

"Customer Information Signage"

We often expect too much of our customers. We expect them to know what we know. We expect them to think as logically (or illogically) as we do. This often adds an unnecessary obstruction for our customers.

We tend to become "store-blind" after a few months and don't always notice the details as we used to.

Consider this customer scenario:

"Jeff is a first-time customer of yours. He's dying for a hot cup of coffee. He stops at your site. Due to fraud you have implemented procedures and controls to monitor sales of coffee. There is a coffee machine, but where are the cups? How does the machine work? Where does he get sugar? He doesn't want to ask the cashier because there's a queue. The take away personnel are busy in the back. Oh, just forget it!!"

Jeff wants to buy a coffee, but decides to rather make one at work. So he leaves and takes his money with him.

How can this problem be solved? Customer Information Signage.

Information about the simple everyday questions that you and your staff have been asked a million times. Why wait to be asked, if you provide proper signage then you solve the problem before it happens and end up with happier customers. Here are some examples:

- Coffee machine instructions – simple step by step guides. For example - Place cup here. Press this button. Wait.
- Toilet keys – some sites control the key by keeping it at the cashier. When you need to go you don't need to go looking for the key.
- Pay first then collect (gas, car washes, food orders, etc) – if you get to the front of the queue just to find out your in the wrong queue, you'll probably just leave altogether.

- Procedures – how to refill gas pay. Then go to refill." When you change a procedure it is even more important to inform your customers.
- Payment options – for example "We accept credit cards. We accept Koopkrug." "We don't accept credit cards for airtime or lotto." "We accept credit cards for purchases of R20 or more."
- Price labels – they are also information signage and are now a legal requirement for each product on display (refer the Consumer Protection Act)
- Making it easier – if you have implemented something to improve service or avoid problems. Tell your customers about it with information signage e.g. if you placed a bell at the take away to ring for service, put a sign with it

When you put up signage there are a few guidelines.

- Keep it simple – not everybody can read *ITALICS* in a special font and colour that you love. Make it clear, simple and bold. Make all signage the same where possible e.g. same font and sizes.
- Add pictures – you can Google any picture nowadays. Make sure it gives the same message as the text and gives the same information.
- Laminate – pieces of paper stuck with Prestik look bad after day one. Laminate it and stick it up with double sided tape. It lasts 100 times longer.
- Norms & Standards – remember the norms and standards of your franchisor and what you are allowed to put up and how you can display it.
- Eye line – it doesn't work if customers can't see it. If you're unsure – Ask them.

Most of us don't like to ask for help, directions or instructions and would rather leave the item, service or product. If you know what most customers are asking about – make it easier by answering the question with information signage.

BEST PRACTICES:

DON'T think that customers look at your business the same way you do. You've seen your business a million times. They haven't.

DO de-clutter your shop, walls, tills, windows, etc frequently. Remove all the posters/stickers/signs that are outdated, damaged, irrelevant or don't call customers to action.

QUICK WINS:

Customers equate a neat, tidy and symmetrical display to fresher products of higher quality with better characteristics. Signage should be in straight lines, blocked together symmetrically, aligned evenly to nearby objects, etc. A skew poster that's worn and slightly dirty creates an impression of inferior products. It's better to do it right or take it down.

FUTURENT Consulting assists and supports the Fuel Industry to become profit efficient. Contact us at any time. We focus on:

- Consulting Services
- Enterprise Performance Improvement
- Business Process Outsourcing

Ruan Schoeman	082 782 5087
rschoeman@future-ent.com	
Gerrie Lewies	083 442 7460
glewies@future-ent.com	
Zelna van Schalkwyk	082 814 7747
zvanschalkwyk@future-ent.com	