

## Is Your Success Formula Working?

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One of the most researched fields of the last decade is probably the retail industry. From design to store traffic, visual merchandising and product selection, everything has been carefully examined trying to discover that competitive advantage so vital for corporate success.

What do some retailers do to achieve success despite economic difficulties and competitive pressures?. Why other organizations that appear to possess all the ingredients for success never achieve it?.

The answer, at the risk of being considered too simplistic, is: the successful companies (not only in retail, but in other industries as well) have realized that *the main competitive advantage they possess is called "Human Resources"*.

The "New Consumer" knows he has many options. Promotions, selection and even competitive prices are not enough to earn his loyalty and patronage. The consumer wants to be treated well, as a human being, he wants to feel good and have a pleasing experience when he spends his money. Otherwise, he will continue visiting different establishments until he finds what he desires.

Several studies conducted about the needs, preferences and types of establishments favored by consumers on the 21<sup>st</sup> century conclude that:

- Given the opportunity, the consumer *will buy where he is appreciated and treated well* and generally, he is willing to pay a little more for the privilege.
- The successful retailers, including the largest, have been able to win the loyalty of their customers making them *feel "special"*.
- The more *contact there is between customers and employees*, the greater the probabilities of sales, and the average sale is higher when the interaction exists.
- **Employees tend to treat customers the same way they are treated by management.**
- Customers always *observe store employees* even if they don't have any verbal contact. The better their impression the greater the chances of making a sale.
- Customers will likely develop a relationship with stores where the employees know *"how to listen" and show "genuine interest"*.

We can then summarize that Customer Service is good business. But customer service is not about techniques or procedures, it's about people. It's an attitude that starts within the organization and is then reflected in dealings with customers.

The success of our **CER** Training Seminars (**C**reating **E**xcellence in **R**etail) has proven that to create an effective customer service culture, you must start by changing our paradigms within the organization at all levels. Realizing that the way we treat and train

our employees determines the level of customer service we provide to our customers is the starting point on your road to success.

Remember: *Change is inevitable, success is optional* .

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