



Advice

# Psychology of Selling

## Courting the Christmas Consumer

Keeping it simple for shoppers is the key to holiday sales success



IT MAY BE A LITTLE EARLY for consumers to be thinking about Christmas, but it's not too early for you to start planning for it. Christmas is one of the most stressful times of the year for most people. Expectations of a perfect holiday, as defined by nostalgic memories of past Christmases, TV specials and old movies, are often impossible to replicate. Combine those expectations with the reality, or threat of,

bad weather, office and neighbourhood parties as well as shorter and darker days, and you have the perfect storm of stress. What customers suffering from stress need from retailers is simplicity. Because they're dealing with so many other stressors, the simpler you make the gift-buying process the better.

A common way to simplify things is by grouping items by price: Gifts Under \$25,

\$50 and \$75. If you employ this technique, have a meaningful assortment of comparable items in each grouping.

Customers also love it when stores categorize displays by recipient. Ideas include Gifts for Him, Gifts for Her, Gifts for the Hostess, Stocking Stuffers and Secret Santa Gifts.

In order to have robust displays, buy with these groupings and categories in mind. If you don't, you won't be able to create enticing displays.

Once you've made it easy for customers to select the perfect gift, make sure they can pay for it just as quickly and easily. Now is the time to see if your POS software is available in a mobile format and to research the feasibility of having one or two tablet devices during the holidays to act as additional POS systems in order to eliminate lineups. If there are lineups, have comfort food nearby to soothe customers' rattled nerves. ■

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