



Michael Sherlock, former CEO of **Brumby's Bakery's** and co-author of newly released book www.jumpshift.com.au has suggestions for retailers in these tough economic times.

the importance of Exceptional Customer Service to bricks and mortar retailers

The doom and gloom merchants are casting a pall over consumer confidence in Australia, and "everyday the paperboy brings more".

For many businesses with a customer focus, the service environment created is the crucial element to the business' success. If consumers are served by robots, they might as well shop online.

Retailers therefore need to go back to the basics of the theatre of retail; that is, providing the experience of human connectivity with the customer. It is rare these days to experience smile, eye contact and a genuine appreciation for your patronage.

The best customers are the ones businesses already have. So while it's very important to recruit new customers, often not enough is done to fully "mine" the ones they already have and to increase their frequency.

Customer Relationship Management is all about satisfied customers who return time after time to tell their friends and family about great quality, service and price. This is called word of mouth advertising, an endorsement, the cheapest and best form of advertising.

In today's social media world this word of mouth advertising process has been amplified. The internet has levelled the media playing field and every customer is now a potential media commentator – food reviewer, secret shopper etc.

Now if a customer receives good or bad service they have the means of instantly communicating their opinion of their experience good or bad to a wide audience. They create the content on record of a brand for all their friends and followers to see.

Retailers need to educate, understand the future needs, build a relationship with their customers and help solve their problems. It is also important to plan social media strategies as part of the strategic business plan.

You don't go to a cocktail party and sell, people usually ask what you do, if you sell Real Estate they may ask for your card and follow up outside the party, you have connected. Treat Facebook and Twitter like a cocktail party.

Many retailers shy away from training because of the expense, but they need to look at the real cost that ignorance plays in diminishing their business.

In my book Jumpshift! I developed a simple, easy to follow customer engagement process called SEE - ME that can be used as a base to showcase your brand in any retail/service organisation.

S = Smile
E = Eye contact
E = Enthusiastic greeting
- =slight pause (mentally summarize the customer's needs and how to connect).
M = Meaningful response (repeat the order and strategically upsell, 1:4 will say yes)
E = Evermore (offer loyalty card/ bounce back and a thank you)

If the serving person's first contact with the customer is to give them a genuine warm smile and make eye contact with a greeting, the whole customer experience is enhanced; they are likely to be more committed and ready to buy.

It is so simple but how often do you experience it?

Customers will prefer this environment to the uncertainty and delay of on-line. They will weigh up the options and decide to shop human to human.



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Having spent my adult life in the development and maintenance of elite TEAMS, I was very taken by Michael's book, which is a practical hands-on approach to achieve this elusive aim in the business world.

Leigh Matt hews, AFL Player of the Century and 4 times Premierships Coach.

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