

"Vision is the art of seeing the invisible. Leadership is the capacity to translate vision into reality."

MANAGE THE CONSUMER EXPERIENCE

So, I gave one of my favorite books to my daughter, *"The Catcher In The Rye"*. It was a well-worn paperback and I wanted a hard cover copy anyway. So I looked it up on the Internet and Barnes & Noble came up. The book was \$19 and I could pick it up in 60 minutes in the local store. I pushed the order button and soon received the promised e-mail that the book was ready to be picked up. Not so bad so far...

In the store I go. At the counter the clerk cannot find the book. She looks at me as if it is my fault,... "Did you order it?". Yes. "Did we call you to tell you it was in?" No. I received the e-mail telling me my search and wait is over the book is available for pickup at the store. "Oh. Well what is your name?" Windsor. "Spell that ... Well let me see if customer service has it... Oh its very soon. You just made the order today." Yes a little over 60 minutes ago.

At the cash register she charges me \$27 for the book. Says I , on the Internet it said the book was \$19. "I don't think so!" Well I think so. "NO." Just gimme the book I'll deal with the price later.

I get home and call the customer service number listed on the website after confirming the \$19 price. After a 5 minute wait I get an agent and immediately ask for a supervisor. I'd like management to get the message I'd like to deliver about the brick & mortar experience for the consumer. Five more minutes go by and the customer service supervisor "part of the management team" asks me to relate my story. I did. She would like to argue with me about their lower on-line price policy vs their higher in-store price policy. No interest in my experience in the store. No interest in my experience on the phone. In short NO INTEREST IN THE CONSUMER. Let me think... buy on-line or visit the brick & mortar store for a terrific experience...?

I made the order on-line expecting to have a happy experience re-reading a favorite book. I drove through the late Sunday morning traffic. I put up with the late Sunday morning experience in the store's parking lot. Complete with shopping carts occupying all of the otherwise available parking spaces. I endure the poor, order-on line, pick up in-store experience. I suffer surly treatment at the hands of a clerk who management has not taken time to train and/or thinks she is properly trained and/or does not know how she executes her training. Then I am over charged. Then I take more time to communicate with their management level customer service members and the understanding at that level is identical to the clerk. I conclude therefore that management fosters this condition on the floor. Imagine my thoughts of aggravation and disappointment, every time I open my new hard cover of *"The Catcher In The Rye"*. Perhaps a good old fashioned book burning is in order...

Can there be any wonder that Barnes & Noble is in the financial condition it is in? When they sit around and wonder why their consumer base is shrinking, where do they look for answers? Certainly not at themselves. It therefore must be someone else's fault... Can you say, **"stronger competition"**?

This ain't rocket science. Brick & Mortar Specialty Retailers gotta do three simple things...

1. Create conditions in order that the consumer expects it is worth driving to the store.
2. Exceed those expectations.
3. Do it every time with every consumer.

It isn't hard. It takes very little intellectual capability. It requires no special training. Just think about what impresses you when you are the consumer and do that in your store. AND insure that your staff understands what to do, why to do it and then actually does it.

At your service,



Ray Windsor