



Advice

Psychology of Selling

How to woo the time-strapped customer

With hectic lives, shoppers are looking for the easy way out – of your store!



WE'RE ALL FAMILIAR with the saying, "Time is money." For an increasing portion of consumers, that saying hits the nail right on the head. From longer hours at work and second jobs to driving the kids all over the place, we often hear people lament, "When I was younger I had all kinds of time, but no money. Now I have money, but no time!"

How can a bricks-and-mortar store woo the time-strapped customer when

24-hour online shopping is at their fingertips? The reality is that today all retailers, large and small, need a web presence, including an online shop or they risk alienating this time-sensitive consumer.

Besides buying online and having purchases shipped to their home, many consumers like the option of buying online and picking up in store, otherwise referred to as click and pick. Train your staff right, and

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you can up-sell the customer when she comes in to pick up her order. Also be sure to stress the major advantage you have over Internet-only stores – the ease of returns.

It should go without saying that these customers don't like waiting in line. Line-ups at cash registers are a major turnoff. Many shoppers today will abandon their purchase at the sight of a long line-up. Consider purchasing a few hand-held POS devices to combat occasional line-ups. At a cost of approximately \$1500, they pay for themselves quickly, especially during busy holiday periods.

Tech-savvy chain stores and larger retailers are even beginning to play with self-pay options: the customer scans the barcode with their phone and is taken to an online payment site. They show their receipt on the screen to an associate, get a bag or box and off they go.

The most important thing to remember is that the time-strapped customer is very sensitive to any delay – real or perceived. If you "appear" to be moving slowly or if they think a line isn't moving fast enough, they'll bolt. Read the cues your customers are giving you. Are they looking at their watch or phone or glancing at the cash register? These are sure tip-offs that they're in a hurry and you have seconds to save the sale. ■

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