

Why In-Store Atmosphere Matters

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Influencing the In-Store Customer Experience

Positive customer experience is everything when you're a retailer. Every retailer knows that when your customer has a positive experience it not only results in making your customer happy but potential additional revenue as well. But how can you help ensure your customers will have this experience? By ensuring your in-store atmosphere is calming, pleasant, and alluring to customers.

In-store atmosphere includes not only the physical characteristics used to attract customers but targeting and engaging atmospherics as well. Atmospherics are effects intended to create a particular atmosphere or mood which entices customers to enter the store and purchase. These effects can include human senses such as sound and smell.

Whether retailers like it or not, atmosphere is a direct contributor to the customer experience. If a store has a good atmosphere, it can help differentiate its brand from its competitors and excite customers to shop. Therefore, it is crucial that a retailer considers the role that in-store atmosphere can play in their success. Whether you own a grocery store, gourmet popcorn shop, restaurant, or café, it is important to make your store atmosphere be the best it can be.

How to Craft In-Store Atmosphere Using Atmospherics

When creating your in-store atmosphere, it is important to keep in mind who your target audience is. Do you cater to an older or younger demographic? Is your target market young professionals or middle-aged consumers? Who your target audience is will determine how you use atmospherics within your store. Atmospherics such as smell, sound, and appearance can create an ambiance that reflects your brand and the clientele it serves.

Atmospheric 1: Smell

Smells are one of the less obvious effects but more impacting atmospherics. Smells have the power to create a warm and friendly environment that your customers will enjoy shopping in. If your store or restaurant smells good, then your customers will be more eager to buy products. For example, if you own a gourmet popcorn shop, you have the opportunity to make your entire store smell delicious. You can do this by popping sweet-smelling flavors of popcorn such as vanilla or caramel corn directly in the store. By doing this you will create a delicious aroma throughout your entire store that will encourage your customers to buy. You must pick scents or aromas that will excite and entice your shoppers.

Holidays are a great time of year to pay attention to your store's scent. During the holiday season, you have the opportunity to create an aroma that will complement the holiday going on. For example, during the Christmas season fill your store with scents such as peppermint or ginger snap, while during the fall and Thanksgiving season, showcase smells such as pumpkin spice or apple pie. You can create these aromas through your food products, candles, or other scenting services.

Atmospheric 2: Sound/Music

When it comes to creating a welcoming environment in your store, consider what your customers hear. The fresh popping of popcorn will capture their attention and it shows the product is fresh. The interaction draws them to make a purchase. Background music can

help create a mood within your store as well as change a customer's behavior and attitude. The type of background music you choose will depend on who your target audience is. For example, if you wish to serve a younger clientele you likely need to create a hip atmosphere. You can achieve this desired atmosphere by playing upbeat, current pop music. This will reflect your store's youthful image. If your desired target audience is middle-aged consumers, then consider playing classic rock. However, if you are a store that attracts all consumers regardless of age, play a mixture of several genres. Overall, make sure your music choice inspires, soothes, or stimulates your customers.

Background music can also help set your customer's shopping pace. Music speed, rhythm, and volume can affect the pace at which a customer flows through the store. For example, when slow music is playing at a low volume, customers tend to wander around the aisles slowly. While when energetic and loud songs play, people tend to accelerate their pace through a store. (LS Retail) The effects speed, rhythm, and volume have on consumers allow you as the retailer to be strategic in how you use in-store music to your advantage.

Atmospheric 3: Appearance

We live in a highly visual world where appearance is important in business. A business's overall appearance is important because it presents a visual image of the brand and the message they are trying to send to their customers. As a retailer, store appearance is critical to sales and attracting customers. When evaluating your business' appearance, the first thing to look at is its exterior. According to a study by Morspace, 95% of consumers say that the external appearance of a store influences their decision to shop there. An attractive exterior can lead to more sales and more customers walking into the store. To spruce up your store's exterior, pay attention to cleanliness, personal touches, and overall presence. Make sure all signs are legible, visible, and in good condition outside your store. Brand your exterior to fit your target audience. Be sure to cater to the wants and needs your audience has. A great way to do this is through a window display. If your store has an opportunity to have a window display use it to your advantage. Make your display clean and attractive. A good tip is to try and create an Instagram-worthy window display. This means you need to make your display attractive enough your customers would want to take a picture. When in doubt enhance the outside of your store with landscaping or welcome signs.

Although the appearance of the outside of the store is important, don't forget the inside! How your store looks inside needs not only to excite your customers, but also to show them what your brand is. You can accomplish this by paying attention to details, such as color and lighting within your store. Color can have an effect on one's mood. For example, a certain color can influence customers at a restaurant to order quickly and leave or relax and feel comfortable spending more money. Psychologists have found that the color red is a popular choice in the restaurant industry. Red has been known to increase blood pressure causing someone to feel excited. It is also known for stimulating one's appetite, while the color green is seen as calming and associated with health and well-being. If you own a restaurant or café consider using colors to influence your customer's moods. You can do this through logos, menus, or even napkins. Colors can also be used in gourmet popcorn shops. Consider displaying bright popcorn flavors to catch customer's eyes. Yellow is the easiest color to see and releases serotonin, a chemical in our brain that makes us feel good.

Another way to make the inside of your store more appealing is through lighting. Lighting can help steer one's focus to a certain area. If your store has a lot of traffic and sells several different things, use high activity lighting. This is where you bring attention to areas you want your customers to focus on and see.