **Any other ‘what if’ you deem necessary i.e., car hits one of your pumps or building.**
* **Robbery Report, Accident Report, Injury Report (staff member or customer).**
* **Active Shooter Information – yes, I said *Active Shooter*. What are your instructions to your staff in the event of a shooting in or near your store?**
* **Mass Attacks in Crowded Places – have you provided your family and staff with suggestions to stay safe in places like movie theaters or shopping malls? Many times, after a shooting occurs, witnesses recall hearing ‘fireworks. They later learn it was actually gunshots. Please advise everyone not to assume it is fireworks!**

**You will notice I said, “Your Instructions or Your Policy”. I say that on purpose, so you can advise your staff what *YOUR* policy is regarding certain instances. Don’t just assume your staff will make the right decision when an emergency occurs.**

**If any of this sounds familiar to you, it is because we covered this and many other ideas during our Safety & Security Training Seminar. I have also discussed this in previous Tom’s Business TIPS. You can download the forms mentioned above on our website “Forms and Reports For Your Business”. These forms, in addition to others, should be included in your store’s Safety & Security Manual. This book must be accessible to all employees, at all times.**

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**Do not put it off, do not wait for a situation to occur and you beat yourself up saying, “I should have seen this coming and did something *yesterday*.” Delegate this project to a manager or trusted CSR. Remember my discussion a few months ago on Delegating – “getting work done through the efforts of others”. After delegating, review all the material before it is shared with your staff.**

**A recent article on *CStoreDecisions*** *(****newsletters@inform.wtwhmedia.com******)*  covered ways to Boost Hot Coffee Sales that many stores lost during the pandemic:**

**1. Champion Local Brands**

* **If you have a popular local brand, promote it!**
* **If you don’t, pick a well-known national brand and advertise it. I don’t think our customers are interested in purchasing ‘Coffee’ without knowing the ‘Brand’.**

**2. Brew it Yourself**

* **Bean-to-cup technology is gaining popularity. The aroma of fresh brewing coffee can entice customers who come into the stores for other items.**

**3. Cent-sible Specials**

* **One chain occasionally runs specials offering any size cup for 69¢ to 89¢. The thought behind this promotion is hopefully most customers will stick with the larger size after the promo ends. I can personally speak for this idea. Many times, I would run a Fountain Drink Special (usually during winter months when sales were off) ‘69¢ for any size’. It did work.**

**4. Track Trends**

* **A simple way for retailers to give their coffee a healthier halo is to offer milk and creamers made from soy, almond, or coconut.**

**5. If You Clean It, They Will Come (And Keep it Clean)**

* **Even the most basic coffee area can be a draw for new and repeat customers, if it is always clean and fully stocked. If you have been a reader of Tom’s Tips for any length of time you heard me discuss clean restrooms** **(and sanitize), clean pump islands (and sanitize), clean fountain/coffee area (and sanitize), clean cashier counter (and sanitize), CLEAN – CLEAN – CLEAN (and sanitize)!**
* **Always be prepared so every customer has the best experience and is able to get in, pay, and get out quickly!**

**If you think your store is not providing the profits that you believe necessary, give us 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 us. We can help improve store operations and profitability!**

***“Outstanding leaders go out of their way to boost the self-esteem of their personnel. If people believe in themselves, it’s amazing what they can accomplish.”***

***Sam Walton***

**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!”***