

# How establishing trust is your trump card

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Getting noticed leads to curiosity.

Establishing Trust is key to successful retailing, particularly in service intensive formats like pharmacies, beauty salons, consumer electronic stores, or with high value items like jewellery or cars. Trust leads directly to purchase, often in spite of the item being quite different to the one the customer originally intended to buy (for example, more appropriate set of features, different brand, higher price). Conversely, the lack of Trust will result in either no purchase at all or in a purchase that is exclusively price or convenience driven.

Let's analyse the steps involved in establishing Trust.

These are: getting noticed; curiosity; selection; engagement; trust; and purchase.

## Getting noticed

It all begins with getting noticed. The main challenge for retailers is that they only can hope for a few seconds of customers' attention time in order to make the positive first impact: 'This place may just be the one I am looking for'. Your shopfront and signage are the two elements that are almost exclusively responsible for getting noticed. Another important factor is what can be seen inside your store from the outside – the street or the shopping mall.

However, I believe just getting

noticed is not good enough. You must be noticed for the right reason. This means in a way that clearly communicates and is consistent with your product and market positioning. I see too many pharmacies that look like \$2 shops and too many \$2 shops that look like pharmacies. There is a well known chocolate retailer who chooses bright blue colour in the front of the shop as a means of getting customer attention. Getting noticed they probably do, but the blue happens to be the worst colour for any food, especially for comfort food, and this is enough to turn a chocoholic like me completely off their product.

As a result of getting noticed, the customer will slow down in front of your store, so you will now have a small share of their attention.

## Curiosity

Getting noticed leads to Curiosity. Customers who are curious will stop at your store window or near the entrance and look inside. There is always a fair amount of natural resistance about coming into your space which is new and unfamiliar to them.

If you sell everyday, reasonably priced items, then wide, inviting entrances will help to quickly

overcome this resistance. Good window and front of store displays are also effective in assisting in the process of giving a positive outcome to the initial Curiosity, so that the customers propel themselves into your store space.

It is particularly important to understand this state of mind if you sell exclusive, highly priced merchandise. Few customers would want to feel embarrassed and out of place inside an exclusive boutique if this is not the place they are looking for, either in terms of price or selection. Therefore, for higher price retailers the windows often provide this important buffer, giving shoppers the time to assess the store. For example, most jewellery stores are designed for window shopping, in order to satisfy that initial apprehension and Curiosity.

## Selection

Curiosity, positively satisfied, leads to customers entering your store. From a fleeting interest the person moves to a longer period of Selection. This includes understanding how the store 'works', ie how it is laid out, and then proceeding to look for and select the product.

The tools retail designers use to help customers in this process are:

good store layout, breaking down the product range into distinct departments and sections that are clearly signed, good lighting, merchandise presentation that makes it easy to buy.

Finding the product will be usually followed by Purchase, so many retailers stop at this. Why worry? Repeat customers will from now on will by-pass the initial steps and go straight into Selection. This is called 'maintenance' or 'convenience' shopping. It can be commonly seen, for example, in supermarkets where Selection leads to Purchase. However, it usually stops there and does not lead to Trust. This means that next time the customer will buy from any other supermarket that is more convenient or cheaper.

That's why the best retailers know that they must cater for one more essential step.

## Engagement

If Selection will have customers shopping with their cold mind, Engagement involves their warm heart. With every step leading to Engagement you get bigger and bigger share of customers' mind and time. Therefore, customers' eyes and ears are now widely open, they are ready and tuned in to receive your messages. That's why Engagement can be achieved by using carefully planned,

strategic elements such as special store ambience, personal service, product selection information, professional advice, and overall attention to detail. This will ensure that each customer will have a special, memorable experience during their visit.

### Trust

Trust is built by repeated and consistent Engagements. Trust is a direct conduit to Purchase and return visitation. However, it is important to bear in mind that Trust is tested in every visit, therefore the need for consistency. Trust takes a big effort to gain but it is very easy to lose.

