

# Keep the tills ringing this season

## Five easy suggestions to get customers back into your store

As retailers prepare for what has traditionally been their peak season, consumers may not be all too keen to re-enter stores or malls; even after the easing of restrictions during level 1. So here are a few things that retailers can do to ensure that the till keeps ringing this season.

Apart from creating a safe shopping experience for consumers (physically and virtually), a desire to appeal to human senses, to connect with people (now more than ever before) remains. For some, retail therapy is no longer therapeutic. The good news is that some of our suggestions do not require significant capital outlay, although Absa can provide for your set-up requirements through our commercial asset finance products. We are going to share five simple ideas that may make consumers feel just a little bit more excited about shopping again.

Manufacturers cannot afford to miss retail peak season as consumer spending increases during the limited holiday window. They too will be keen to optimise their share of the meal, glass or wallet. So partner with your suppliers to create a lasting impression with your customers by giving them more reasons to spend their money with you.



### 1. Staff

It is well known that staff plays a crucial role in any business and define the customers' shopping experience. Therefore, your staff's wellbeing (financial or physical) becomes important for your business, as their knowledge about products' technical functionality or nutritional benefits and thoughtful recommendation creates affinity with your customers so that they will want to return or even recommend your store.

The best customer experience is delivered by highly motivated staff members who are happy and easily approachable and tell positive stories about your business. Shrinkage and staff turnover are lower when staff are motivated, so invest in your people.

### 2. Store layout

The store layout, starting from the parking lot to the transition zone (the point between the entrance and the store) and checkout, should create a sense of exploration and rewarding discoveries, which positively influence customer experience. Although every store has its own layout, every part of the store must be experienced as a worthwhile destination. This will encourage customers to touch and interact with products in the store.

The layout also enables the store owner to present merchandise in a clean and visually pleasing way. The store owner, with manufacturers and suppliers, can demonstrate the products' features, benefits and advantages in the form of live presentations. In the case of a grocery store, display stands are effective to entice consumers to taste, smell and touch the product. Non-consumer packaged goods retailers can be creative about presenting a user experience in-store, for example a cookware store can have master

chefs prepare your favourite meal or a quick snack in-store. Theatrics and well thought out visual merchandising, good store ergonomics and live demonstrations all improve the customer experience and curiosity in the store.

Also, paring merchandise with complementary products that are frequently purchased together, drives more sales.

Clearly demarcated product and service areas make it pleasant for the customer to navigate your store and increase impulse purchases. Promotional items can be placed on the route toward the intended product.

Also demarcate the checkout/till area, ensuring that you can accept all forms of payments such as contactless payments, be it QR codes, tap-and-go, credit and debit cards, cash and electronic payments.

### 3. Supplier sponsored promotions

Collaboration between suppliers and store owners can result in innovative in-store promotions. The use of web interfaces, interactive video displays, embedded QR codes and digital content can be placed strategically within the store or on a digital device. Through the use of beacons, consumers could experience increased interaction with the products and service offerings available to them. Some suppliers are even using product packaging creatively to generate awareness about the coronavirus. This has a positive outcome on customer experience whilst maintaining a safe environment. Although restrictions have

been reduced, safety remains paramount, and promotions aimed at attracting consumers back in-store are important for diverting sales of some products that were not efficiently sold online.

### 4. Product assortment

Product assortment needs to adapt to the new economic and social realities faced by consumers, who still demand convenience, but demand more value and attractive price points to match their income. It's all about stocking more fast-moving essential and health-related products and being highly selective in terms of discretionary products. Due to global supply chain disruptions, there is more opportunity for local brands to showcase their products, which should have a positive impact on our local economy.

### 5. Rewards and loyalty

Consumers are demanding more rewards for their loyalty. Creating a moment that appeals to all their senses becomes a real differentiator, from virtual to physical. Create excitement and expectation, whilst reinforcing convenience. This is achieved through the combined experience of staff, store layout, suppliers and products.

With health concerns being a key concern, both shopping in the aisles and going through checkout need to become as touch-free as possible. We have observed that consumers who are concerned about infection have moved decisively away from cash payment to non-cash payment mechanisms such as QR codes, tap-and-go and credit cards. Getting

customers to buy will require an omnichannel experience that includes drive-through, click and collect and other delivery options that cater for the new emphasis on health, safety and convenience.

Although online shopping has increased, brick-and-mortar shopping remains the most prevalent. A change in the wholesaler and retailer mindset to customer experience is important. It is not business as usual and new approaches are required.

Where an investment is required, Absa will be there with you every step of the way. We are set up to meet all your business, personal banking and financial services needs, leaving it to you, the wholesaler and retailer, to develop a clear perspective on which actions to prioritise to improve and deliver a consistent customer experience.

Our range of products and services are tailor-made to meet your business, personal and employees' needs. We can also provide your staff with the convenience of bringing Absa to them, whilst still offering them discounted life-stage banking solutions so that they can continue to provide consumers with a memorable in-store experience.

To find out more about the fast-moving consumer goods sector and available financial solutions, contact Lesego Mpakanyane on ...

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