

Retailers' Own Efforts Will Make This Holiday Season Successful

High gas prices! Internet competition! No good help! “Just excuses,” says Retail Consultant Doug Fleener who believes profitable retailers will make their own successful holiday season.

Fleener, founder of the Dynamic Experiences Group, is author of the newly-released “The Profitable Retailer: 56 Surprisingly Simple and Effective Lessons to Boost Your Sales and Profits.” Fleener says, “This book is written specifically for the independent retailer and is a collection of lessons I’ve learned about how to sell more products, be a better marketer, make more money, and live a more comfortable life.”

To be a profitable retailer this holiday season, Fleener offers these tips:

Welcome every customer. This cues the customer that no matter how busy the store looks, the staff is there to help and make their shopping experience a good one.

Take down those “No food and drink” signs and offer everyone holiday drinks and snacks.

All holiday hires don’t have to be sales associates. Hire a person whose key functions include running purchases to customers’ cars, receiving shipments, and keeping doors and windows clean. That person might also double as a greeter!

Create a holiday mentor program where you match up seasonal hires with your permanent employees. Who better to teach than those who do it every day?

Seek out a top notch seasonal cashier. Those last ten feet that can make or break the store experience for many customers, so finding a good cashier may be worth thousands of dollars.

Pre-wrap top-selling items. People love them! Always make sure your employees know how to wrap properly. A poorly wrapped present is worse than not offering gift wrapping at all.

If you’re in a mall, do something nice for your mall manager. You never know when you might need a favor. The more you can make them feel appreciated the more opportunities will come your way – media coverage, for example.

You must offer gift cards which now account for close to one-third of holiday purchases. Provide gift boxes and wrapping to make the cards more special and differentiate them from other retailers’ cards.

To be a great place to shop, a retailer has to be a great place to work. Wow your staff this holiday by giving them retail survival kits that includes energy bars, 10-minute break passes, and aspirin. Bring in a masseuse. Order in lunch. Sing holiday songs to them. Keep it fun for the staff.

And to stay profitable post-holiday, Fleener counsels, “Make the return process painless. When a customer enters the store with a return, have the employee approach the customer and offer to carry the product for them. Teach employees that returns are the second opportunity to wow the customer.”

The Profitable Retailer is published by Acanthus Publishing and is available for \$19.95 at Amazon or at www.theprofitableretailer.com where an excerpt of the book may be read. Discounts on bulk orders are cheerfully given.