

Retailing

Top 10 Ways to Turn Off Customers

As individuals, we all have our own little pet peeves. What may turn off one customer may not bother another. As retailers, we can't afford to turn off a single customer and image is everything. Keeping our stores neat and clean is not only easy to do; it is generally an inexpensive way to attract customers and create a pleasant store atmosphere.

Take a look around your retail store. Do any of the following situations exist? Here are ten ways your store may be turning off customers:

1. Dirty Bathrooms

This customer pet peeve clearly deserves the number one spot on this list. Retail store restrooms should always be sparkling clean, whether they are open for public use or not. Make sure to stock the bathrooms with plenty of paper products, soap, trash receptacles and clean it daily.

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2. Messy Dressing Rooms

Keeping the dressing room area free of discarded hangers, tags and empty packaging goes beyond creating a neat store appearance, it is also a good step towards loss prevention. Take a quick look for out of place items after each customer uses the dressing room.

3. Loud Music

Playing music in a retail store can help create a certain atmosphere for our shoppers. Music that is too loud, inappropriate or of poor quality can run a positive shopping experience.

4. Handwritten Signs

In this era of technology, there is no excuse for displaying handwritten signage. It is too simple to print a sign from our computers or use pre-printed signs. Printed signs simply look more professional and signs with hard-to-read handwriting can be a customer turn-off.

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5. Stained Floor or Ceiling Tiles

It is true, accidents happen. However, our customers don't have to see them. Dirty carpet, stained flooring and ugly ceiling tiles can turn off many shoppers. Sweeping, vacuuming and mopping should be done on a regular basis. Consider hiring a professional cleaning crew to polish tile floors. Replace stained portions of carpet and ceiling tiles where possible.

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6. Burned-out or Poor Lighting

Replace any burned out light bulbs as soon as possible. Make sure all customer areas of the store have ample lighting and take into consideration shoppers with aging or less than perfect eyesight. Your store should be well illuminated for all customers.

7. Offensive Odors

Customers understand if they visit a lawn and garden center they will have to deal with the smell of fertilizer. The same goes for shoppers of a feed supply store. Certain odors are understandable and may even appeal to the customer's sense of smell. However, shoppers don't want to smell an employee's lunch drifting across the store. Use neutralizers to combat any offensive odors.

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8. Crowded Aisles

Consumers like a selection but not if it means sacrificing comfort while shopping. Be sure your store is designed to allow adequate space between aisles and keep walkways free of merchandise. Cramped spaces can ruin a shopping experience and turn off a customer.

9. Disorganized Checkout Counters

A stack of hangers, returned merchandise and sloppy work areas behind the checkout is a huge customer turn-off. This particular area where a customer's financial transaction is taking place should not show any signs of disorganization. Like messy dressing rooms, a disorganized checkout counter can lead to theft. Keep those register areas neat and tidy.

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10. Lack of Shopping Carts/Baskets

Your type of retail shop may not require a shopping cart or your store may be too small, but there's not a single type of retailer that wouldn't need at least some sort of shopping basket. If you hope for your customer to purchase more than one item in your store, be sure to have an adequate supply of shopping carts or baskets on hand.

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By Shari Waters, About.com Guide

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