People who are in the Trust phase will refer to your business as 'my café' or 'my book store'. If asked about their favourite place to shop, they will recall your store name first. They will walk past five other shops selling similar product in order to visit yours. They will bring their friends to shop with them.

### Brand Advantage

The main advantage of brands is that they help customers by-pass many of the initial steps towards Purchase. This is particularly beneficial for multiple location retailers. If Trust has been already established by visiting one location, customers would easily extend it to other locations. A Gloria Jeans customer will be as comfortable with his local store as he would be with a Gloria Jeans store in Dubai. As before, the consistency of store presentation and service is essential, and even more so for the brands, because one disappointing experience can destroy the hard-earned Trust of the entire branded network.

Our client, the Lifesource Group,

owns a well-known brand called Nad's – a leading range of hair removal and skin care products. They asked us to create a concept for a new business extension - a chain of laser hair removal clinics that would leverage the strengths of the existing brand, but also extend it to the new area of laser technology.

Here is a step by step example and analysis of how retail and brand design was used to help establish Trust with the targeted customers.

### Getting noticed

The new identity we have created uses the well known Nad's logo, together with the new extension words 'Hair removal clinic. Natural gel and laser'. This way the stores have a much better chance of getting noticed by customers. We are using a familiar Logo but adding new important information to it at the shopfront signage level – this is essential as it ensures that customers understand straight away that this is a new offering coming from the familiar brand. The striking interior of the front area can be seen from the street – this also helps in getting noticed. However, we have ensured that privacy of the customers waiting inside is also being maintained.

### Curiosity

The customer has noticed the store and slowed down. In the case of hair removal, we are now dealing with curiosity mixed with quite a bit of apprehension ('What exactly do they do here?', 'How do they do it?', 'Will this hurt?', 'How much will it cost?'). We have therefore tried to provide succinct answers to these questions right at the front of the

store. As we are dealing here mainly with the services, not the products, signage and graphics were the most effective tools to achieve this task. The clean, light, bright, professional look of the store is also a powerful tool that allows us to send positive messages that deal with the initial apprehension customers might be experiencing.

### Selection

Once inside, customers can easily select from the prominently positioned list of services, as well as from a striking and comprehensive display of associated products. The product display is designed to support the client's positioning as leaders in their field. As well as that, it is a valuable opportunity for add-on sales that will contribute to the bottom line of the business.

### Engagement

This key step in building customer trust is achieved through a combination of several different techniques.

We created a memorable ambience inside the store that makes customers feel relaxed and at ease. Comfortable seating and special features, like vertical garden and custom designed crystal and candle lights, help to make every visit a memorable experience. User-friendly information about the business and its services is delivered through plasma TV, take home leaflets and environmental graphics. All of the above is supported by knowledgeable, up to date, friendly, personal customer service.

### Trust

One or more of the above things

will help develop an emotional bond and Trust between the store and the customers. People will leave the clinic, happy about their treatment, happy about the overall experience, and ultimately happier about their life. They will retain a strong positive recall of both the brand name and the physical space. For our client, this is essential, as their whole business model is built on encouraging repeat visits and on developing a network of these clinics.

### Trust and the pharmacy

I believe building and keeping Trust is essential in the pharmacy business. Like in our Nad's clinics example, you are often dealing with customers who are not feeling well, who are looking for help, who have certain anxiety and apprehension when it comes to their personal health issues. Alternatively, the pharmacy customers that are healthy and want to stay healthy will still be more choosy and selective when it comes to buying products and services for their own health, compared with just about any other retail category.

In all cases, they want to come to a place and to people that they can trust. How your pharmacy environment, your team and yourself will respond to these needs will determine whether your business will be treated just as a convenient place to fill a script today, or as 'my pharmacy' – the one and only place the customer will think of going for all their pharmacy needs.

