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Black Friday is just a few days away. Is your customer service program established for the busiest shopping day of the year?

By John Tschohl

We will shortly be experiencing one of the biggest, if not the biggest shopping day of the year which we have titled: Black Friday. So the rush is on to make sure that retailers have plenty of inventory, plenty of good deals, plenty of part-time employees, and plenty of caffeine laden, worrisome, nerve racking, do it all in a short period of time... 24 hours.

"Black Friday" indicates the point at which retailers begin to turn a profit, or "in the black". For large retail chains like [Wal-Mart](#), Black Friday can boost their year to date net profit by several billion dollars.

Competition is fierce. The fiercest is...ON LINE SHOPPING. They are even offering Countdown to Black Friday deals. They are kicking off the savings a little early and are counting down to the big day with even more deals, all day, every day. Great benefits are being offered by shopping online, there are No lines, great prices, free shipping, no sales tax and so on and so on and so on.

What's a retailer to do when facing goliaths like Amazon? It's estimated that retailers can make up to 40% of their annual revenue on Black Friday. One amazing fact is 85 % of customers in a recent survey said they would be willing to pay up to 25% MORE to ensure a superior customer experience. SO.... the moral to the story is the Great Experiences Get the Customer.

Black Friday Tips For Your Employees

Here's 5 easy steps to take to significantly impact your portion of revenue in this 24 hour period. Knowing you do not have time to put your part-time, holiday people through extensive training, you can definitely train them on some simple principles:

1. **Get employees to use the customer's name.** Greet every single customer by saying, "Welcome to our store, my name is Michael, what is yours?"
2. **Smile.** It's magic. When a customer enters your store and sees a warm, genuine smile, they melt. It's showing that you care about them and want to help.
3. **Think SPEED.** Every single person out shopping on Black Friday wants to get the job done as soon and as fast as they can. When someone asks a question or wants to know where something is located, get on the same side of the counter they are on. Walk them over to what they are looking for, ask their name and use it in conversation letting them know to ask for you for any help they need.
4. **Treat everyone as a VIP.** Every person that walks into your location is your opportunity to turn a customer into a "fan" of yours and your company's. No matter how they dress, no matter how they look, no matter how they act, it is a 3 second opportunity to make a customer for life. Take advantage of each second by smiling, asking their name and treat them like royalty.
5. **Thank you goes a long way.** By thanking each and every customer for coming in and letting them know it was nice to meet them and help them out will make a huge difference in their decision to come back to you and...to tell everyone they know about how special they were treated. You handled their need, you can take care of problems, you can be trusted. It all comes from a simple and meaningful....Thank You.

Let's face it. Service is the single ingredient that separates one company from another, one salesperson from another, one product from another. In our highly competitive free enterprise system, there's no such thing as a product so superior to its competition that outstanding service cannot make a difference. We have a small window to make a great impression and what better time to do it than Black Friday.

Customers are walking into your business willingly – it's your job to make sure they want to come back again and again. You know what to do....dazzle 'em!

About the Author

John Tschohl is an international service strategist and speaker. He is founder and president of the Service Quality Institute in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Described by USA Today, Time and Entrepreneur magazines as a customer service guru, he has written several books on customer service including the new 10th edition of Achieving Excellence Through Customer Service. The Service Quality Institute (<http://www.customer-service.com>) has developed more than 26 customer service training programs that have been distributed and presented throughout the world. John's monthly strategic newsletter is available online at no charge.